THE COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION ON SINGLE MOTHERHOOD PARENTING: A CASE STUDY OF MPANDA MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW)

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

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2025

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that they have read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled: **"Assessing the Community Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting at Mpanda Municipal Council, Tanzania"** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work of the Open University of Tanzania.

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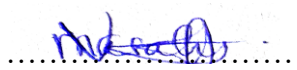
DECLARATION

I, **Victoria Eliya Massatu**, declared that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other university or institution. Where other people's works have been used, and references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW).



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Date

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially “My beloved late father in Heaven Eliya Massatu” and my mother Esther Elikana for their undying support and the immense sacrifices, they have made to make sure that I completed this entire course. Much of my dedication to this dissertation should be directed toward my lovely husband Leopord L.Mabugo and my children Moses Leopord Mabugo, Ellis Leopord Mabugo, and Dorcus Leopord Mabugo. I hope they will be inspired to learn and acquire knowledge for their future success and in the hereafter.

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ABSTRACT

This study titled “The Community’s Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting: A Case Study at Mpanda Municipality” aimed to: (i) assess cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting, (ii) examine community practices toward single mothers, and (iii) investigate the support provided by social welfare officers. Guided by Ecological Systems Theory and an interpretivist philosophy, the study employed qualitative methods with a sample of 50 participants, and data were analyzed using Nvivo software. Findings revealed that single mothers in Mpanda Municipality face negative cultural attitudes linking single motherhood with moral failure, carelessness, or poor parenting. These beliefs create social stigma that affects both mothers and their children. The study further noted discriminatory community practices, where single mothers are excluded from social and cultural activities such as village meetings, initiation rites, and traditional marriage ceremonies, reinforcing their marginalization and social isolation. Additionally, social welfare officers provide referrals, legal aid, and counseling, yet their effectiveness is hindered by limited outreach, bureaucracy, and inadequate funding. Many single mothers struggle to access these services due to distance, negative treatment, or lack of awareness. The study concludes that the wellbeing of single mothers in Mpanda Municipality is undermined by harmful cultural beliefs, exclusionary practices, and weak social support systems. It recommends strengthening follow-up mechanisms, staff training, and decentralization to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of social welfare services.

Keywords: *Cultural Perception, Community Practices, Social Welfare Officers, Single Motherhood.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistic
CBI	Community Based Intervention
CSMC	Council of Single mothers& their Children
CHWs	Community Health Workers
CEDAW	Conventional on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
EAC	East African Community
ECP	Early Child Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GF	Global Fund
ILO	International Labor Organization
KI	Key Informants
MHNSW	Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Social Welfare
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
SES	Social Economic Status
MMC	Mpanda Municipal Council
SW	Social Welfare
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
TDF	Theoretical Domains Framework
U.S	United States

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergence Fund
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Chapter Overview

This study, entitled "Assessing the Community Perceptions on Single Motherhood," intends to assess the cultural perception of single motherhood, examine the communities' practices on single motherhood, and investigate the support provided by social welfare officers around single motherhood. Furthermore, this chapter provides entail on the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the general objective, the specific objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the scope of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Historically, single motherhood was often stigmatized and viewed negatively. In many societies, single mothers were seen as deviating from the traditional family structure, which typically included a married couple and their children. This stigma was rooted in cultural, moral, and religious beliefs that emphasized the importance of marriage and the nuclear family (Worell, 1986). In the 20th century, particularly in the latter half, there was a gradual shift in perceptions. The rise of feminist movements and changes in social norms began to challenge traditional views on family structures.

Despite these changes, single mothers continued to face significant social and economic challenges (Goffman, 1963). In contemporary society, single motherhood is more widely accepted, although stigmatization still exists. Studies have shown that single mothers often face economic hardships and social discrimination. However,

there is also a growing recognition of the resilience and strength of single mothers, as well as the need for supportive policies and programs (Carroll, 2019).

Single motherhood is a global phenomenon that transcends cultural, economic, and geographic boundaries. According to the United Nations, approximately 101.3 million women worldwide are raising children alone, with an equal number living with their children and another 101.3 million women whose children live elsewhere. This statistic underscores the widespread nature of single motherhood and its significance in global family structures (UN Women, 2020) the United States exhibits one of the highest rates, with about 23% of children living in single-parent households, a figure more than three times the global average of 7% (World Population Review, 2025). Conversely, countries like China and India report lower rates, around 4% and 5%, respectively (World Population Review, 2025)

In a written statement for the 58th Session of the UN Commission on Social Development in 2019, MMM drew attention to the vulnerability of single mothers to poverty and homelessness. The statement emphasized the importance of affordable housing and social protection systems for single motherhood. Globally, nearly 8% of all households are headed by a single parent, and 84% of single-parent households are headed by mothers. This statistic highlights the significant role that single mothers play in raising children and managing households worldwide.

According to Oxfam, globally, extreme poverty rates are 4% higher for women than men, and this gender gap rises to 22% during women's reproductive years. In other words, mothers are already more likely to be poor than women without children (UN

Women Hub, 2023).

In the United State of America, single motherhood is often viewed with mixed feelings. According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in October 2021, 47% of U.S. adults say single women raising children on their own is generally a bad thing for society, an increase from 40% in 2018. This perception varies significantly across demographic lines, with higher disapproval among men and older adults. In 2023, there were about 15.09 million children living with a single mother in the United States Single mothers face significant economic challenges, with a 28% poverty rate. Most of single mothers are in the age of 30s to 40s, and about half of them have never been married. (Pew Research Center Survey, 2023).

In Canada, the perception of single motherhood is generally more accepting. Studies have shown that single mothers face challenges such as role strain, poverty, and discrimination, but there is also a strong emphasis on support and empowerment through community programs. In 2020, there were about 41,910 single mothers aged between 0 and 24 years living in Canada. The total number of single parent families in Canada reached 1.84 million in 2024 Single mothers in Canada often face economic hardships, but there are various support systems in place to help them. The USA has a higher number of single mothers and a higher poverty rate among single mothers compared to Canada (Gucciardi et al., 2004).

According to the UN Women Hub (2021) single motherhood in Cuba is often viewed with a mix of resilience and struggle. Single mothers face significant economic challenges, and the community perception is generally supportive but

acknowledges the hardships. The pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, as highlighted in a 2021 article by Natalia Favre. Further, it is noted that 29.4% of women aged 20-24 years old in Cuba were married or in a union before age 18. The adolescent birth rate is 1.3 per 1,000 women aged 15-19. In the Bahamas, single motherhood is often viewed with concern due to high rates of children born out of wedlock. There is a significant social stigma attached to single motherhood, and the community perception is often critical. A 2016 article in The Tribune discusses the societal challenges and the need for better parental responsibility. In the Bahamas, more than 60% of children are born out of wedlock. A survey in 2012 showed that at least 75% of Bahamian households are single-parent entities (Bahamas Population Survey Report, 2012).

According to the European Parliament (2020), single motherhood is often viewed with a mix of support and challenges. Single mothers face significant economic and social challenges, but there is also a growing recognition of their resilience and strength, single motherhood is often falsely stigmatized as consisting of only irresponsible teenagers, while in truth, 85% of all single parents in Europe are single mothers between the ages of 25 and 64. Furthermore, 7.8 million single-parent households in the European Union, accounting for 4% of total households. The share of single-parent households varies considerably between countries, with Sweden having the highest share at 34%, followed by Denmark at 29%, and Estonia at 28%.

Moreover, Susan & Salgado (2023) single motherhood in United Kingdom is often viewed with mixed feelings. There is a significant social stigma attached to single motherhood, but there is also a strong emphasis on support and empowerment

through community programs. Single motherhood has moved from being a relatively rare experience among children that grew up in the 1960s and 1970s to a social norm among those born in 2000 in 2023, there were over 2.7 million single-parent families in the UK, with the majority being lone-mother families, accounting for 84% of the total Single parents make up nearly a quarter of families with dependent children in the UK, with around 90% of single parents being women. In addition, the UK has a higher number of single mothers and a higher poverty rate among single mothers compared to Europe.

In Australia, single motherhood presents significant challenges, particularly in terms of financial stability and housing security. According to a report by the Council of Single Mothers & their Children (CSMC), 87% of single mothers are concerned about their long-term financial circumstances, with 56% living below the poverty line. Despite 78% of single mothers being in paid employment, many struggle to meet their general cost of living expenses. Housing is a major concern, with nearly half of the respondents not feeling confident about their long-term housing situation. Additionally, single mothers experience homelessness and marginal housing at almost four times the national average.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that there are 1.4 million jobless families in Australia, with 284,000 being one-parent families. Single mothers often face significant economic challenges, with many sustaining a family on less than $60,000 annually, which is below the median Australian income of $65,000. Family violence is also a significant issue, with 67% of single mother’s surveyed experiencing family violence. Overall, single motherhood in Australia is marked by

financial insecurity, housing challenges, and the need for better support systems to address these issues (Council of Single Mothers & their Children, 2024).

According to United Nations (2019), single motherhood in India is often viewed with a mix of resilience and struggle. Single mothers face significant economic challenges, and the community perception is generally supportive but acknowledges the hardships. According to the report released in, 4.5% of Indian households, or 13 million, are run by single mothers. The poverty rate of lone mother households in India is 38%, compared to 22.6% for dual-parent households. Single mothers in India often face significant social and economic challenges, including limited access to financial resources and social support.

According to the Housing and Population Census (2010) single motherhood in Malaysia is often viewed with significant social stigma. Single mothers face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, support, accommodation, and social services. The societal expectation is for women to be married, and single mothers are often pitied or ridiculed, accounted to 831,860 single mothers in Malaysia, accounting for 2.9% of the population. Single mothers in Malaysia face significant challenges, including economic hardships and social discrimination. India has a higher proportion of single-parent households compared to Malaysia, where single motherhood is less common but highly stigmatized.

In Africa especially Nigeria, single motherhood is often viewed with a mix of resilience and struggle. Single mothers face significant economic challenges, and the community perception is generally supportive but acknowledges the hardships. The

study examined the prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of single motherhood in Nigeria. According to their findings, single mothers constituted 9.5% of the population. Interestingly, contrary to global patterns, single mothers in Nigeria were found to be wealthier, more educated, and experienced less intimate partner violence (Uzoma, 2021). The prevalence of single motherhood varied significantly across different regions, ranging from 2.9% in the North-West to 20.3% in the South-South region. Economic resources and parental care significantly influenced the higher odds of stunting in single mother households.

According to the (Demographic & Health Survey of Ethiopia, 2023), single motherhood is often viewed with significant social stigma. Single mothers face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, support, accommodation, and social services. The study highlighted the challenges faced by single mothers in raising their children, including financial problems, emotional stress, and social isolation. More than one household in every four (26%) is female headed. The well-being of children in single-mother-headed families is often compromised due to the economic and social challenges faced by their mothers. Therefore, Nigeria has a higher proportion of single-parent households compared to Ethiopia, where single motherhood is less common but highly stigmatized.

In Botswana, single motherhood is often viewed with a mix of resilience and struggle. They face significant economic challenges, and the community perception is generally supportive but acknowledges the hardships. Single mothers in Botswana often face co-occurring poverty, unemployment, violence, and multiple life traumas. In 2019, 83.8% of births in Botswana were to single mothers (Molinga, 2021).

In Zimbabwe, single motherhood is often viewed with significant social stigma. Single mothers face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, support, accommodation, and social services. The societal expectation is for women to be married, and single mothers are often pitied or ridiculed. The level of single motherhood in Zimbabwe is 20%, this statistic highlights the challenges faced by single mothers in the country, including economic hardships and social discrimination. Botswana has a higher proportion of single-parent households compared to Zimbabwe, where single motherhood is less common but highly stigmatized (Mbanefo, 2013).

A study conducted by Mugo et al., (2018), single motherhood in South Sudan is often viewed with significant social stigma. Single mothers face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, support, accommodation, and social services. The societal expectation is for women to be married, and single mothers are often pitied or ridiculed. The barriers to accessing and utilizing maternal healthcare services in South Sudan are significant, with only 19% of births attended by skilled health personnel. The maternal mortality ratio in South Sudan is estimated at 1,150 per 100,000 live births, with a high rate of home deliveries (87%).

The prevalence of single motherhood is not well-documented, but the challenges faced by them are exacerbated by the country's fragile healthcare system and ongoing conflicts. In Uganda, single motherhood is often viewed with mixed feelings, there is a significant social stigma attached to single motherhood, but there is also a strong emphasis on support and empowerment through community programs. Single motherhood is increasing in Uganda, with neoliberal and capitalist

ideals, indigenous and western cultures exacerbating the problem. The number of single parents in Uganda has increased from 20% in 2020 to about 30% in 2023. Single mothers face significant economic challenges, including poverty and limited access to social support, Uganda has a higher proportion of single-parent households compared to South Sudan, where single motherhood is less common but highly stigmatized (Makerere University Researchers, 2023).

On the same note, Mkumbwa (2023) single motherhood in Tanzania is often viewed with a mix of resilience and struggle. Single mothers face significant economic challenges, and the community perception is generally supportive but acknowledges the hardships. Single mothers in Tanzania face socio-economic challenges in supporting their children's education, they often face economic hardships, including poverty and limited access to social support. The study highlights the economic, social, cultural, and psychological challenges faced by single mothers in Dodoma. Single motherhood is prevalent in Tanzania, with a significant number of households headed by single mothers.

According to the East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, single mothers in Dodoma face manifold challenges in supporting their adolescent children’s they often face economic hardships, including poverty and limited access to social support. The study found that the prevalence of single mothers increased from 19% in 2010 to 38% in 2016 (Shitindi & Lubawa, 2022). Moreover, Kumbwa (2023), Katavi was announced as a new region on 15 September 2017, it had the action plan to reduce teenage pregnancy. The plan aimed to reduce the rate to 20% by 2020. Despite the efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy in Tanzania. Katavi was

reported to have the highest rate of adolescent pregnancy among adolescents aged 15-19.

Katavi is a leading region in the country with 45% adolescent aged 15-19 and all these falls under single mothers and Katavi has also reported to have the lowest modern contraceptives prevalence rate of 18% in the country. It is due to this high rate of adolescent pregnancies therefore, lead Mpanda MC to be selected for this study. Katavi has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancies in the country, with 45% of adolescent girls experiencing pregnancy. This high rate of adolescent pregnancy contributes to the increasing number of single mothers in the region. The study highlights several factors influencing repeated pregnancies among unmarried adolescent mothers in Katavi, including inadequate sexuality knowledge, perceived barriers to contraceptive use, and social factors such as peer pressure and parent-child relationships (Mpimbi, 2022).

Acknowledging the remarkable efforts made by the government of Tanzania to support single mothers through various initiatives, ongoing challenges persist. Continuous evaluation and enhancement of these programs are essential to effectively address the needs of single motherhood and improve their socio-economic well-being. Despite these efforts, single mothers in Tanzania continue to face significant challenges. A study focusing on the Kigamboni District highlighted the impact of single parenting on the welfare of children, parents, and the community at large, indicating a steady rise in single parenting and its associated challenges. Despite the efforts made by the government, the problem still exists, due to the increasing number of single mothers in our country, especially in the Katavi region

and this is the motive behind for this study with the aim of assessing the community perception on single motherhood in the entire region (The National Child Protection Guidelines, 2024).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Ideally, many societies had traditional family structures where children were raised by both parents, meaning a father and a mother. In many cultures, the family was the foundation of society, and gender roles were clearly defined. The father was typically the primary breadwinner, while the mother was responsible for raising the children and managing household duties (Shitindi & Lubawa, 2022). Before the rise of single motherhood in Tanzania, traditional family structures were more prevalent, with extended families playing a significant role in child-rearing. The community often provided support, and there was a strong emphasis on marriage and family unity. However, societal changes, economic pressures, and evolving cultural norms have contributed to an increase in single-parent households.

In the past, single motherhood was less common and often stigmatized. Women who found themselves raising children alone due to divorce, separation, or the loss of a partner faced significant social and economic challenges. The support systems available today, such as legal protections and community organizations, were not as developed, making it more difficult for single mothers to navigate their circumstances (Mkumbwa, 2023). Single motherhood is often viewed with a mix of support and challenges. While some communities are supportive and recognize the resilience and strength of single mothers, others may attach social stigma and discrimination. Single mothers often face significant economic and social challenges,

including poverty, limited access to social support, and discrimination in various aspects of life.

Single mothers often face significant economic hardships, including poverty and limited access to employment. For example, in the United States, 28% of single mothers live below the poverty line. Children of single mothers may face educational and developmental challenges. In Africa, the prevalence of single motherhood has been increasing, with significant variations across regions. Factors contributing to this increase include socio-economic challenges, cultural norms, migration, and changes in family structures. According to data from the Demographic and Health Surveys, over 22% of women aged 20-49 years in Africa are unmarried mothers. In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 32% of children live with a single mother. In Kenya, around 25% of households are headed by single mothers. South Africa and Botswana have some of the highest rates, with 40-50% of households headed by single mothers.

In Tanzania, the prevalence of single motherhood has been increasing, particularly in certain region such as Dodoma 35.4%, Singida 32%, 25% Rufiji district (Coast Region) and Katavi 45% has been increasing over the years and they face various have reported higher rates of single motherhood due to socio-economic challenges and cultural factors. According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Katavi region approximately 45% of adolescents aged 15-19 years in Katavi are single mothers. Additionally, it is estimated that 23% of girls aged 15-19 years begin childbearing**,** and 39% of adolescent girls by 18 years old are either already mothers or pregnant. By focusing on Mpanda Municipal Council, this study aims to provide

valuable insights into the specific challenges and support systems for single mothers in a context that is underrepresented in existing literature. The unique demographic characteristics and high prevalence of single motherhood in Katavi make it a critical area for research.

The nation may face a social and economic burden due to the increase in single mothers; the nation may also lack social development due to the challenges faced by single mothers and their children, including poor education and health. In the US 28% of single mothers live below the poverty line. Over 22% of women aged 20-49 years in Africa are single mothers (MaishaHuru, 2024). The rationale behind single motherhood in Tanzania is influenced by various socio-economic and cultural factors. Single motherhood can arise from several circumstances, including divorce, separation, the death of a partner, and births to unmarried women.

Additionally, school pregnancies contribute to the prevalence of single motherhood. Single mothers in Tanzania face numerous challenges, including economic hardships, social stigma, and limited access to resources. These challenges can impact their ability to provide for their children and maintain a stable household. Efforts to support single mothers in Tanzania include initiatives by both governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide financial assistance, education, and social support. These efforts aim to empower single mothers and improve their quality of life (Shitindi & Lubawa, 2022).

Existing studies in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa have generally explored single motherhood from broad national or regional perspectives, often emphasizing

statistical trends, economic implications, or cultural attitudes toward single mothers. However, there is limited research that provides an in-depth understanding of the localized experiences and coping strategies of single mothers at the community level, particularly in regions such as Katavi, where the rates of single motherhood are among the highest in the country. This study aims to fill this research gap by examining the unique challenges, socio-economic conditions, and available support systems for single mothers in Mpanda Municipality. By doing so, it seeks to generate localized insights that can inform policymakers, community leaders, and development partners in designing effective, context-specific interventions to improve the well-being of single mothers and their children.

1.4 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to Assess Community Perceptions on Single Motherhood Parenting in Mpanda Municipal Council.

1.5 Specific Objectives

i. To assess the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council
ii. To examine the community practices on single motherhood parenting at Mpanda municipal council.
iii. To investigate the support provided by social welfare officers for single Mothers in Mpanda municipal council.

1.6 Research Question

i. What are the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council?

ii. What are communities' practices on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council?
iii. What is the support provided by social welfare officers for single Motherhood in Mpanda municipal council?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The community's perception of single mothers has significant implications for policymakers, parliamentarians, academicians, and practitioners/advocates, as it influences their work, decisions, and approaches to addressing issues faced by single mothers. The significance for each group is as follows: - Community perceptions guide the political and legislative priorities of policymakers, shaping their approach to designing inclusive policies for single mothers. Community perceptions shape the strategies and programs implemented by social workers, NGOs, and advocates working directly with single mothers. Practitioners tailor interventions (for example, counseling, legal aid, or housing assistance) based on how single mothers are perceived and the challenges they face. Stigma often creates barriers to accessing these services, requiring advocates to address social biases in their work (Smith, 2020).

This study is significant to practitioners like social welfare officers because it provides crucial insights into the potential barriers single motherhood parenting face in accessing healthcare for their children, allowing them to identify specific needs and tailor support services accordingly like navigating complex healthcare systems, providing financial assistance and advocating for policy changes to improve access for single mother's families and helps them understand community biases and

challenges faced by single motherhood.

This study would be significant to policymakers as it provides valuable insights into the societal challenges faced by single mothers, guiding the formulation of inclusive and supportive policies. By understanding community perceptions, policymakers can develop targeted interventions that address social stigma, economic hardships, and access to essential services for single mothers and their children. The findings can inform policies on social welfare, education, and employment, ensuring that single mothers receive adequate support to improve their livelihoods. Additionally, this study can help shape awareness campaigns and legislative measures aimed at promoting gender equality and reducing discrimination. By incorporating evidence-based recommendations, policymakers can foster a more inclusive society where single mothers are empowered to contribute meaningfully to their communities without facing undue prejudice or hardship.

The significance of this study on community's perception of single motherhood parenting lies in its potential to provide valuable insights for researchers. By exploring the cultural, social, and economic factors that shape perceptions of single motherhood, this research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and support systems available to single mothers. It can also highlight the impact of societal attitudes on the well-being and development of children raised by single mothers. Furthermore, the findings can inform policy makers, social workers, and community leaders in designing targeted interventions and support programs that address the unique needs of single mothers, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment for all families.

1.8 Scope of the Study

Globalization, urbanization, and changing family structures are gradually altering community perceptions of single mothers, often making them more positive or neutral. The study is limited to Mpanda municipal council located in Katavi region of Tanzania with the purpose of assessing the Community practices on single motherhood aging from 18- 35 years old. The scope of these perceptions can inform policy development, advocacy work, and community initiatives aimed at empowering single mothers and reducing stigma. Activism and advocacy have led to greater acceptance and understanding in many parts of the world.

The scope of community perception of single mothers is vast and varies significantly across different cultures, societies, and socioeconomic contexts. It encompasses attitudes, stereotypes, and support structures related to single mothers and their roles in the family and society. Media plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions, either reinforcing negative stereotypes, for example ("welfare queens") or highlighting stories of success and resilience. Communities that provide robust social safety nets, such as childcare, healthcare, and financial aid, may foster more positive perceptions of single mothers

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

The literature review is organized into several sections. The first section provides an overview of the key concepts and definitions related to community perception on single motherhood. The subsequent sections delve into the major themes and findings from the literature, followed by a discussion of the gaps and future directions. The final section offers a conclusion and summarizes the key takeaways from the review.

2.2 Conceptualization of the Key Terms

To guarantee clarity, consistency, and a common understanding between readers and researchers, conceptualisation of important terminology entails precisely describing the main concepts utilised in a study (Neuman, 2014). Conceptualisation involves giving clear definitions for concepts like "single motherhood," "cultural perceptions," "community practices," and "social welfare support" to evaluate cultural perceptions and support for single motherhood parenting. For example, single motherhood can be defined as a parenting scenario in which a mother raises a kid alone, without the father's active participation, because of divorce, separation, death, or childbirth that occurs outside of marriage (Amato, 2000).

A community's common views on social roles and behaviours, such as how single mothers are perceived, are referred to as cultural perceptions (Hofstede, 2001). According to Giddens (2006), community practices are the visible customs, actions, and reactions influenced by social norms that affect the support or treatment of

single mothers. The term "social welfare support" is official aid given by public servants or the government with the goal of enhancing the welfare of vulnerable populations, such as single mothers, by offering services including financial aid, legal protection, and counselling (UNRISD, 2010). A clear theoretical and empirical framework aids in the proper conceptualisation of the study.

2.2.1 Cultural Perception

Cultural perception refers to how different culture's view, interpret, and respond to single mothers within their societies. This includes social attitudes, norms and expectations, support systems, media representations, historical context and gender roles (Michael et al., 2023). In this study the cultural perception is a negative view that society holds towards the group of single mothers. They are often seen as individuals lacking morals, are looked down upon, and are marginalized. Society tends to view them as a group that does not contribute significantly to the community.

2.2.2 Community Practices

Community practices refer to the shared activities, traditions, customs, and behaviors that are commonly observed and followed by members of a community. These practices can include a wide range of activities such as cultural traditions, celebrations, rituals, and ceremonies that are unique to a particular community (Bain et al., 2022). Social norms accepted behaviors and expectations within the community, such as greetings, dress codes, and etiquette. Economic activities, common ways of earning a living, such as farming, fishing, or trading. Health practices, traditional methods of healthcare, including herbal remedies and

community health initiatives. Educational practices, ways of teaching and learning that are specific to the community, include informal education and apprenticeship, religious practices, worship, prayer, and other religious activities that are central to the community's spiritual life.

Cultural practices often contribute significantly to the perception of single motherhood, especially in communities where traditional customs are deeply ingrained (Bain et al., 2022). In the context of this study, cultural practices are a critical factor in the prevalence of negative perception on single motherhood, especially in communities where traditional customs heavily influence social behavior. Understanding the impact of these practices is essential for assessing the effectiveness of community-based interventions supported by social welfare officers advocating community awareness and inclusivity of these single motherhoods. Through education, advocacy, and legal support, community-based interventions can help to reshape cultural norms, promoting the well-being and empowerment of single motherhood in Mpanda municipal council.

2.2.3 Social Welfare Officers

Social welfare officers are those professionals who implement the programs and services designed to meet the need of the people. These needs include economic and social well-being, health education and quality of life (Diziegielewiski, 2016). In Tanzania, social welfare officers include professional social workers, non – professional (PSWs) and all that work within social welfare agencies/institutions to offer support services such as childcare workers in childcare institutions for the welfare and well-being of those they serve (Ministry of Health Nutrition and Social

Welfare, 2012). In the context of this work, social welfare officers mean the officers in the public sector/ government who are professionally trained in Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, Social Protection, Guidance and Counseling, Theology, Divinity, Child Protection, Social Policy, Early Childhood Development, Social Gerontology or any other professions related to social welfare from government-recognized college or university.

2.2.4 Single Motherhood

Single motherhood refers to the condition of a mother living alone with her children, without a partner, due to various reasons such as divorce, separation, the death of a partner, or an intentional decision to raise children independently (Smith, 2020). nurturing, care, and the continuation of family lineage single motherhood Eva et al., 2023) noted that motherhood is often defined as the condition of being a mother, which includes the biological, emotional, and social aspects of raising children. It involves providing care, support, and guidance to children from infancy through adulthood. As per this study, motherhood is highly valued and respected in the community and is often associated with nurturing, care, and the continuation of family lineage.

Mothers are seen as the backbone of the family, responsible for the upbringing and moral development of children traditionally, mothers are expected to fulfill roles as caregivers and homemakers. They are often responsible for household duties and ensuring the well-being of their children and family members. Society often places high expectations on mothers to uphold cultural values and norms. Mothers are expected to demonstrate strength, resilience, and dedication to their families. In this

study single motherhood are those who aged 19 to 35.

2.3 Theoretical Review

A theoretical review is the process of looking at and evaluating current theories that are pertinent to a certain research issue to provide a conceptual framework that directs the design, interpretation, and analysis of the study (Creswell, 2014). Finding, analysing, and evaluating accepted ideas that explain the connections between the variables or phenomena being studied are all part of it. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is one theory that helps explain how many environmental systems (family, community, and policy) affect single mother' experiences in research concerning single parenting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The theory can be used to understand how cultural norms shape community perceptions of gender and parenting roles (Eagly, 1987). A robust theoretical review not only grounds the research in scholarly work but also highlights gaps, informs hypothesis formulation, and strengthens the study's academic foundation. It ensures that the research is connected to broader intellectual traditions and provides a basis for comparing findings with prior knowledge. Thus, the selected theory for informing this study entitled as "Assessing the Community perception on Single Motherhood" is Ecological Systems Theory.

2.3.1 Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems Theory was founded by Urie Bronfenbrenner, he was a Russian-born American psychologist born on April 29, 1917, and died September 25, 2005. The theory posits that an individual's development is influenced by various

interconnected environmental systems, ranging from immediate surroundings like family (microsystem) to broader societal structures like culture (microsystem). The theory is relevant to studying community perceptions of single motherhood as it helps analyze how different environmental factors, such as family dynamics, social services, cultural norms, and societal attitudes, interact and impact the experiences and perceptions of single mothers. The key arguments of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory are highly relevant to studying community perceptions of single motherhood. By examining the different environmental systems that influence an individual's development, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping community attitudes towards single mothers.

For instance, the microsystem helps analyze the immediate environment of single mothers, such as family and friends, while the mesosystem looks at interactions between these environments, like the relationship between a single mother's work and her child's school. The exosystem considers external factors like social services and community support, and the macrosystem explores broader cultural norms and societal attitudes. Finally, the chronosystem provides a historical perspective on how these perceptions have evolved over time. By applying this theory, researchers can identify the various influences on community perceptions and develop more effective support systems and policies for single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

2.3.1.1 Relevancy of the Theory

The study shows how different layers of the ecological system ranging from immediate family and social networks to broader societal and cultural contexts shape perceptions and experiences of single motherhood. The goal is to foster a deeper

understanding and appreciation of the complexities faced by single mothers, and to identify ways in which we can support and empower. The study of cultural perception is highly relevant to Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the complex interactions between individuals and their environments.

Bronfenbrenner's theory is structured around five interconnected systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Each of these systems plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's development and behavior. Cultural perceptions are deeply embedded within the macrosystem, which encompasses the broader cultural and societal contexts that influence individuals. These cultural norms, values, and beliefs shape how communities perceive and respond to various social phenomena, including single motherhood. For instance, in some cultures, single motherhood may be stigmatized, leading to social exclusion and limited support for single mothers.

In contrast, other cultures may have more inclusive and supportive attitudes, providing better social and economic support for single mothers. The relevance of cultural perception to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory lies in the understanding that cultural contexts (macrosystem) interact with other systems to influence individual experiences and outcomes. For example, the support systems available to single mothers within their immediate environment (microsystem) and the interactions between these support systems (mesosystem) are influenced by the broader cultural attitudes and policies (macrosystem). This interconnectedness highlights the importance of considering cultural perceptions when examining the

experiences and challenges faced by single mothers. Therefore, cultural perceptions are integral to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as they shape the macrosystem, which in turn influences the other systems and the overall development and well-being of individuals. Understanding these cultural contexts is essential for developing effective interventions and support systems for single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

This theory is particularly relevant when examining community practices on single motherhood, as it highlights the complex interactions between individuals and their environments. Here are the key arguments of Bronfenbrenner's theory Microsystem, this is the immediate environment in which an individual interacts, such as family, friends, and community. For single mothers, the microsystem includes their children, extended family, and close social networks. Community practices that provide direct support, such as childcare services, parenting groups, and local support networks, play a crucial role in the daily lives of single mothers.

Mesosystem**,** this refers to the interactions between different microsystems. For example, the relationship between a single mother's workplace and her child's school can significantly impact her ability to balance work and parenting responsibilities. Community practices that facilitate communication and cooperation between these systems, such as employer-supported childcare or flexible work hours, can greatly benefit single mothers. Exosystem**,** this includes external environmental settings that indirectly affect an individual, such as a parent's workplace or community health services. Policies and practices at the community level, such as access to affordable healthcare, housing, and social services, can have a profound impact on the well-

being of single mothers and their children. Macrosystem**,** this encompasses the broader cultural and societal context, including norms, values, and laws. Cultural perceptions of single motherhood, societal attitudes, and legal frameworks all influence how single mothers are treated and supported within their communities.

Community practices that promote inclusivity and challenge stigmatization can help create a more supportive environment for single mothers. Chronosystem**,** this involves the dimension of time, including life transitions and historical events. Changes in societal attitudes towards single motherhood over time, as well as significant life events such as divorce or the birth of a child, can affect the experiences of single mothers. Community practices that adapt to these changes and provide ongoing support are essential for the long-term well-being of single mothers. However, by applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to the study of community practices on single motherhood, we can better understand the multifaceted influences that shape the experiences of single mothers. This approach highlights the importance of considering the interactions between different environmental systems and the need for comprehensive community support to address the unique challenges faced by single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

This theory is particularly relevant when examining the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers, as it highlights the complex interactions between individuals and their environments. According to Bronfenbrenner’s theory arguments of and their relevance to the study. Social welfare officers play a crucial role in the microsystem by providing direct support and resources to single mothers, such as counseling, financial assistance, and access to childcare services. For

example, the relationship between a single mother's workplace and her child's school can significantly impact her ability to balance work and parenting responsibilities. Social welfare officers can facilitate communication and cooperation between these systems, such as coordinating with employers to provide flexible work hours or with schools to offer after-school programs.

Policies and practices at the community level, such as access to affordable healthcare, housing, and social services, can have a profound impact on the well-being of single mothers and their children. Social welfare officers advocate for and help single mothers navigate these systems to ensure they receive the necessary support. This encompasses the broader cultural and societal context, including norms, values, and laws. Cultural perceptions of single motherhood, societal attitudes, and legal frameworks all influence how single mothers are treated and supported within their communities. Social welfare officers work within this context to promote inclusivity and challenge stigmatization, helping to create a more supportive environment for single mothers.

In chronosystem**,** changes in societal attitudes towards single motherhood over time, as well as significant life events such as divorce or the birth of a child, can affect the experiences of single mothers. Social welfare officers provide ongoing support and adapt their services to meet the evolving needs of single mothers throughout these transitions, however by applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to the study of the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers, we can better understand the multifaceted influences that shape the experiences of single mothers. This approach highlights the importance of considering the interactions

between different environmental systems and the need for comprehensive community support to address the unique challenges faced by single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how various environmental systems interact to influence an individual's development.

One of its major strengths is its holistic nature it recognizes that people are shaped by multiple layers of influence, from immediate family and community interactions to broader cultural and societal structures. This makes the theory highly relevant for studying single motherhood, as it allows for the exploration of how family dynamics, community support, government policies, and cultural beliefs collectively impact single mothers' experiences. The theory also aligns closely with the work of social welfare officers, who operate across these systems to provide support at both individual and institutional levels. Its inclusion of the macrosystem ensures that cultural norms and values are considered, which is vital in understanding community perceptions of single motherhood in Tanzania.

However, the theory is not without weaknesses. It is often criticized for being too broad and difficult to measure empirically, as it identifies many influences without specifying how they interact or which have the greatest effect. It also gives limited attention to individual agency, power dynamics, and gender inequality factors that are particularly relevant in studies of single mothers. Despite these limitations, the theory remains appropriate for this study because it provides a multidimensional perspective that captures the complex social, economic, and cultural factors shaping single mothers' lives. Its comprehensive structure helps explain how different

systems influence perceptions, challenges, and support mechanisms for single mothers in Tanzania, making it a valuable tool for guiding both analysis and policy recommendations.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

A systematic analysis of previous research studies based on seen and measurable phenomena using information gathered through surveys, interviews, experiments, and other scientific approaches is known as an empirical literature review (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). To detect trends, gaps, and connections pertinent to the current research issue, it entails examining the results of earlier empirical studies. An empirical examination of the literature on single motherhood can look at how different communities have reacted to single mother, the kinds of support that social welfare officer's offer, or the cultural beliefs that shape parenting roles.

In contrast to theoretical reviews, which concentrate on theoretical concepts and models, empirical reviews are based on actual data and findings, offering proof to back up or refute presumptions and aiding in the improvement of the study problem and approach (Creswell, 2014). To determine what is known, what is still unknown, and how the current study advances knowledge, this kind of evaluation is crucial. This section of empirical literature review is guided by three specific objectives which are the cultural perception on single motherhood, examining the community' practices on single motherhood, to investigate the support provided by social welfare officers around single motherhood. The reasons why conducting this study at Mpanda mu1nicipal council is due to the increases number of single motherhood, also explores various studies conducted between 2020 and 2024, examining how

single motherhood being perceived in different perspectives in different backgrounds as in Social Stigma and Challenges; Single mothers often face social stigma and discrimination, which can lead to psychological distress.

Economic and Relational Difficulties**;** Single mothers tend to experience more economic challenges compared to single fathers, who face more caregiving difficulties. Impact on Children: Single motherhood can significantly impact children's health, academic performance, and psychosocial development. These challenges are often exacerbated by the discrimination and stigma faced by single parents. Socio-Economic Factors: The prevalence of single motherhood is higher among women from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This is influenced by factors such as access to family planning, societal norms regarding family formation, and economic inequality and in cultural differences: The experiences of single mothers vary across cultures, while in more traditional societies, single mothers face greater challenges (Mudau et al., 2018).

2.4.1 Cultural Perception of Single Motherhood

The study reveals that single parents generally have more negative experiences compared to coupled parents in most cultures worldwide. Economic challenges are a common issue globally, while relational difficulties are more prevalent in collectivistic cultures, the authors also note differences in the types of challenges faced by single mothers versus single fathers, with mothers encountering more economic hardships and fathers facing more caregiving difficulties in more feministic cultures, such as Sweden, there is less discrepancy between genders because the state provides equal support and opportunities for both single mothers

and fathers. The study asserts that many problems faced by single parents are not due to inherent limitations but rather discrimination and stigma rooted in their respective communities (Jain & Mahmoodi, 2022).

Further, Baghel & Pradhan (2019) discusses various aspects of single motherhood, including cultural perceptions. The authors highlight that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma and discrimination. In many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being irresponsible or unable to provide a stable environment for their children. The review emphasizes the importance of social support for single mothers. Cultural perceptions can influence the level of support single mothers receive from their communities. This study seek to assess the perception of community member toward the single mother parenthood as most of study has focused on the cultural impact lather the their perception.

In cultures where single motherhood is stigmatized, they have limited access to social support networks. The study discusses how cultural perceptions on single motherhood can impact the children of single mothers. Children may face bullying, social isolation, and discrimination due to their family structure, which can affect their academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. The authors note that cultural perceptions of single motherhood vary widely across different regions and societies. In some cultures, single mothers may receive more acceptance and support, while in others, they may face greater challenges and stigma. In the study entitled as “Examines the impact of changes in family structure on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of children” by Amato, the primary focus of the

study is on the differences between children raised in two-parent households versus single-parent households, He also touches on cultural perceptions of single motherhood highlighting that single motherhood is often associated with negative cultural perceptions. In many societies, single mothers face stigma and are perceived as being less capable of providing a stable and nurturing environment for their children compared to two-parent households.

The study shows that children raised in single-parent households are more likely to experience cognitive, social, and emotional challenges, these challenges are partly attributed to the cultural stigma and lack of social support that single mothers often face. He further discusses how economic and social factors, influenced by cultural perceptions, play a significant role in the well-being of single mothers and their children. Single mothers often have lower incomes and less access to resources, which can exacerbate the challenges they face. The study suggests that policies aimed at supporting single mothers and reducing cultural stigma can have a positive impact on the well-being of both mothers and their children. Amato emphasizes the need for interventions that address the broader cultural and social context in which single motherhood (Amato, 2005).

Moreover, Casey (2012) discusses the economic challenges faced by single parents in the United States, with a particular focus on single mothers**,** despite being employed, many single mothers in the U.S continue to live in poverty. This economic struggle is often exacerbated by cultural perceptions that single mothers are less capable of providing for their families. The report discusses the social stigma attached to single motherhood. Single mothers are often unfairly blamed for their

circumstances and are perceived as being irresponsible or dependent on welfare. This stigma can lead to discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment and housing. The researcher emphasizes the need for policies that address the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. He argues that changing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems can help improve the lives of single mothers and their children. The report includes a comparative analysis of single motherhood in the U.S. and other high-income countries. Works more hours but still have higher poverty rates compared to their counterparts in other countries. This disparity is partly due to cultural attitudes and the lack of supportive policies in the U.S.

Furthermore, Calderwood (2010) discusses the impact of living apart from natural fathers on children, highlighting the association with poverty and negative outcomes. The author emphasizes that single mothers often face significant economic challenges, which can lead to poverty. This economic hardship is partly influenced by cultural perceptions that single mothers are less capable of providing for their families compared to two-parent households. The study discusses the social stigma attached to single motherhood.

Single mothers are often perceived negatively and face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment and housing. This stigma can exacerbate the challenges they face and impact on their overall well-being. These outcomes are influenced by the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers, which are shaped by cultural perceptions. The study suggests that addressing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems for single mothers can help

mitigate the negative outcomes for both mothers and their children. He emphasizes the need for policies that support single-parent families and reduce the stigma associated with single motherhood.

Worth noting, Balamurugan (2024) highlights that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma and discrimination. In many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain. The review discusses how cultural perceptions influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact their emotional and social well-being.

Single mothers often endure a great deal of emotional strain due to these challenges. These challenges are often exacerbated by the cultural stigma and lack of support faced by single mothers. The study also explores the coping mechanisms employed by single mothers to deal with the challenges they face. These include relying on religious convictions, support networks, and social networks. The review suggests that collaboration between government and non-government organizations is necessary to aid and improve the overall quality of life for single mothers. Addressing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems can help mitigate the negative impact on single mothers and their children.

The study conducted by Mudau et al., (2018), discusses relational difficulties in collectivistic cultures, which can significantly impact the cultural perception of

single motherhood. The authors highlight that single mothers in collectivistic cultures often face significant cultural stigma. In these societies, traditional family structures are highly valued, and single motherhood is often viewed negatively. This stigma can lead to social isolation and discrimination against single mothers. The study emphasizes that single mothers in collectivistic cultures may have limited access to social support networks.

The strong emphasis on family unity and traditional roles can result in single mothers being marginalized and receiving less support from their communities. They may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to societal pressures and lack of acceptance. The authors suggest that addressing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems for single mothers in collectivistic cultures can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being. They emphasize the need for policies that promote inclusiveness and support for single-parent families.

Additionally, Barber (2003) discusses the cultural perception of single motherhood within feministic cultures, with a particular focus on state support and opportunities for single parents. He highlights that in feministic cultures, such as Sweden, there is a smaller discrepancy between genders. The state creates equal support and opportunities for both single mothers and fathers. This includes access to childcare, parental leave, and financial assistance, which helps to mitigate the challenges faced by single parents. The study notes that feministic cultures tend to have a more progressive view of single motherhood. Single mothers are less likely to face social stigma and discrimination compared to more traditional cultures. This positive

cultural perception is supported by state policies that promote gender equality and support for all parents. Barber discusses how the supportive environment in feministic cultures positively impacts the well-being of single mothers and their children. Access to resources and social support helps single mothers to better manage their responsibilities and reduces the stress associated with single parenthood. The study suggests that other countries can learn from the policies and cultural attitudes of feministic cultures. Implementing similar support systems and promoting gender equality can help improve the lives of single mothers and their children in other cultural contexts.

Therefore, to explore the impact of single parenthood on children's health and development, with a focus on cultural perceptions in many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The study discusses how cultural perceptions of single motherhood can impact children's health and development.

Children of single mothers may face challenges such as lower academic performance, behavioral issues, and emotional difficulties due to the stigma and lack of support their mothers' experience. Cultural perceptions influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children. Through addressing and promoting inclusivity and support for single-parent families' and providing better support systems for single mothers can help

cultural perceptions mitigate the positive impact on their well-being and their children's development.

2.4.2 Community Practices on Single Motherhood

According to Shitindi & Lubawa (2022) the community practices Single Motherhood on different perceptive, on economic challenges, social and cultural challenge and psychological challenge Single mothers faced significant economic challenges, including lack of sufficient financial resources to support their children. The study highlighted the need for economic empowerment programs to help single mothers become financially independent. The authors discussed the social stigma and cultural practices that negatively impacted single mothers. These practices included discrimination and exclusion from community activities, as well as cultural norms that deprived single mothers of property and support. Single mothers experienced psychological stress due to the pressure of raising children alone without adequate support. The study emphasized the importance of providing psychological support and counseling services to help single mothers cope with these challenges.

Further, Sinha & Ram (2018) single mothers often face significant cultural stigma. In many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The study discusses how cultural practices and perceptions of single motherhood can impact children's health and development. Children of single mothers may face challenges such as lower academic performance, behavioral

issues, and emotional difficulties due to the stigma and lack of support their mothers' experience. They emphasize that cultural practices influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children. The authors suggest that addressing cultural practices and providing better support systems for single mothers can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being and their children's development. They emphasize the need for policies that promote inclusiveness and support for single-parent families.

Further still, Mudau et al., (2018) discusses the relational difficulties in collectivistic cultures and how these difficulties impact single motherhood. The authors highlight that single mothers in collectivistic cultures often face significant cultural stigma. In these societies, traditional family structures are highly valued, and single motherhood is often viewed negatively. This stigma can lead to social isolation and discrimination against single mothers. The study emphasizes that single mothers in collectivistic cultures may have limited access to social support networks.

The strong emphasis on family unity and traditional roles can result in single mothers being marginalized and receiving less support from their communities, discuss how the cultural stigma and lack of social support can negatively impact the well-being of single mothers. They may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to societal pressures and lack of acceptance. The authors suggest that addressing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems for single mothers in collectivistic cultures can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being. They emphasize the need for policies that promote inclusiveness and support

for single-parent families.

However, Balamurugan (2024) highlights that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma and discrimination. In many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The review discusses how cultural practices influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children.

The children of single mothers are more likely to struggle with issues such as alcoholism, tobacco use, delinquency, hazardous sexual behavior, and even suicidal thoughts. These challenges are often exacerbated by the cultural stigma and lack of support faced by single mothers. The study also explores the coping mechanisms employed by single mothers to deal with the challenges they face. These include relying on religious convictions, support networks, and social networks. The review suggests that collaboration between government and non-government organizations is necessary to aid and improve the overall quality of life for single mothers. Addressing cultural practices and providing better support systems can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being and their children's development.

Moreover, Calderwood (2010) discusses the impact of living apart from natural fathers on children, highlighting the association with poverty and negative outcomes. Here are some key points she addresses regarding cultural perceptions of single

motherhood. Calderwood emphasizes that single mothers often face significant economic challenges, which can lead to poverty. This economic hardship is partly influenced by cultural perceptions that single mothers are less capable of providing for their families compared to two-parent households. The study discusses the social stigma attached to single motherhood. Single mothers are often perceived negatively and face discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment and housing. This stigma can exacerbate the challenges they face and impact on their overall well-being.

Calderwood highlights that children living apart from their natural fathers are more likely to experience negative outcomes, such as behavioral problems and lower academic achievement. These outcomes are influenced by the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers, which are shaped by cultural perceptions. The study suggests that addressing cultural perceptions and providing better support systems for single mothers can help mitigate the negative outcomes for both mothers and their children. Calderwood emphasizes the need for policies that support single-parent families and reduce the stigma associated with single motherhood.

The study undertaken by Casey (2012) discusses the economic challenges faced by single parents in the United States, with a particular focus on single mothers. The author highlights that despite being employed, many single mothers in the U.S continue to live in poverty. This economic struggle is often exacerbated by cultural practices and perceptions that single mothers are less capable of providing for their families. The report discusses the social stigma attached to single motherhood. Single mothers are often unfairly blamed for their circumstances and are perceived

as being irresponsible or dependent on welfare. This stigma can lead to discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment and housing. Emphasizes the need for policies that address the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. He argues that changing cultural practices and providing better support systems can help improve the lives of single mothers and their children. The report includes a comparative analysis of single motherhood in the U.S and other high-income countries. He points out that single mothers in the U.S work more hours but still have higher poverty rates compared to their counterparts in other countries. This disparity is partly due to cultural attitudes and the lack of supportive policies in the U.S.

Fancy (2020) discusses the challenges faced by single parents, particularly single mothers, in contemporary society. Fancy highlights that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma. In many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The paper discusses how cultural practices influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children.

Fancy notes that children of single mothers are more likely to struggle with issues such as lower academic performance, behavioral problems, and emotional difficulties. These challenges are often exacerbated by the cultural stigma and lack of support faced by single mothers. The study suggests that addressing cultural

practices and providing better support systems for single mothers can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being and their children's development. Fancy emphasizes the need for policies that promote inclusivity and support for single-parent families.

Maitri & Mahmoodi (2022) explores the experiences and consequences of single parenting, with a focus on single motherhood. They highlight that single mothers face numerous challenges, including financial difficulties, health issues, and social stigma. These challenges are more pronounced compared to those faced by coupled parents. The study emphasizes that cultural and social factors significantly shape the experiences of single mothers. In collectivistic cultures, single mothers often face relational difficulties and social isolation due to the strong emphasis on traditional family structures. Single mothers are more likely to encounter economic challenges compared to single fathers.

This is partly due to societal expectations and gender roles that place a greater financial burden on mothers. The study discusses how single parenthood can impact children's health, academic performance, and psychosocial development. Children of single mothers may face additional challenges due to the stigma and lack of support from their mothers' experience. The authors call for further cross-cultural studies to better understand the experiences of single mothers and their impact on children. They emphasize the importance of developing interventions to support single-parent families and manage psychological distress. Amato (2005) examines the impact of changes in family structure on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of children. He highlights that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma. In

many societies, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The study discusses how cultural practices influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers.

The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children. He further notes that children of single mothers are more likely to experience cognitive, social, and emotional challenges. These challenges are often exacerbated by the cultural stigma and lack of support faced by single mothers. The study suggests that addressing cultural practices and providing better support systems for single mothers can help mitigate the negative impact on their well-being and their children's development. Amato emphasizes the need for policies that promote inclusivity and support for single-parent families.

However, in Tanzania, with a focus on cultural practices different literatures have highlight that single mothers often face significant cultural stigma. In many communities, single motherhood is viewed negatively, and single mothers are often perceived as being less capable of providing a stable environment for their children. This stigma can lead to social isolation and emotional strain for single mothers. The study discusses how cultural practices influence the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The lack of financial resources, education, and social support can negatively impact on their well-being and that of their children. Cultural practices that stigmatize and deprive single women of property can hinder their ability to support their adolescent children. Note that children of single mothers are

more likely to struggle with issues such as lower academic performance, behavioral problems, and emotional difficulties. These challenges are often exacerbated by the cultural stigma and lack of support faced by single mothers. Therefore, social welfare officers have a role to provide training to the community on the rights of single mothers to live, be respected, own land and other property, and be supported.

2.4.3 Support Provided by Social Welfare Officers for Single Mothers

Mkumbwa (2023) highlights the crucial role that social welfare officers play in supporting single mothers. They provide guidance, resources, and emotional support to help single mothers navigate the challenges of raising children alone. Assist single mothers in accessing financial aid and employment opportunities. This support is essential in helping single mothers meet the educational needs of their children. The study emphasizes the efforts of social welfare officers in addressing the social stigma faced by single mothers. They work to educate the community and promote more inclusive and supportive attitudes towards single mothers and are involved in community training programs that aim to raise awareness about the rights of single mothers and the importance of supporting them. These programs help to create a more supportive environment for single mothers and their children.

Furthermore, Fancy (2020) emphasizes the importance of community support for single mothers. She highlights that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing resources and assistance to single mothers, helping them navigate the challenges they face. The paper discusses how social welfare officers can provide economic assistance to single mothers, including financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities. This support is essential in helping single

mothers achieve financial stability. He notes that social welfare officers also provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being. The study suggests that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness about the challenges faced by single mothers.

Shitindi & Lubawa (2022) highlights that social welfare officer's play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. The study emphasizes the importance of training and education provided by social welfare officers. They recommend that SWOs offer training to the community on the rights of single mothers, including their right to live, be respected, own land, and other property. This training helps to empower single mothers and reduce the stigma associated with single motherhood.

The study discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being. The authors suggest that support mechanisms from government and non-governmental organizations should be in place to empower single mothers. Amato (2005) examines the impact of changes in family structure on the cognitive, social,

and emotional well-being of children. While the primary focus of the study is on the differences between children raised in two-parent households versus single-parent households, Amato also touches on the support provided by social welfare officers (SWOs) around single motherhood. Amato highlights that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability.

The study discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being. He suggests that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness about the challenges faced by single mothers.

As per Casey (2012), his literature discusses the economic challenges faced by single parents in the United States, with a particular focus on single mothers. Casey highlights that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic assistance to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. The report emphasizes the need for policies that address the economic and social challenges faced by single mothers. The argument is that social welfare officers should be better equipped and funded to provide the

necessary support to single mothers, helping them to overcome poverty and improve their quality of life, includes a comparative analysis of single motherhood in the U.S. and other high-income countries. He points out that single mothers in the U.S. work more hours but still have higher poverty rates compared to their counterparts in other countries. This disparity is partly due to the lack of supportive policies and the role of social welfare officers in providing adequate assistance.

Furthermore Calderwood (2010) discusses the impact of living apart from natural fathers on children, highlighting the association with poverty and negative outcomes. Calderwood emphasizes that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. The study further discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being.

Calderwood suggests that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness about the challenges faced by single mothers. However, Balamurugan (2024) explores the psychosocial impact on single mothers' well-being, with a focus on the support provided by social welfare officers (SWOs), highlights that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This

includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. The review discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being. He suggests that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness about the challenges faced by single mothers.

The study by Mudau et al., (2018) discusses relational difficulties in collectivistic cultures and how these difficulties impact single motherhood. The study highlights that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. It further discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being.

The authors suggest that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness

about the challenges faced by single mothers. Additionally, Sinha & Ram (2018) explores the impact of single parenthood on children's health and development, with a focus on the support provided by social welfare officers (SWOs).

The authors highlight that social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing economic support to single mothers. This includes financial aid, access to affordable housing, and employment opportunities, which are essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability. The study discusses how social welfare officers provide emotional and social support to single mothers. This includes counseling services, support groups, and community programs that help single mothers build a support network and improve their overall well-being. The authors further suggest that policies should be implemented to enhance the support provided by social welfare officers to single mothers. This includes increasing funding for social welfare programs, training social welfare officers to better understand the unique needs of single mothers, and promoting community awareness about the challenges faced by single mothers.

Finally, due to reviews above the support provided to single mothers in Africa, with a focus on the role of family and community support. Single mothers in Africa often rely on their immediate and extended families for various forms of support, including childcare and financial assistance. This support is crucial in helping single mothers manage their responsibilities and improve their overall well-being. They emphasized that family support can provide single mothers with the time and opportunities to develop careers while raising their children. This economic assistance is essential for helping single mothers achieve financial stability and

support their children independently. The importance of community programs and initiatives that provide additional support to single mothers, these programs can help single mothers access resources, build support networks, and improve their quality of life. Governmental assistance is necessary to ensure the safety and success of single-parent families throughout Africa. Policies that promote financial security, social assistance, and greater access to job opportunities can help empower single mothers, especially if they lack family support.

2.5 Research Gaps

According to Creswell (2014), a research gap is an area or component of the body of existing literature where there is a need for more exploration because there is insufficient information, limited evidence, or unexplored views. By emphasizing what has not been sufficiently addressed or fully understood in previous research, identifying a research gap aids in defending the study's originality and relevance (Kumar, 2011). For instance, there may be a gap in the literature because, although many studies address the difficulties of parenting generally, there may not be as much targeted research on the institutional support and cultural perspectives of single mother in rural African communities. Outdated data, a lack of geographic coverage, unstudied populations, or inconsistent theories can all lead to research gaps.

In addition to directing the current study's course, identifying these gaps guarantees that the research advances the subject and meets scholarly or practical demands. The literature by Lynne (2011) focuses on a specific demographic (Midwestern community leaders) and did not explore the perspectives of single mothers

themselves or other community members. Additionally, it did not address long-term outcomes beyond the first year of motherhood. This qualitative research study explored the experiences of 10 Western Australian single mothers aged 35 to 45 years, using a phenomenological methodology. The study identified protective and risk factors related to community and external influences on resilience.

Thematic analysis revealed that participants developed external protective factors while enduring various external risk factors. The study had a small sample size and was limited to a specific age group and geographic location. It did not consider the experiences of younger or older single mothers or those from different cultural backgrounds. This descriptive cross-sectional survey examined community perceptions of single parenthood in two urban Local Government Areas in Zaria metropolis. Data from 270 respondents were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. The study provided insights into community attitudes towards single parenting and identified areas for potential intervention. The study was limited to a specific geographic area and did not explore the perspectives of single parents themselves. It also did not address the impact of community perceptions on the well-being of single parents and their children (Anyebe et al., 2017).

Sara (2018) revealed that community practices on single motherhood, the study did not explore the perspectives of single mothers themselves or other community members and did not address long-term outcomes beyond the first year of motherhood. The study did not explore the perspectives of single mothers themselves or other community members and did not address long-term outcomes beyond the first year of motherhood. Results suggested that participants developed

external protective factors that fit their individuality, context, and environment whilst various external risk factors were endured. Although these single mothers demonstrated resilience, the study highlights a gap in understanding how community practices specifically contribute to or hinder resilience.

As for Affandy & Ahmad (2024) assessed the supports provided by Social Welfare officers around single motherhood, the study did not explore the perspectives of single mothers themselves or other community members and did not address long-term outcomes beyond the first year of motherhood (Marbaniang et al., 2022), their study on "Perceived Support and Coping of Single Mothers in a Matrilineal Society". The study did not explore the perspectives of single mothers themselves or other community members and did not address long-term outcomes beyond the first year of motherhood.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This section is guided by the ecological system theory which is stated by Urie Bronfenbrenner's arguments that is Microsystem, Mesosystem, Macrosystem and chronosystem. How do they relate to specific objectives of the study and modify variable with the focus of the problem to be decreased. For example, in (Microsystem) includes the immediate environment of the individual, such as family, friends, and social welfare officers and support from these close relationships can directly influence single mothers, for example, collaboration between social welfare officers and community leaders can create a supportive network for single mothers. (Mesosystem) it involves, such as local government policies and community programs. Implementing supportive policies and programs can provide resources and

opportunities for single mothers. This encompasses cultural values, customs, and laws. Changing cultural perceptions and promoting positive attitudes towards single motherhood can reduce stigma and discrimination. However, in (chronosystem) includes the dimension of time, including life transitions and historical events. Over time, societal attitudes and policies can evolve to become more supportive of single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Furthermore, efforts to change cultural perceptions can include awareness campaigns, education programs, and community dialogues to promote understanding and acceptance. Encouraging inclusive practices and providing platforms for single mothers to share their experiences can foster a supportive community environment and enhancing the capacity of social welfare officers to provide comprehensive support, including counseling, financial assistance, and legal aid, can improve the well-being of single mothers. Active involvement of community members in supporting single mothers can create a sense of belonging and reduce isolation. Through empowering single mothers through skills training, education, and economic opportunities can enhance their self-esteem and independence and involving single mothers in decision-making processes related to policies and programs that affect them can ensure their needs are addressed.

For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and promote gender equality. CEDAW requires countries to take appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and

fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. By aligning the efforts in Mpanda Municipal Council with the community can work towards reducing discrimination and improving the perception of single motherhood.

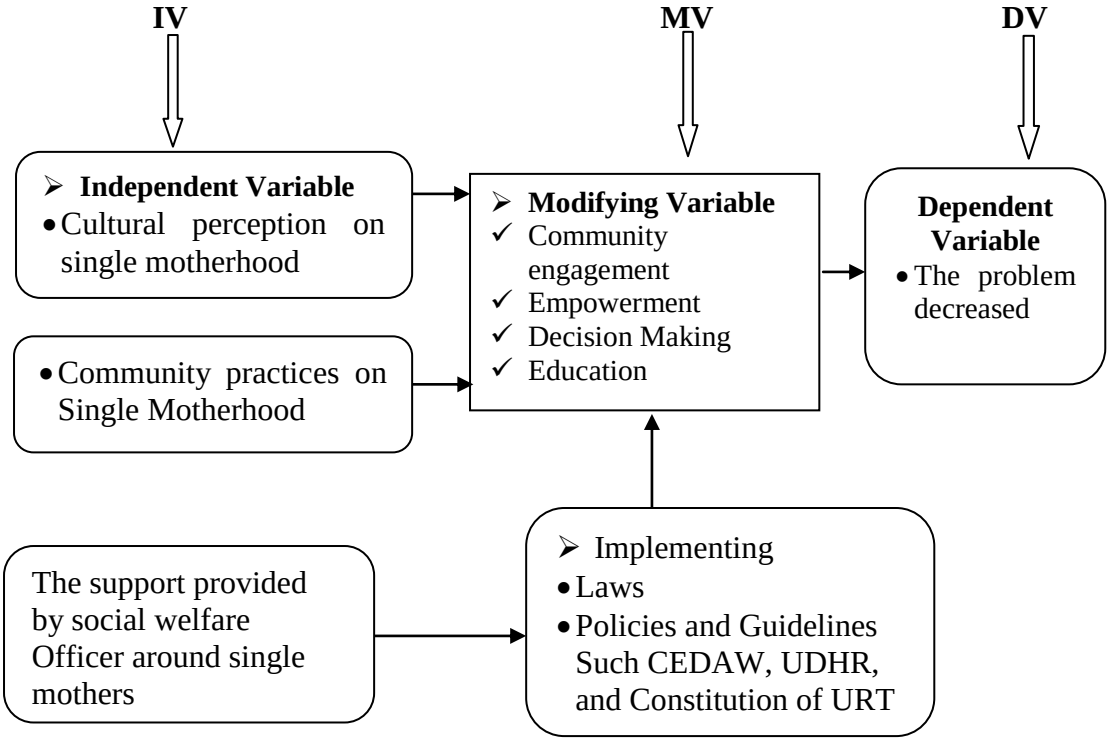

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter entails Research Philosophy, Research Design, Research Approaches, Population of the Study, Area of the study, Sampling procedures, Probability and Non-Probability sampling, Sample and sample Size, Criteria of inclusion and exclusion, Secondary data source/Documentary Review, Primary data source, Data collection tools, Qualitative Data Rigor, Data Analysis, Presentation and Ethical Consideration.

3.2 Research Philosophy

According to Derek (2023), research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs and assumptions that guide the way researchers approach their studies. It encompasses the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and the methods used to gather and analyze data. Research philosophy helps researchers understand the underlying principles of their work and choose appropriate methods for their studies. Using the pragmatism approach enables a researcher to create a comprehensive analysis and thoroughly integrate several pertinent variables into the investigation. In addition, it is the method of enabling research to acquire the correct and right information and a workable solution to the problem. Pragmatism combines both positivism and interpretivist within the same study to understand and interpret reality (Pranas et al., 2018).

According to Gemma (2018), Positivism depends on measurements and reason through observation of activity, action, or reaction to develop new knowledge and

the approach is related to quantitative methods of data collection. Contrary to interpretivist, which holds that knowledge and truth are contextual, cultural, and founded on individual experiences and understandings, this approach is related to qualitative. In addition, the approach depends on values and beliefs for data collection in study, in the context of this study the researcher used interpretivist philosophy to deal well with related cultural perception on single motherhood, the community's practices on single motherhood, and the support provided by Social Welfare Officers around single motherhood and all this is purely qualitative research.

3.2.1 Research Design

Research design is referred to as the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data, a good research design should ensure that the research problem is addressed effectively and efficiently (Kothari, 2004). It is also defined as the specific procedure involved in the research process, this includes data collection, analysis, and report writing. It is therefore a step-by-step procedure that involves data collection, analysis and reporting (Creswell, 2014).

Research design is divided into two types which are experimental research design and non-experimental research design. This study uses non-experimental research design which is exploratory research design. The reason for using explorative research design is because the researcher intends to explore the problem to gain insights and understanding the community's perception on single motherhood (Kothari, 2004).

3.2.2 Research Approach

Krishnaswamy (2010) defines research approaches as the strategies or plans that guide the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Research approaches can be broadly categorized into three main types, which is quantitative approach, this approach involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, and trends. It is often used in studies that require statistical analysis and objective measurement. Qualitative approach, this approach focuses on understanding the meaning and experiences of individuals through non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. It is used to explore complex phenomena and gain in-depth insights and mixed methods approach**.**

This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. It allows researchers to draw on the strengths of both approaches and address research questions from multiple perspectives. Hence this study uses qualitative research approach for it intends to assess the community's perception on single motherhood. The researcher used interviews to explore the complex cultural perceptions on single motherhood, cultural practices and the support provided by social welfare officers to this single motherhood in Mpanda municipal council in Katavi region.

3.3 Study Area

Mpanda Municipal Council is located at approximately 6°20'38" S in latitude and 31°4'10" E longitude**.** This places it in the southern hemisphere, within the central part of the Katavi region. However, according to the pupation and Housing Census

2022, Katavi region had a total population of 1,152,958 with 583,056 being women and 569,902 men. Additionally, according to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Mpanda Municipal Council has a population of approximately 147,000 people. The gender distribution is as follows males around 74,000 and female around 73,000. Tanzania is one of the countries with the highest rate of adolescent pregnancy. It is estimated that 23% of girls aged 15-19 years begin childbearing and 39% of adolescent girls by 18 years old are either already mothers or pregnant.

On 15 September 2017, Tanzania's Katavi region announced a new regional action plan to reduce teenage pregnancy. The plan aimed to reduce the rate to 20% by 2020. Despite the efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy in Tanzania, Katavi was reported to have highest rate of adolescent pregnancy among adolescent aged 15-19. Katavi is a leading region in the country with 45% adolescent aged 15-19, these falls under single mothers, the region has also reported to have the lowest modern contraceptives prevalence rate of 18% in the country. The high number of adolescent pregnancies is the reason as to why Mpanda municipal council was the targeted area of this study with the purpose of assessing community's perception on single motherhood.

Mpanda Municipal Council was selected as the study area because it represents one of the regions in Tanzania with a notably high prevalence of single motherhood, particularly among adolescents and young women. According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Katavi Region where Mpanda is located reported that approximately 45% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 years are single mothers, making it a critical area for understanding the growing trend of single motherhood and its

social implications. The area also presents a unique blend of traditional and modern social dynamics, where cultural norms about family and gender roles coexist with emerging attitudes shaped by urbanization and education. This makes Mpanda an ideal setting for exploring how community perceptions and practices toward single motherhood are formed and changing over time.

In addition, the municipality hosts an active Department of Social Welfare that provides direct support to single mothers, offering an opportunity to assess institutional roles and interventions. Furthermore, there is limited existing research focusing on single motherhood in Katavi Region, meaning this study will contribute valuable localized insights to help inform policies and community programs aimed at improving the welfare and social inclusion of single mothers.

3.4 Population of the Study

According to Krishnaswamy (2010) the population of the study is referred to as the total group of individuals or objects that the researcher is interested in studying. This includes everyone or everything that fits the criteria set by the researcher for the study. Kothari (2024) defines a study population as a large group of units that share one or more characteristics in common and are the focus of a research study. This population is the group from which a sample is selected for the purpose of making inferences about the entire group. The population of the study of Mpanda Municipal Council as per Population and Housing Census 2022 is 147000 where by 73000 men and 74000 being women. The researcher decided to conduct this research because teenage pregnancies remain a significant issue in Katavi, especially in Mpanda municipal council. The adolescent birth rate has increased from 116 to 132 births per

1,000 girls aged 15-19 between 2010 and 2015/16. One in four adolescents aged 15-19 had begun childbearing. The prevalence of teenage pregnancies varies across regions, with Katavi region (where Mpanda is located) having one of the highest rates at 45%. According to this study, the unity of analysis refers to the major entity that is being analyzed in a study. It is the 'what' or 'whom' that is being studied (kothari2004). The unity of analysis in this study is single motherhood aged 15-35. Who characterized by Primary Educated and uneducated, employed in informal sectors, with self-employment and those who engage themselves in casual works.

3.5 Probability and Non-Probability Procedure

Probability sampling refers to a technique that ensures that all sampling units have an equal chance of being chosen from a population. It is considered as the best way to ensure that a sample is representative of the population and some types of probability sampling include simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling (Mizanur, 2022). As per (Kothari, 2004) probability sampling referred to as the process of selecting samples from a population where each member has a known, non-zero chance of being included. This ensures that the sample is representative of the population and some common probability sampling methods include simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling and cluster sampling.

These methods help ensure that the sample accurately represents the population, which is crucial for the validity and reliability of research findings. (Kothari, 2004) defined non-probability sampling techniques as those where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal

chances of being selected.

Some common non-probability sampling methods include purposive sampling - selecting samples based on specific purposes or criteria, convenience sampling - choosing samples that are easiest to access and readily available, quota sampling - ensuring that the sample reflects certain characteristics of the population and snowball sampling - using initial subjects to recruit additional subjects, often used for hard-to-reach populations. This study uses non-probability sampling techniques for it uses a qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used to select Municipal director, religious leaders, community leaders such as local/street leaders, village executive officers (VEOs), social welfare officers (SWOs), single mothers, community health workers (CHW) and health care providers to get more relevant insights on the entire social issue, this is due to the fact that they are of importance in this study.

3.5.1 Purposeful Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling (also known as judgmental sampling) is described as a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selects individuals based on their knowledge, experience, or expertise related to the research question (Kothari, 2004). Kothari emphasizes that purposive sampling is particularly useful when the researcher needs to gather in-depth information from specific individuals who can provide valuable insights. This method is often employed in qualitative research where the focus is on understanding complex phenomena rather than generalizing findings on a larger population.

As per Creswell (2014), purposive sampling (also known as purposeful sampling) is a technique used in qualitative research to select participants who are most likely to provide rich and relevant information for the study, in purposive sampling, researchers deliberately choose individuals who have specific characteristics or experiences that are pertinent to the research question. This method ensures that the selected participants can offer valuable insights and contribute meaningfully to the study's findings. This study includes the following respondents, Municipal Director (MD), 4 Religious leaders, 4local/street leaders, 4Village Executive Officers (VEOs), 10 Social Welfare Officers (SWOs), 20Single Mothers, 4Community Health Workers (CHW) and 4 Health care providers.

3.6 Sampling and Sample Size

In this part of the research dissertation, researcher explored the methods and strategies used to select a representative subset of the population for the study. Given that the study is purely qualitative, focused on obtaining rich, in-depth data from a smaller, carefully chosen sample. The sample size was determined using purposeful sampling to achieve meaningful and reliable results. By carefully considering these factors, the researcher aimed to gather comprehensive insights that can be generalized to the broader population. It is from this understanding, the sample size of 50 participants was used in this study.

3.6.1 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to represent the characteristics of the whole group. Kothari explains that sampling is essential in research because it allows researchers to draw conclusions

about a population without having to collect data from every single member (Kothari, 2004). The sample size as per Krejcie and Morgan (1970) refers to a subset of a population that is selected for a research study. The purpose of selecting a sample is to make inferences about the entire population without having to study every individual within it, using purposeful non-random sampling procedure enabled the researcher to collect data from many respondents because it is easy to understand.

3.6.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of participants included in a study. This number is usually represented by n. The size of a sample influences the precision of our estimates and power of the study to draw conclusions and factors that influence the determination of sample size includes population size, population variance and confidence level, margin of error, research method and nature of the population (Kothari, 2004). The sample size for this study is 50 participants who were selected purposefully, including, Municipal Director (MD), Religious leaders, local/street leaders, Village Executive Officers (VEOs), Social Welfare Officers (SWOs), Single Mothers, and Community Health Workers (CHW) and Health care providers.

3.6.2.1 Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling is used in the study "The Community's Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting: A Case Study at Mpanda Municipality" because it is necessary to gather detailed, context-specific insights from people who have rich, pertinent experiences or knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. Using purposeful sampling, the researcher can specifically choose participants who are

most likely to offer comprehensive and insightful information on the social norms and cultural perceptions that influence single motherhood, including social welfare officers, community leaders, and single mothers.

In qualitative research, where the goal is a thorough knowledge of unique social phenomena rather than statistical generalisation, deliberate sampling is especially suitable, according to Patton (2002). Purposeful sampling, which focusses on people with lived experiences or professional involvement in single mothers parenting, improves the quality and relevance of data collected, especially considering the study's small sample size of 50 participants. According to Creswell (2013), intentionally sampling aids researchers in "identifying and selecting information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest," hence facilitating the production of complex and reliable conclusions in the context of Mpanda Municipality. This strategy is consistent with that study.

Table 3.1: The Respondents Distribution Table

Sn	Participants	Number
1	Municipal Director (MD)	1
2	Social Welfare Officers	10
3	Religious Leaders	4
4	Street/ Local leaders	4
5	Village Executive Officers VEOs)	4
6	Single Mothers	20
7	Community Health Workers (CHW)	4
8	Health care Providers (doctors/nurses)	4
	Total	**50**

3.6.2 Saturation Point

According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), the saturation point in qualitative research is the point at which no new themes, information, or insights are emerging from further data collection, suggesting that the sample size is adequate and that

additional observations or interviews are unlikely to produce novel findings. It is a crucial idea for figuring out when to cease collecting data, particularly in research projects that involve focus groups, interviews, or field observations. Saturation indicates that the researcher has sufficiently recorded the diversity and complexity of participants' viewpoints, ensuring the data's completeness and depth (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Saturation is reached, for instance, when recurrent themes, like difficulties obtaining social services or social stigma, continue to surface among participants in a study examining the experiences of single mothers without bringing in fresh perspectives. The goal of qualitative sampling is to guarantee data analysis that is both efficient and rich.

3.7 Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

In this part of the research proposal, the researcher outlined the specific criteria used to determine which respondents are eligible to be included in the study and which are not. Establishing clear inclusion and exclusion criteria is essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of our research findings. These criteria help the researcher to define the target population accurately and to select participants who are most relevant to the research objectives. By carefully considering these factors, the researcher aimed to minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of our results. The process delved into the details of our inclusion and exclusion criteria to understand how they contribute to the rigor of our study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018).

3.7.1 Criteria for Inclusion

Inclusion criteria are the characteristics that prospective research participants must have to be included in the study, while exclusion criteria are those that disqualify

participants from the study **(**Scriber, 2023**)**. This study included single mothers aged 19-35, religious leaders, social welfare officers who are at the council level, street/local leaders, community health workers, health care providers, village executive officers and Municipal director of Mpanda. Participants excluded from this study are single mothers, below the age of 18 and above 35, social workers who are not working at the council level, meaning those working in ward level, in health centers and hospitals, and ward executive officers.

3.8 Data Sources

The place or origin from which information is gathered for analysis in a research study is referred to as a data source. Depending on how the data is gathered, it may be primary or secondary (Kothari, 2004). While secondary data sources include information that has already been gathered and recorded by others, such as books, reports, journals, census data, and official statistics, primary data sources comprise direct data collected by the researcher using techniques like surveys, interviews, focus groups, or observations (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). To ensure that a study's conclusions are valid, reliable, and relevant, it is essential to choose the right data sources. To investigate support for single mother, for example, primary sources could include social welfare workers and single mothers themselves, while secondary sources could be a review of academic research and government policy. To a considerable extent, the quality and appropriateness of a research project's data sources determine its credibility.

3.8.1 Secondary Data Source

Secondary data sources refer to data that are collected by someone other than the

primary user, or for different purpose than the current one. They are sometimes referred to as secondhand information/ data, some examples of secondary data sources include government collected data, organizational records, data collected for other research purposes, online databases, books and Journals (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, Kothari & Garg (2014) defined secondary data as the published or already existing data developed from previous studies, was carried out for the purpose of accomplishing other research objectives.

In this study, secondary data was obtained through reviewing different existing documents relating to this study for the purpose of enriching it. This includes previous research findings and different reports from relevant authorities such as Mpanda Municipal Council, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Social Welfare, Ward Executive offices and other government reports.

3.8.2 Primary Data Source

Primary data is defined as original information collected directly from firsthand sources to address specific research questions or hypotheses. This type of data is unique to the research being conducted and is gathered through various methods such as surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments. Primary data is essential for providing up-to-date and original insights that are specific to the needs of a study (Mogalakwe, 2006). Under this study, the researcher intends to collect data from the Municipal Director (MD), religious leaders, local/street leaders, village executive officers, social welfare officers, single mothers, community health workers and health care providers by recording the responses obtained through the interview guide and interview checklist through the use focus group discussion.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

Data collection tools refer to the methods and instruments used to gather information for research purposes. These tools can include questionnaires, interviews, observations, and various forms of surveys. They are essential for collecting accurate and reliable data to support research findings (Krishnaswamy, 2010). This study employs two data collection tools which are interview checklist and interview guide from the respondents on the study of community's perception on single Motherhood in Mpanda municipal council.

Participants in this study were not offered any monetary compensation for their participation. However, they were provided with assurance of confidentiality, respect, and the opportunity to share their experiences, which was intended to empower them and contribute to improvements in community support for single mothers. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

3.9.1 Interview Guide

An interview guide refers to as a structured outline used by researchers to conduct interviews. The guide includes a list of topics and questions that the interviewer plans to cover during the interview. It helps ensure that all relevant areas are addressed and that the interview remains focused and organized. The interview guide also allows for consistency across multiple interviews, making it easier to compare and analyze the data collected (Kothari, 2004). This tool during data collection helped participants to provide responsive answers on assessing cultural perceptions on single motherhood, the community practices on single motherhood and the

support provided by social welfare officers for single mothers. The researcher used an interview guide to gather data from 50 participants. Of the total of 50 participants, the following was its composition, 1 Municipal Director, 10 Social Welfare Officers, 4 Religious Leaders, 4 Local leaders, 4 Village Executive Officers, 20 Single Mothers, 4 Community Health Workers, 4 Health Practitioners. All these participants were exposed to interview guided (as per table 3.2). Each interview took approximately 25-35 minutes per participant.

3.9.2 Interview Checklist

An interviewer should ensure that the interview process is thorough and consistent, focusing on the procedural aspects of conducting an interview (Kothari, 2004). In study researcher collected qualitative data using interview checklist, utilizing the setup of Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) from 5 social Welfare Officers, 5 Community Leaders, 10 single Mothers, and 5 health practitioners. Each group was composed of 5 participants to facilitate and allow active participation among them. Thus five (5) focused group discussion (5) were employed to collect qualitative data using an interview checklist. A total of 25 participants were involved in focus group discussion (As per table 3.2). Each group used at least 20 to 30 minutes to complete the session for data collection

The research methods were chosen to directly address the study objectives and research questions. To assess cultural perceptions of single motherhood, the study used questionnaires for single mothers and community members to gather quantitative data on beliefs and attitudes, while interviews with key informants provided deeper insights into cultural norms and reasons behind these perceptions.

To examine community practices on single motherhood, the study employed questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, which allowed the researcher to capture everyday practices, social interactions, and support mechanisms. For investigating the support provided by social welfare officers, interviews with officers and documentary review of official reports and policies were used to understand the type, scope, and effectiveness of support. By combining these methods, the study ensured that each research question was addressed comprehensively, providing both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Table 3.2: Composition of Data Collection Tools

Sn	Participants	Number	Data Collection Tools	
			Interview Guide	Interview Checklist
1	Municipal Director (MD)	1	1	
2	Social Welfare Officers	10	10	5
3	Religious Leaders	4	4	5
4	Street/ Local leaders	4	4	
5	Village Executive Officers VEOs)	4	4	
6	Single Mothers	20	20	10
7	Community Health Workers (CHW)	4	4	5
8	Health care Providers (doctors/nurses)	4	4	
	Total	**50**	**50**	**25**

Source: Field Data, 2025.

3.10 Qualitative Data Rigor

Qualitative rigor refers to the trustworthiness, credibility, and overall quality of the research process and findings. It involves ensuring that the research design, methods, and conclusions are robust, transparent, and free from bias, key aspects of rigor in qualitative research include Credibility**,** Transferability**,** Trustworthiness and Conformability (Kothari, 2004).

3.10.1 Transferability

According to Creswell (2010) transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied or transferred to other contexts, settings, or populations. Transferability is achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and processes, allowing readers to determine whether the findings are applicable to their own situations. The relevancy of transferability as a tool is providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants, the study can help other researchers and policymakers understand whether the findings can be applied to similar communities or settings. This is particularly important for addressing issues related to single motherhood, which may have commonalities across different regions. Transferable findings can inform policy decisions and interventions in other communities facing similar challenges.

For example, if the study identifies effective support mechanisms for single mothers in Mpanda Municipality, these strategies can be adapted and implemented in other areas. By comparing the perceptions and experiences of single mothers in Mpanda Municipality with those in other regions, researchers can identify patterns and differences that may inform broader social and economic policies. Community engagement, understanding the transferability of findings helps in engaging with the community and stakeholders. It ensures that the study's recommendations are relevant and applicable to the local context, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful implementation.

3.10.2 Conformability

According to Creswell (2010) conformability is defined as the degree to which the

findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's biases, motivations, or perspectives. Conformability is one of the key criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, it ensures that the data and interpretations are clearly derived from the participants' responses and not influenced by the researcher's personal views. The relevance of conformability to the research study is ensuring that the findings are shaped by the respondent’s responses and not by the researcher's biases or assumptions. This helps in presenting an accurate and unbiased view of the community's perceptions.

Providing a clear audit trail of the data collection and analysis processes. This allows other researchers to understand how the conclusions were reached and to verify the findings and enhancing the trustworthiness of the study by demonstrating that the findings are based on the respondents' experiences and perspectives. This is particularly important in qualitative research, where the researcher's interpretation plays a significant role. Finally, allowing other researchers to replicate the study in different contexts or with different populations. This helps in validating the findings and understanding whether they are applicable to other settings. However, by ensuring conformability, the study can provide a reliable and accurate representation of the community's perceptions on single motherhood, which can inform policy decisions and interventions.

3.10.3 Trustworthiness

According to Kothari (2004) trustworthiness refers to the quality, credibility, and reliability of the data collected and the research process. It ensures that the findings are accurate, consistent, and can be trusted by others. The relevancy of

trustworthiness to this study is ensuring that the findings accurately represent the community's true perceptions and experiences. This helps in building confidence in the study's results among stakeholders and policymakers.

Demonstrating that the findings can be applied to other similar communities or settings. This allows for broader application of the study's insights and recommendations. This adds to the reliability of the study and its findings and ensuring that the findings are shaped by the participants' responses and not by the researcher's biases or assumptions. This enhances the objectivity and impartiality of the study. However, by adhering to these principles of trustworthiness, the study can provide reliable and meaningful insights into the community's perceptions of single motherhood, which can inform effective interventions and policies.

3.10.4 Credibility

According to Creswell (2010) credibility is defined as the extent to which the findings of a study accurately represent the participants' experiences and perspectives, it is achieved through various methods such as triangulation, member checking, and providing detailed descriptions of the research context. These methods help to ensure that the data collected is trustworthy and accurately reflects the reality of the respondents. Its relevance to this study is ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the true perceptions and experiences of the community. This helps in building trust in the study's results among stakeholders and policymakers. Enhancing the trustworthiness of the study by demonstrating that the data collected is reliable and valid. This is crucial for gaining acceptance and support for the study's findings and recommendations. Providing credible data that can inform policy decisions and

interventions aimed at supporting single mothers. This can lead to greater community involvement and support for initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges faced by single mothers.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as the process of systematically applying statistical and logical techniques to describe, summarize, and compare data. This includes data preparation, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and data interpretation (Kothari, 2004). This research is pure qualitative and thematic analysis was used.

3.11.1 Thematic Analysis

According to Kothari (2004), thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative research method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within a dataset. This method is useful for understanding people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from qualitative data. Thematic in data analysis helps the researcher immerses themselves in the data by reading and re-reading it, noting down initial ideas, the researcher systematically codes interesting features of the data across the entire dataset, collating data relevant to each code, then collated into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme, the researcher checked if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset, generating a thematic map of the analysis and researcher weaves together the narrative and data extracts, producing a coherent and compelling report of the analysis. Finally, by using thematic analysis, you can systematically explore and understand the complex perceptions and experiences of single motherhood in Mpanda Municipality. This method allowed research to generate rich, detailed

insights to inform policy decisions and interventions.

3.12 Data Presentation

Data presentation is referred to as the process of organizing and displaying data in a clear and effective manner. This involves using various tools and techniques to make the data understandable and accessible to the audience (Kothari, 2004). In this study a researcher used quotation in data presentation.

3.12.1 Quotation Data Presentation

According to Kothari (2004) quotation refers to a group of words taken from a text or speech and repeated by someone other than the original author or speaker. Quotations are often used to provide evidence, support arguments, or illustrate points in research and writing. Use respondent's own words to illustrate key points. In this study, quotation helped a researcher to ground the analysis in the actual data, integrated quotes into the narrative to provide evidence for the interpretations and to give voice to the respondents. However, by combining visualization and quotations, a researcher can create a rich, engaging, and credible presentation of qualitative data. This approach helps to convey the complexity and depth of your findings while making them accessible and understandable to the audience in the study.

3.13 Research Ethical Consideration

Creswell (2014) emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations throughout the research process. Ethical considerations involve ensuring that the research is conducted in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants. Creswell emphasizes that researchers must anticipate and address

ethical issues at every stage of the research process to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of their studies. Participants in this study were not offered any monetary compensation for their participation. However, they were provided with assurance of confidentiality, respect, and the opportunity to share their experiences, which was intended to empower them and contribute to improvements in community support for single mothers. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

3.13.1 Clearance Letter from the Open University of Tanzania

A clearance letter from the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) is an essential ethical consideration in research as it ensures that the study is approved and adheres to ethical standards set by the institution. This letter serves as formal authorization for the researcher to conduct research, particularly when working with human participants. It confirms that the research proposal has been reviewed and approved by the university's ethics committee or relevant authority. Provides evidence that conducting the study under institutional oversight, is a reference for researchers in upholding the values of integrity, honesty, and fairness in conducting research (Bhandari, 2024). An introductory letter for conducting this research was obtained from the Open University of Tanzania and was presented to Mpanda municipal council authority and a written permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the mentioned authority.

3.13.2 Do Not Harm Principle

Creswell (2014) emphasizes the principle of "Do No Harm" as a fundamental ethical

consideration. This principle ensures that the research does not cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm to participants. Creswell highlights the importance of protecting participants' rights, dignity, and well-being throughout the research process. Researchers must be vigilant in anticipating and addressing any potential risks or negative impacts that their study might have on participants.

3.13.3 Confidentiality

According to Creswell (2014) confidentiality is a key ethical consideration, it involves protecting the privacy of participants by ensuring that their data is kept secure and that their identities are not disclosed without their consent. In this study confidentiality is important because it helps in protect respondents from potential harm, such as social stigma, discrimination, or legal consequences, helps in building trust, maintaining confidentiality aligns with ethical guidelines and standards set by research institutions and governing bodies and helps maintain its integrity and reliability, which is essential for valid research findings.

3.13.4 Anonymity

According to Kothari (2010) anonymity in research means that the identities of participants are not known to the researcher or anyone else involved in the study. This ensures that the information provided by participants cannot be traced back to them, which is crucial for several reasons in the field when conducting the research. Respondents were told the truth and given accurate information related to the protection of their identities. Maintaining anonymity aligns with ethical guidelines and standards in research, ensuring the privacy and dignity of participants. In addition, anonymity helped to maintain the integrity and reliability of the data

collected, which is essential to valid research findings.

3.13.5 Consent

According to Kothari (2004) consent refers to the voluntary agreement of an individual who has the capacity to understand the implications of their decision. It is typically required in situations where the individual is fully informed and capable of making an autonomous choice. For example, a patient must give consent before undergoing a medical procedure, or a participant must give consent before joining a research study. In this study, respondent gave consent before being interviewed.

3.13.5.1 Assent

According to Kothari (2004) on the other hand, assent is the agreement of someone who is not legally or cognitively capable of giving full consent, such as a child or an individual with certain cognitive impairments. Assent is usually sought in situations where the individual's understanding may be limited, but their willingness to participate or agree is still valued and considered important.

3.13.6 Voluntary Participation

According to Kothari (2004) voluntary participation refers to the principle that individuals should freely choose to participate in a research study without any form of coercion or undue influence. This means that participants should be fully informed about the nature of the research, its purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, and they should have the freedom to decide whether to participate. Voluntary participation is essential in this research study because it aligns with ethical guidelines and standards, ensuring that participants' rights and autonomy are

respected and it protects participants from potential harm or exploitation, ensuring that their involvement is based on informed and voluntary consent.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This study entitled “The Community’s Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting. A Case Study at Mpanda Municipality” has three specific objectives, to assess the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting, to examine the community practices on single motherhood parenting, and to investigate the support provided by social welfare officers for single Mothers in Mpanda municipal council. Using these specific objectives, the chapter presents the findings, analysis and discussion. Owing to the significance of socio-demographic information in any research study, this chapter begins with the presentation on demographic information among the respondents of the study.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Study Respondents

In a study titled "The Community's Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting," participant demographics are vital because they offer significant background that aids in the accurate and meaningful interpretation and analysis of the results. Individuals' views and attitudes on single parenthood can be greatly influenced by factors like age, gender, marital status, occupation, and education level (Bryman, 2016). Thus, those who are older or come from more conventional backgrounds might be more conservative, whereas younger or better educated people might be more accepted.

Knowing the demographic profile also makes it easier to spot trends among various social groups and improves the findings' applicability in related situations (Creswell

& Poth, 2018). Additionally, demographic information promotes openness and facilitates cross-study comparison, which strengthens and validates qualitative research. It would be challenging to take into consideration the sociocultural elements that influence community attitudes without this knowledge.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information among Respondents

Demographic Information	Demographic Variables	Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting		Total Percent
		Positive (%)	Negative (%)	
Gender	Male	28%	12%	40%
	Female	55%	5%	60%
	Total	83%	17%	100%
Age Categories	19 -24	25%	4%	29%
	25 - 30	13%	3%	16%
	31 - 34	17%	2%	19%
	35 - 40	16%	4%	20%
	41 - 44	3%	6%	9%
	45 +	2%	5%	7%
	Total	76%	24%	100%
Education Levels	Primary School leaver	12%	4%	16%
	Form Four Leaver	22%	2%	24%
	Certificate holders	17%	2%	19%
	Diploma holders	14%	2%	16%
	Bachelor holders	14%	0%	14%
	Master Holder and above	11%	0%	11%
	Total	90%	10%	100%
Employment Status	Formal Employed	25%	1%	26%
	Informal Employed	60%	4%	64%
	Self-employed	6%	4%	10%
	Total	91%	9%	100%

Source: Field Data, 2024

4.2.1 Gender of the Study Respondents

Table 4.1 on gender noted that 85% of all participants had positive perception on single motherhood parenting as compared to 17% who were negative about it. Further, 28% of male as compared to 55% of female were positive about single

motherhood parenting; this is contrary to 12% of male who were negative about it, as compared to 5% of female who held negative perception on single motherhood parents. From these findings, the population of 17% among participants, both male and female who hold negative perception on single motherhood parenting is a significant number, which should be supported to transform their perceptions.

4.2.1.1 Discussion of the Gender of the Study Respondents

With 85% of respondents expressing positive opinions, Table 4.1's findings demonstrate significant gender variations in the community's perceptions of single motherhood parenting and an increasing acceptance of it. Nonetheless, the gender-specific analysis shows that 55% of female had favorable opinions, compared to 28% of male. This suggests that women might be more sympathetic to the difficulties and responsibilities faced by single mothers, perhaps because of common gendered experiences and social expectations (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

On the other hand, 12% of male and 5% of female had negative opinions, making up 17% of with negative opinions a minority but nevertheless socially relevant percentage. The sentiments of this group can be a result of long-standing cultural norms and conventional views regarding gender roles and family structure (Hofstede, 2001). It is imperative to change these beliefs since stigma, social exclusion, and a lack of assistance for single mothers can all be caused by unfavorable society attitudes. Addressing these prejudices and fostering a more encouraging atmosphere for single-parent households may be accomplished through focused awareness campaigns and inclusive community discussions.

4.2.2 Age Categories among Study Respondents

Table 4.1 noted that 29% was recorded from age category of 19-14 as the highest among others; 20% was observed at 35-40, and 19% was noted at 31-34 age category. On the same, 16% was recorded at 25 -30; 9% was noted at 41-44; and 7% was recorded at 45 age category and above. Further, the findings noted that 76% of all participants were positive compared to 24% who were negative on single motherhood parenting. With the presented findings where 24% holds negative perception on single motherhood parenting, it reveals the reasons for social stigma held against single mothers.

4.2.2.1 Discussion of the Age Categories among Study Respondents

According to Table 4.1, the 19–24 age group was the most represented (29%), followed by the 35–40 age group (20%) and the 31–34 age group (19%). This suggests that younger and middle-aged people have a considerable influence on how people view single parenting. 76% of all participants had a positive opinion, which points to a growing trend in society towards accepting non-traditional parenting choices. 24% of those who continue to have unfavorable opinions, however, represent a sizable minority whose opinions might support the social stigma and marginalisation of single mothers in many areas.

Traditional standards that romanticize two-parent households and link single motherhood to moral failings or financial dependence are frequently the source of this stigma (Harper & McLanahan, 2004). Given that younger individuals are typically more progressive and open-minded, shifting social attitudes may account for the age differences in views (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). However, the fact that

almost 25% of people have unfavorable opinions necessitates focused community education, awareness campaigns, and legislative initiatives meant to change these perceptions and advance inclusive attitudes towards all family types.

4.2.3 Education Levels among Study Respondents

Table 4.2 noted 24% as the dominant education level among others from form four leavers; 19% observed from certificate holders, and 16% recorded at primary school leavers and diploma holders respectively. Further, 14% was noted at bachelor holders; and 11% was recorded at master's holders and above which was the lowest score among others. Further still, the findings noted of 10% of the participants hold negative perception as compared to 90% with positive perception on single motherhood parenting.

4.2.3.1 Discussion of the Education Levels among Study Respondents

According to Table 4.2, Form Four leavers made up the largest group of participants (24%), followed by certificate holders (19%), primary school dropouts and diploma holders (16% each), bachelor's degree holders (14%), and master's degree holders and above (11%). According to this distribution, many participants had lower to mid-level education. Interestingly, 90% of individuals had good opinions about parenting as a single mother, whereas just 10% had negative opinions, despite this heterogeneity.

Although higher education is frequently linked to more progressive and inclusive attitudes because of increased exposure to diverse social realities and critical thinking skills, these findings suggest that positive attitudes towards single mothers

are prevalent across educational levels (Ajzen, 1991; Campbell, 2010). A change in social norms and heightened knowledge, perhaps brought about by media and educational efforts addressing gender equality and non-traditional family structures, may be the reason for the comparatively low negativity (10%). Nonetheless, community involvement and ongoing education are essential for eradicating lingering stigma and promoting acceptance, especially among those with little formal education who might still hold conservative views.

4.2.4 Employment Status among Study Respondents

Table 4.1 on employment status among the respondents, noted that 64% were employed in the informal sector; 26% were noted in the formal sector, and 10% recorded the self-employed, which was the lowest among others. Further, the finding noted 91% as compared to 9% who had negative perception on single motherhood parenting.

4.2.4.1 Discussion of the Employment Status among Study Respondents

The employment status of the respondents is displayed in Table 4.1, which shows that the majority (64%) worked in the informal sector, followed by the formal sector (26%), and the lowest group of self-employed people (10%). This distribution emphasises the prevalence of informal employment, which is common in developing regions with few formal job possibilities, such as sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2018). The findings showed that, despite the financial diversity shown by the sorts of jobs, 91% of participants had favorable opinions of parenting as a single mother, while only 9% had negative opinions.

Regardless of wealth or job stability, the high degree of acceptance, especially in the un-organised sector, indicates that exposure to single mothers at the community level and via lived experiences may promote empathy and lessen stigma. This result is consistent with the social contact theory, which holds that more engagement with under-represented groups helps dispel prejudices and promote more accepting viewpoints (Allport, 1954). Even said, the existence of a minority with unfavorable opinions highlights the necessity of ongoing public education and awareness initiatives to further question antiquated gender and family conventions.

4.3 The Cultural Perceptions on Single Motherhood Parenting in Mpanda Municipal Council

The first specific objective of the study called the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council, was dealt with in this study using, community attitudes towards single mothers where community leaders, health practitioners, and social welfare officers were interviewed to collect their views and judgments on women raising children on their own. Elements such as social stigma, social acceptance and discrimination were at the Centre of this variable. Further, gender and family role expectation were brought on to inform the first specific objective, where cultural beliefs of single women roles in parenting were explored.

Lastly, the traditional beliefs and practices were used to complement the other variables, were beliefs about marriage, out-of-wedlock childbirth, inheritance rights, and family honor were used. The study found that cultural perceptions of single motherhood in Mpanda are complex, encompassing both stigma and recognition of resilience. Many participants noted that single mothers face negative social

judgments. One community elder in an FGD stated,

> *"People often think single mothers are irresponsible and have brought shame to their families*."

Similarly, a female community member added,

> *"Some in the village gossip about women who raise children alone; it is as if they are not good mothers."*

Despite these negative views, others acknowledged the strength and perseverance of single mothers. One social welfare officer noted,

> *"Despite the challenges,* many *single mothers work hard to provide for their children and maintain their households."*

A young male community member observed,

> *"I admire single mothers who manage work, home, and school for their children; they are very strong." The overarching theme emerging here is "Resilience versus Stigma,"*

Reflecting the tension between traditional disapproval and recognition of single mothers' efforts.

4.3.1 The Community Attitudes towards Single Mothers

The Community Attitudes towards Single Mothers where community leaders, health practitioners, and social welfare officers were interviewed to collect their views and judgments on women raising children on their own. Elements such as social stigma, social acceptance and discrimination were at the Centre of this variable. More qualitative narrations are captured as follows, Using variables such as "social stigma", "social acceptance" and "discrimination" on single women raising children on their own, develop qualitative narrations from community leaders, health practitioners, and social welfare officers, proposed implication of each narration

As collected from key informants such as community leaders, health practitioners, and social welfare officers, the variables such as *social stigma*, *social acceptance*, and *discrimination* on single women raising children on their own, were central, as the narration presented, One of the community leaders pointed out social stigma, when narrated:

> *"A woman who raises a child by herself is frequently viewed in our village as someone who has not lived according to our customs. Children from such households are branded, others gossip behind her back, and occasionally even parents* forbid *their own girls from mingling with her kids. It seems that being a single mother is a stigma that both the mother and the child must deal with.* One of the community leaders during focus group discussion

The collected qualitative data from community leaders were deeply ingrained social stigma that isolates single mother and their children and may restrict their access to community resources and social contacts is shown in this narration. It suggests that culturally conscious awareness campaigns are necessary to dispel myths and advance inclusivity via instruction and discussions with traditional leaders. Agreeing with the views presented, one of the health practitioners revealed:

> *"We have witnessed changes over time. Because they were afraid of being judged, single mothers used to avoid going to clinics altogether. These days, peer groups and younger healthcare professionals are more encouraging, and many women feel comfortable asking for help. Although it is not flawless, there is greater comprehension, particularly in metropolitan and semi-urban regions."* One of the health practitioners during key informant interviews

An increasing tendency towards social acceptability, particularly in healthcare settings, is highlighted in this narration. It suggests that training on patient-centered care and institutional improvements is bettering healthcare accessible for single mothers by lowering judgmental attitudes. Cementing the presented findings, one of

the social welfare officers narrated:

> *"I have dealt with a number of situations when single mothers were excluded from community activities or refused assistance from family members only because they were unmarried. Some are even passed over for jobs because they are thought to be careless or untrustworthy."* One of the social welfare officers during focus group discussion

This indicates prejudice against single mothers in the context of the family and the economy. Incorporating anti-discrimination provisions into local development initiatives, raising community awareness of rights and dignity, and enforcing equal opportunity policies are all urgently needed.

4.3.1.1 Discussion of the Community Attitudes towards Single Mothers

Qualitative narratives from social welfare officers, health professionals, and community leaders show how factors including discrimination, social acceptance, and social stigma influence the lived realities of single mothers parenting children alone. In line with Goffman's (1963) theory on stigma and social identity, community leaders emphasised the existence of social stigma, which views single parenting as shameful and at odds with conventional values, resulting in social isolation and judgment.

Community practices play both supportive and challenging roles in the lives of single mothers. Many participants highlighted the importance of informal support networks, including extended family, neighbors, and religious institutions. One single mother explained, “My mother and neighbors help me look after the children when I go to work; without them, I don’t know how I would manage.”

However, some participants reported experiences of social exclusion and gossip. A single mother shared,

> *"Sometimes I feel left out in community events because people judge me for raising my child alone."*

Community-led initiatives such as women's savings groups and parenting workshops were mentioned as helpful by several respondents. One community leader noted, "We organize meetings and training for single mothers to help them improve their skills and support each other." The emerging theme is "Community Support and Social Exclusion," capturing the dual role of the community in both helping and marginalizing single mothers.

In line with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, which describes how shifting attitudes can lead to constructive behavioural changes, health practitioners highlighted a growing trend towards social acceptance, especially in clinical settings where inclusive attitudes among younger professionals are improving access to services. The intersectionality framework developed by Crenshaw (1989) emphasises how overlapping social identities (gender, marital status, and class) can expose people to multiple disadvantages. Social welfare officers also reported discrimination in access to resources and opportunities, where cultural biases affect even formal support systems. These results suggest that to combat cultural prejudices and advance fair treatment for single mothers, extensive, multi-sectoral initiatives are desperately needed.

4.3.2 Gender and Family Role Expectation

The variables such as Gender and family role expectation were brought on to inform

the first specific objective, where cultural beliefs of single women roles in parenting were explored. To respond to this question, the qualitative information was collected from community leaders, health practitioners, and social welfare officers, on cultural beliefs related to single women role in parenting. During Focus Group Discussion, one of the Community Leader, pointed on the Cultural Beliefs on Single Women in Parenting, when narrated:

> *"Our culture holds that for a child to develop normally, they require both a mother and a father. A child raised by a woman alone is perceived as lacking self-discipline and identity. Not because we despise single mothers, but because of our traditions, women are expected to remain married or taken care by the husband."* One of the community leaders during a focus group discussion.

In this narration, the weight of parenting legitimacy is placed on marital status, reflecting the way societal views reinforce gender norms. It suggests that community level education is necessary to reframe good parenting outside of marriage institutions and to advance the understanding of the worth and competence of single mothers. Echoing the presented views of the community leaders, one of the health practitioners narrated while pointing on cultural beliefs in clinical practice:

> *"Some women are embarrassed to be single mothers, so they do not bring their children to checkups or vaccinations. Unmarried women are perceived as being irresponsible or morally frail, and this perception occasionally affects how patients or even medical professionals treat them. "*One of the health practitioners during a key informant interview

This demonstrates how health-seeking behaviors are influenced by cultural stigma. It suggests that guarantee that all mothers, regardless of marital status, can get care without fear or shame, cultural competence training for healthcare professionals and the promotion of non-discriminatory health services are necessary. In agreement with health practitioners, one of the social welfare officers, pointed out cultural

beliefs and legal support, when narrated:

> *"It is a common misconception that if a woman is parenting a child by herself, it is because she made bad decisions, and she has to "struggle with things." Even when she is eligible for assistance, people judge her rather than offer assistance because of this mentality, which influences how communities react to her needs."* One of the social welfare officers during the interview

This demonstrates how access to social support and service delivery are impacted by cultural judgment. To counteract moralistic views and maintain social assistance equity, it is implied that vigorous advocacy and enforcement of rights-based approaches in welfare services are required, in addition to cultural sensitization initiatives. These narratives show how cultural ideas have a significant influence on how people view and treat unmarried women in parental roles, which affects how easily they can receive social services and support. Building inclusive, rights-respecting communities requires addressing these ideas.

4.3.2.1 Discussion of Gender and Family Role Expectation

The three qualitative narratives from social welfare workers, health professionals, and community leaders show how cultural views still shape how unmarried women are perceived as parents, frequently limiting social support and upholding traditional gender standards. According to the community leader, a mother and a father are necessary for good parenting, which implies that single mother are fundamentally unfit. This idea is based on patriarchal cultural norms that give legitimacy to homes headed by fathers (Hofstede, 2001).

The health professional's story demonstrates how cultural beliefs influence behavior and service utilisation by exposing how moral judgment and cultural shame prevent

single mother from seeking necessary health services. In the meantime, the social welfare officer emphasises how moralistic viewpoints frequently result in the refusal of assistance for single mother, attributing their predicament to individual shortcomings rather than structural or interpersonal problems. When taken as a whole, these stories imply that ingrained cultural norms still stigmatise and marginalise single mother, hence strengthening barriers to care and equality. It is necessary to address these ideas through culturally sensitive education, policy lobbying, and service provider training to change public perceptions and advance welcoming, encouraging environments for all parenting styles.

4.3.3 Traditional Beliefs and Practices

The traditional beliefs and practices were used to complement the other variables, where beliefs about marriage, out-of-wedlock childbirth, inheritance rights, and family honor were used. The traditional beliefs and practices that were used to complement the other variables were; The narration as captured from one of religious leaders focused on beliefs about marriages:

> *"According to our teachings, marriage is holy and ought to be the cornerstone of a family's existence. Despite our preaching of compassion, the congregation still disapproves of women who raise children outside of marriage because they are perceived as going against God's will."* One of the religious leaders during focus group discussion

This story presented by the religious leaders illustrates how religious interpretations perpetuate conventional wisdom regarding marriage by portraying single parenting as immoral. To spread messages of compassion, acceptance, and support for all mothers, regardless of marital status, discussion with religious institutions is implied. On the same one of the community leaders noted on out of wedlock childbirth:

> *"A child born outside of marriage is frequently viewed as illegitimate in our society, which has an impact on the mother's treatment. People may exclude her from social events because they believe she is irresponsible or contemptuous of traditions.* One of the community leaders during a key informant interview

This story, narrated by the community leaders, illustrates the stigmatisation of unwed birth, which has an impact on the social standing of both the mother and the child. Regardless of the marital status of their parents, it suggests that cultural education initiatives are necessary to combat harmful labelling and advance the rights and dignity of all children. Cementing these views, one of the single mothers during focus group discussion pointed out to inheritance rights, when narrated:

> *"Since we were never married, my partner's family denied my child any inheritance after he left. According to them, even if the male acknowledged the child, only legally married women and their offspring have these rights."* One of the single mothers during focus group discussion.

The narration from single mothers reveals legal and cultural vulnerabilities by highlighting the denial of inheritance rights to children of unmarried mothers. To guarantee equal inheritance rights for all children, it is implied that stricter enforcement of child protection legislation and legal reforms are required. Further, one of the social welfare officers pointed to family honor when narrated:

> *"Some families worried that it would damage their reputation, conceal or shun their daughters who become single mothers. Girls have been forced into early marriages or disowned in certain situations, merely to "correct" the disgrace they caused." One of the social welfare officers during a key informant's interview*

This tale demonstrates how damaging customs like forced marriage and seclusion are justified by family honour. It suggests that to combat harmful honor-based conventions and defend the rights of single mothers, and their children, protective

social services, psychosocial support, and community education are necessary. Together, these narratives demonstrate the profound impact that cultural and religious traditions have on single parenthood, perpetuating inequality through moral judgement, legal disadvantage, and exclusionary practices. Multi-level interventions are needed to address these problems, such as community sensitisation, legislation reform, and interaction with religious and cultural institutions.

4.3.3.1 The Discussion on Traditional Beliefs and Practices

A community's behaviours and social expectations are shaped by long-standing rituals, values, and norms that have been passed down through the generations. These are referred to as traditional beliefs and practices. These ideas can greatly impact how single mothers are viewed and treated, and they frequently shape opinions on parenting, morality, gender roles, and family structure. The idea that a full family needs a mother and a father is maintained by customs in many cultures, which stigmatises and marginalises women who raise children by themselves (Hofstede, 2001).

Such views could lead to pressure to marry for the sake of family honour, exclusion from community gatherings, or denial of inheritance rights for children born outside of marriage (Mbiti, 1990). When these customs are not modified to reflect changing social circumstances, they can perpetuate prejudice and inequality even if they can foster social togetherness. To advance gender equality, defend the rights of single mother, and foster more accepting and helpful social norms, it is crucial to recognise and confront the effects of traditional beliefs.

4.3.4 The Relevance of Ecological Systems Theory to Cultural Perceptions on Single Motherhood Parenting in Mpanda

Given that it offers a thorough framework for examining the ways in which many environmental systems interact to influence both social attitudes and individual experiences, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is extremely pertinent to comprehending cultural views on parenting by single mothers. Multiple layers of systems, including the microsystem (family, peers), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (community structures and institutions), macrosystem (cultural values and norms), and chronosystem (changes over time), are said to have an impact on a child's and caregiver's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The sanctity of marriage, family honour, and stigmas associated with unwed births are cultural beliefs that are ingrained in the macrosystem and influence how communities perceive and interact with single mother. These cultural views then impact social services at the exosystem level, such as welfare offices or schools, and interactions at the microsystem level, such as rejection or support from family members. Therefore, the theory aids in explaining why social stigma or prejudice against single mother may result from larger systemic and cultural pressures rather than isolated incidents. By using this theory, practitioners and researchers can create comprehensive interventions that consider societal, community, and individual factors.

4.4 The Community Practices on Single Motherhood Parenting at Mpanda Municipal Council

The second objective of the study is to examine the community practices on single motherhood parenting at Mpanda municipal council was dealt with the support

systems available for single mothers, such as financial aid, childcare services, and counseling. Further, the social integration and participation of single mothers in community activities such as community meeting, community decision making forum, and community leadership. The study also employed the cultural rituals and customs related to child rearing is perceived when naming, during initiation, and marriage customs around children of single mothers.

4.4.1 The Support Systems Available for Single Mothers

Interviews with social welfare officers revealed that formal support exists but faces limitations. Officers described providing counseling, financial assistance, and linkage to community programs. One officer explained,

> *"We try to help single* mothers *access resources and training, but our staff is few, and sometimes the community does not fully cooperate."* Another officer added, *"Some mothers are not aware of available programs, so we spend time educating them about their rights and services."*

Challenges such as limited resources, insufficient policy awareness, and cultural resistance were commonly reported. One officer noted, "We have programs, but not enough money or staff to reach all the single mothers who need help." Documentary review of social welfare reports confirmed these limitations, showing that while support mechanisms exist, their implementation is inconsistent. The theme "Institutional Support and Resource Gaps" captures these findings. Informed by the "financial aid", "childcare services", and "counseling" as key elements on the support systems available for single mothers, the single mothers themselves, community leaders, and social welfare officers, were involved to inform these variables. The following narration was captured as presented, One of the single

mothers while focusing on financial aid noted:

> *"I found it difficult to take care of myself after my husband left. I applied to the district office for* financial *assistance, but the procedure was cumbersome and occasionally degrading. Without a women's savings organisation, I could not have paid for my kids' food or tuition."* One of the single mothers duringa key informant interview.

The findings from single mothers noted that the critical necessity for easily accessible and respectable financial assistance systems is emphasised in this narrative. It suggests that to achieve prompt economic empowerment, it is critical to streamline bureaucratic procedures, expand official financial support networks for single mothers, and collaborate with community-based organisations. Further, one of the community leaders pointing out childcare services, narrated:

> *"With no one to care for their children, many single women in our community are unable to go to training or obtain employment. Due to the lack of formal childcare facilities, they frequently have to leave children with their elder siblings."* One of the community leaders during a key informant interview

The qualitative findings from community leaders highlight a lack of daycare options, which restricts the financial options available to single mothers and may jeopardize the safety of their children. It suggests that to encourage women's involvement in employment, education, and development projects, funding for reasonably priced community-based childcare services is required. On the same note, one of the social welfare officers, during focus group discussions, narrated:

> *"Many single mothers suffer in silence, whether they are unhappy, emotionally overburdened, or abandoned by their relatives. We provide counselling, but we do not have many resources, and in many places, getting mental health help is still stigmatised."* One of the social welfare officers, during focus group discussions.

The qualitative findings collected from social welfare officers demonstrate the importance of counselling in addressing the mental health of single mothers is highlighted in this narrative. It suggests the need to increase access to mental health services, lessen the stigma associated with counselling, and educate more social workers to provide understanding and approachable assistance.

4.4.1.1 The Discussion on the Support Systems Available for Single Mothers

To foster resilience and dignity, these narratives jointly highlight the multifaceted support that single mother require and advocate for an integrated strategy combining social safety, child services, and mental health treatment. The results of the financial aid, daycare, and counselling narrations highlight the various difficulties single mothers encounter as well as the weaknesses in the institutional and social support networks. The story of the single mother reflects larger problems of economic marginalisation among women-led households and demonstrates the emotional and administrative strain associated with obtaining financial aid (Chant, 2003).

The narrative of the community leader highlights the dearth of easily accessible childcare, which prevents single mothers from engaging in activities that generate revenue and prolongs poverty cycles, highlighting the necessity of gender-responsive service delivery (UN Women, 2015). A gap in comprehensive care is indicated by the social welfare officer's experience, which emphasises the psychological fragility and emotional strain faced by single mother, which is exacerbated by the stigma associated with mental health issues and the scarcity of counselling options (WHO, 2021). According to these findings, to empower single mother and lessen systemic injustices, integrated, community-based initiatives that incorporate financial

assistance, child welfare services, and mental health treatment are needed.

4.4.2 The Social Integration and Participation of Single Mothers in Community Activities

The social integration and participation of single mothers in community activities was dealt with by using “community meeting”, “community decision making forum”, and “community leadership” where qualitative data were collected from health practitioners, community leaders, single mothers, and social welfare officers. Narration from each of them as presented for more details, One of the health practitioners noted challenges in community meeting when it comes to single mothers’ welfare:

> *"The majority of our community meetings centre on topics like water supply and agriculture. We seldom ever talk about issues related to reproductive health or the difficulties experienced by single mothers. Even when brought up, these subjects are frequently shunned or viewed as minor.* One of the health practitioners during a key informant interview.

The narration presented by health practitioners revealed that social and health issues that affect single mothers are frequently ignored in community meetings. The conclusion is that regular community meetings should incorporate inclusive social agendas to promote candid conversations about gender, parenting, and health issues. On this note, one of the community leaders emphasized:

> *"Most of the elders in our decision-making forums are men. Young women and single mothers are rarely invited, and when they do show up, they remain silent. When making important decisions that impact the wellbeing of families and children, their opinions are frequently ignored."* One of the community leaders during a key informant interview.

The qualitative findings from community leaders demonstrate isolation from decision-making processes, which may result in laws and practices that do not adequately address the needs of single mothers. Intentionally including single mother in community consultations and ensuring gender-balanced representation in local governance are the implications. In agreement with community leaders, one of the single mothers, narrated:

> *"People suggested that because I was single, I was not 'fit' to run for a leadership position on our community committee. A single mother like me are deterred from even attempting because they perceive married women as more respectable or stable."* One of the single mothers during focus group discussion

The collected qualitative data from single mothers highlight the correlation between married status and community leadership, which perpetuates gender bias and marginalisation. The result is that to combat discriminatory attitudes and advance equal participation, single mother's need leadership skill building and awareness campaigns. On the same view, one of the social welfare officers voiced on the status of single mothers and their position in the community:

> *"In discussions and planning, we urge community leaders to include vulnerable groups, such as single mother. However, cultural constraints still frequently keep them from fully participating. Leaders worry about criticism from the community if they are perceived as supporting non-traditional families." One of the social welfare officers during a key informant interview,*

This demonstrates how ingrained cultural opposition threatens inclusive community structures even in the face of official support. To guarantee that community systems are fair and accommodating to all kinds of families, it is implied that continuous involvement, education, and policy enforcement are required. Further, these narratives show that although there are community platforms, they frequently mute

or exclude single mother, which perpetuates gender-based marginalization and social hierarchy. To advance social justice and responsive local governance, it is essential to foster inclusivity in forums, meetings, and leadership.

4.4.2.1 The Discussion of the Social Integration and Participation of Single Mothers in Community Activities

Critical gaps in the inclusion and representation of marginalized groups, especially single mothers, are brought to light by the discussion of community meetings, decision-making forums, and leadership. Despite being essential for grassroots development and administration, these community institutions frequently mirror patriarchal norms that restrict women's participation, particularly for those who do not fit into typical family roles (Cornwall, 2003). Important social difficulties are often silenced by community meetings that ignore or minimize issues like single parenting because they are perceived as private or morally delicate.

According to cultural conceptions that link leadership legitimacy to marital status, women especially single mothers are frequently marginalised or viewed as unfit to lead in decision-making forums, which are typically controlled by men (Agarwal, 2010). The democratic potential of community government is undermined by this exclusion from leadership and decision-making, which also leads to policies that do not adequately represent the lived reality of vulnerable groups. Institutionalising inclusive policies that guarantee all community members, irrespective of gender or marital status, have equal access to participation, voice, and leadership possibilities is crucial for advancing equitable and responsive governance.

4.4.3 The Cultural Rituals and Customs Related to Child Rearing

The study employed the cultural rituals and customs related to child rearing as perceived when naming newborn child, during initiation ceremonies, and marriage customs around children of single mothers. Pointing to the naming of newborn child, one of the religious leaders revealed the following:

> *"According to our custom, the father's side of the family gives a child their name, frequently at a religious ceremony. Since some families refuse to engage in the ceremony in the absence of a recognised father figure, it becomes contentious or is completely avoided when a child is born to a single mother." One of the religious leaders during a key informant interview*

The captured qualitative findings from religious leaders illustrate how naming customs can turn into a place where children of single mothers are excluded. It is implied that these behaviors support patriarchal systems that restrict recognition to children born outside of marriage and lead to early identity-based stigma. To accommodate different family types and guarantee that every child is welcomed with dignity, this necessitates inclusive transformation into religious and cultural traditions. On the same point, son of the single mother, pointing to initiation ceremonies noted:

> *"I was informed when my child reached adulthood that he was not eligible to take part in the male initiation ceremonies of the community since he lacked a father to introduce him. They claimed that a father's approval was necessary for the procedure, and I felt powerless to see my child left out of something so significant to our culture.* One of the single mothers during a focus group discussion.

The qualitative findings from single mothers illustrate how children of single mother may face obstacles because of initiation rituals, which are essential to cultural identification and belonging. To promote social inclusion and equal cultural access for all children, it is imperative that cultural adaptation be made so that maternal

guardianship can be acknowledged in such ceremonies. In agreement of the presented voices, one of the community leaders, pointed to marriage customs around children of single mothers, noted:

> *"Due to the misconception that girls raised by single mother are unmannerly or "complete," their bride price is sometimes lowered, or families flatly refuse proposals. There are also many who believe that these girls bring misfortune into their husbands' homes."* One of the community leaders during a key informant interview

This story illustrates how marriage traditions support discrimination against mothers based on their marital status across generations. It is implied that such views not only have an impact on single mothers but also put their children at a social and financial disadvantage. Legal safeguards and cultural sensitisation initiatives are necessary to prevent children from being penalised for uncontrollable conditions. These stories show how, despite their significance in communal life, traditional practices can be used as means of exclusion if they are not modified to reflect shifting social circumstances. When strictly enforced, these rituals impact life paths, restrict social engagement, and promote stigma for single mothers and their children. Therefore, the study must stress the importance of analysing and changing discriminatory cultural behaviors.

4.4.3.1 The Discussion of the Cultural Rituals and Customs Related to Child Rearing

Religious leaders, single mothers, and community leaders think that naming a newborn kid, initiation rituals, and marriage customs are cultural practices that expose deeply ingrained social structures that frequently marginalise children born to single mothers. Because paternal acknowledgement, which is culturally symbolic of

legitimacy and identity, is absent from naming ceremonies, which are frequently carried out by the father's family or religious representatives, children of single mothers may be excluded (Mbiti, 1990).

Similarly, such children, particularly males without a father to sponsor or mentor them, may be excluded from initiation ceremonies, which are rites of passage into adulthood, reinforcing patriarchal and gendered norms (Hofstede, 2001). This marginalisation is further demonstrated by marriage customs, where daughters of single mothers are viewed as less desirable and frequently receive lower bride prices or rejection because it is assumed that they were not raised properly or bear social misfortune (Meekers, 1994). These behaviors demonstrate how moral and social sanctions imposed by conventional beliefs on single mothers and their children continue to perpetuate cycles of inequity and stigma. Culturally aware changes, inclusive customs, and community education are necessary to address these issues and advance fairness and acceptance of all family types.

4.4.4 Relevance of Ecological Systems Theory to Community Practices on Single Motherhood Parenting at Mpanda Municipal Council

Since Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a framework for comprehending how different environmental systems interact to influence individual behaviors and society norms, it is extremely pertinent to the analysis of community practices around single mothers parenting in Mpanda Municipal Council. At the microsystem level, Mpanda's single mothers engage with their immediate social circles, including their families, community, and schools, where they could be directly supported or rejected according to their marital status. Particularly in

situations where social networks are weak, the mesosystem, which links these surroundings, can help or hurt their parenting. Access to resources, such as daycare, financial help, and legal aid, is shaped by the exosystem, which includes organisations like welfare offices and local governments. These resources are frequently restricted or impacted by cultural norms.

At the macrosystem level, Mpanda's deeply ingrained gender norms and cultural beliefs continue to link marriage to legitimate parenting, which perpetuates stigma and discrimination against single mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These ideas have an impact on who makes decisions, how support is allocated, and how community meetings are run. To promote equitable parenting environments, the idea emphasises the significance of multi-level interventions that address not just individual behaviors but also institutional structures, cultural ideologies, and community practices.

4.5 The Support Provided by Social Welfare Officers for single Mothers in Mpanda Municipal Council

The third specific objective of the study was entitled “To investigate the support provided by social welfare officers for single Mothers in Mpanda municipal council” was guided with the types of support services provided such as counseling, legal aid, financial support, parenting education, and referrals to NGOs, and health services. Further, the accessibility of social welfare services such as the cost involved like transportation, quality of services provided and the bureaucracy. The perceived quality of social welfare services such as types of service provided, feedback mechanisms, and follow up practices among social welfare officers.

4.5.1 The Support Services Provided to Single Mothers

The qualitative findings on the support services provided to single mothers were informed with counseling, legal aid, financial support, parenting education, and referrals to Non-Governmental Organisations, and health services. The social welfare officers, community leaders, single mothers and health practitioners were as follows, One of the social welfare officers, focusing on counseling services provided to single mothers and their children narrated:

> *"Many single mothers, particularly those who have been shunned by their relatives, arrive at our office feeling overwhelmed. We try to provide counselling, but some people are afraid of being judged and we are understaffed. Seeking psychological assistance is still stigmatised." One of the social welfare officers during focus group discussion*

The findings presented by the social welfare officers indicate that more counselling services with qualified, nonjudgmental experts are desperately needed. To lessen the stigma associated with mental health issues and establish secure areas for emotional support, community awareness-raising is also necessary. Further, one of the community leaders pointed out legal aid, when narrated:

> *"In certain instances, fathers have abandoned their children, leaving the mother with nothing. Without going to town, it is difficult to get legal assistance here, and many people are unaware of their rights or how to file for assistance." One of the community leaders during a key informant interview*

The narration from the community leaders draws attention to the restricted availability of legal aid in semi-urban and rural areas. It suggests that to enable single mothers to assert their rights to inheritance and child support, decentralised legal aid and awareness-raising are required. Agreeing with the presented findings, one of the single mothers pointed to financial support when revealed,

> *"After being left alone with my two children, I couldn't even afford rent. I asked for support from the government office but was told to wait. I*

> *ended up joining a local women's group, which gave me a small loan to start selling vegetables." One of the single mothers during a key informant interview*

This illustrates the formal financial aid systems' shortcomings and delays. Strengthening government-community collaborations, such women's organisations, is implied to offer prompt and adaptable assistance for economic resilience. Moreover, one of the social welfare officers, during a key informant interview, narrated:

> *"We host parenting workshops, but few single mothers show up. Because they are more concerned with surviving, some people lack transportation, feel ashamed, or do not understand its importance." One of the social welfare officers during a key informant interview*

It follows that parental education must be made more widely available, useful, and connected to financial rewards. Sessions that are tailored to single mothers' reality can increase impact and engagement. On the same noted one of community leaders further pointed to referral, when narrated:

> *"We work with some NGOs, but information about their programs doesn't always reach those in need. Sometimes, only those with connections get help." One of the community leaders during a key informant interview*.

This suggests unequal access to recommendations from NGOs. It is implied that to guarantee the benefit of all single mother, transparent and inclusive referral systems should be established, and community leaders and welfare officers should work together more closely. Supported with health practitioners, they further pointed to health services, when narrated:

> *"Due to embarrassment or a fear of being judged, single mothers frequently miss children's vaccines or arrive late for checkups. Some people continue to think that medical professionals will chastise them for not having a husband." One of the health practitioners during a*

key informant interview

This emphasizes how cultural stigma affects access to healthcare. It suggests the establishment of mother-friendly clinics that provide impartial care to all family types and the necessity of educating healthcare professionals on respectful care. Together, these narratives demonstrate that although there are support services available, their efficacy is hampered by obstacles pertaining to stigma, awareness, accessibility, and institutional capacity. The well-being of single mother and their children can be significantly enhanced by strengthening these programs through staff training, community-inclusive initiatives, and policy reform.

4.5.1 The Discussion on the Support Services Provided to Single Mothers

The results of the support services narratives, counselling, legal assistance, financial assistance, parenting classes, referrals to non-governmental organisations, and health services, show serious deficiencies in the availability, quality, and inclusiveness of services for single mother. Notwithstanding the existence of structures, stigma, red tape, ignorance, and a lack of outreach are some of the obstacles that many single mothers must overcome to fully make use of the help that is available. For instance, the under-utilisation of parenting classes and counselling is frequently associated with feelings of shame and everyday survival demands, which reflects what Goffman (1963) called "spoilt identity," in which societal judgments adversely influence an individual's behavior and access.

Furthermore, marginalised women are disproportionately affected by structural inequality, which is shown by the inaccessibility of health and legal assistance facilities non decentralised areas (Chant, 2003). Informal support networks, such as

women's savings organisations, play an important role in demonstrating the tenacity of community-led solutions despite institutional failures. To provide fair and efficient support for single mother and their children, these findings point to the necessity of rights-based and culturally responsive reforms, better interagency cooperation, and more community awareness.

4.5.2 The Accessibility of Social Welfare Services to Single Mothers

The Accessibility of Social Welfare Services to Single Mothers such as the cost involved like transportation, quality of services provided and the bureaucracy. One of the community leaders pointed to transport and bureaucracy when narrated,

> *"In our community, the majority of single mothers reside distant from the district headquarters. They do not have the money to travel there. Even when they can leave, they encounter lengthy lines and are frequently instructed to return with additional paperwork. It deters people from asking for assistance*." One of the community leaders during a key informant interview

This narration demonstrates how substantial obstacles to service access are caused by bureaucratic red tape and transportation expenses. Decentralizing social welfare services, bringing them closer to communities, streamlining documentation procedures, and perhaps providing mobile outreach programs to reach low-income and distant single mother are the implications. On the same, one of the single mothers, narrated:

> *"When I finally reached the welfare office, I was treated like I was begging. No one explained clearly what I was entitled to. I left feeling ashamed and confused. I didn't go back." One of the social welfare officers during a key informant interview*

The low quality of service delivery, including impolite communication and insufficient information exchange, is reflected in this narration. To guarantee that

single mother feels supported rather than condemned, it is implied that social welfare workers must be given more training in capacity building, with a focus on client-centered care, dignity, and open communication. The accessibility of social welfare programs for single mother is significantly impacted by administrative complexity, geographical distance, and service quality, as these narratives collectively show. To make social services genuinely accessible and responsive, these obstacles must be removed through outreach programs, staff training, and legislative reform.

4.5.2.1 The Discussion on the Accessibility of Social Welfare Services to Single Mothers

Structural and systemic hurdles like low service quality, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and transportation costs frequently make it difficult for single mother to access social assistance services. Long commutes and prohibitive travel costs make it difficult for single mothers to get to district welfare offices in many low-resource environments, which restricts their capacity to get timely assistance (UN Women, 2015). Even when individuals do seek services, stigmatising attitudes, inadequately trained professionals, and ambiguous communication about their rights can degrade the quality of care, discouraging continued involvement.

Single mothers who might already lack the legal or financial means to comply are further excluded by bureaucratic procedures, such as the need for numerous paperwork and protracted waiting periods. These difficulties reflect a larger institutional gap in which welfare systems fall short in meeting the requirements of households headed by vulnerable women (Chant, 2003). Decentralised service delivery, staff capacity building, and streamlined processes are necessary to address

these problems and guarantee that single mother may easily and dignifiedly get care

4.5.3 The Perceived Quality of Social Welfare Services

The perceived quality of social welfare services such as types of service provided, feedback mechanisms, and follow up practices among social welfare officers. To collect the qualitative data, social welfare officers and the Municipal Director (MD) were the key informants, as they narrated, Pointing on the quality of services provided to single mothers, one of the social welfare officers narrated:

> *"Counseling, legal assistance, and referrals to non-governmental organizations are among the services we offer as social welfare officers; yet the demand frequently surpasses our ability to supply them.*

Revealing some of the challenges confronting the quality of social welfare services, one of the social welfare officers narrated:

> *Due to staffing limitations and inadequate transportation, particularly for home visits, we are unable to provide consistent follow-up.*

Moreover, another social welfare officer added:

> *Although we try to listen to single mothers, it might be challenging to determine their true feelings on the assistance they receive because we lack a systematic feedback system.*

Additionally, one of the social welfare officers noted that single mothers do not back for the services, when narrated:

> *Some single mothers never come back, leaving us to wonder if the procedure deterred them or if we actually made a difference."*

The effectiveness and reliability of social welfare services may be impacted by the gaps in service quality reflected in this narrative, which are linked to a lack of organised feedback systems, insufficient resources, and weak follow-up procedures.

To improve service delivery and client outcomes, it is implied that investments in staffing, monitoring systems, and client-centered approaches including frequent feedback loops and follow-ups are necessary. Exposing to the challenges facing social welfare officers in handling the constraints of single mothers in the Mpanda Municipal, the Municipal Director revealed,

> *"Social welfare officers are* essential *in helping our district's single mothers and their children. But a lot of obstacles prevent them from becoming effective. One significant problem is the lack of qualified staff, which puts an undue burden on the few officers that are available. This frequently results in burnout and restricts their capacity to offer all-encompassing help."*

Further still, the MD, noted:

> *"The Social Welfare Officers find it challenging to successfully conduct follow-up visits or reach rural communities due to a lack of funds and resources, including office supplies, communication tools, and transportation."*

Pointing on skills development and competencies, the MD further revealed:

> *"Another concern is the scarcity of* training *opportunities, which limits their ability to properly and sensitively manage complicated social issues."*

The MD concluded his narrations, when noted to other challenges and proposed a solution:

> *"The Social Welfare Officers frequently face social shame and community members' lack of collaboration, which can hinder their attempts to carry out programs effectively. Increased funding, coordinated government support, and continual professional development are necessary to address these issues and enable our social welfare officers to provide better services to our communities."*

Significant obstacles to the district's efficient provision of social welfare services are implied by the issues raised by the district director. Single mothers and their children

may be underserved because of the lack of skilled social welfare officers and their overwhelming workloads, which could lower the quality and scope of support services. Outreach initiatives are hampered by inadequate funding and a lack of necessary resources, particularly in isolated or difficult-to-reach locations, which may exacerbate social injustices.

Social welfare officers may not be adequately prepared to handle intricate and changing social issues due to a lack of training opportunities, which could compromise the effectiveness and professionalism of interventions. Additionally, program execution may be hampered by social stigma and a lack of community participation, which lowers trust and community engagement. When taken as a whole, these consequences highlight the pressing need for greater government commitment, more funding, and capacity-building programs to fortify social welfare systems and guarantee that disadvantaged groups get the assistance they require.

4.5.3 Discussion of the Perceived Quality of Social Welfare Services

Key issues with the quality of social welfare service delivery are revealed by the social welfare officer's narration, namely regarding the kinds of services provided, the lack of official feedback channels, and inadequate follow-up procedures. Despite the availability of services like legal aid, counselling, and referrals, their effectiveness is diminished by a lack of structured evaluation procedures, understaffing, and restricted mobility. Lack of structured client feedback restricts responsiveness to the special requirements of single mother and hinders service improvement (UNRISD, 2010).

Additionally, the inability to perform routine follow-ups results in a service gap, which lowers client trust and disengagement (Holosko, 2001). These problems highlight a larger structural flaw in welfare administration, where there are several services provided but their continuity and quality are jeopardised. Investments in human resources, the creation of frameworks for client feedback, and the institutionalisation of monitoring and evaluation systems are all necessary to improve results and provide more efficient, client-centered assistance for vulnerable groups, such as single mothers.

4.5.4 The Relevance of Ecological Systems the Support Provided by Social Welfare Officers for Single Mothers in Mpanda Municipal Council

Since it shows how many environmental systems affect the delivery and efficacy of social services, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is extremely pertinent to comprehending the assistance given by social welfare officials to single mothers in Mpanda Municipal Council. Social welfare workers work closely with single mothers at the microsystem level, providing them with services including legal assistance, counselling, and referrals that influence the mothers' immediate sense of empowerment and care.

However, the exosystem as institutional structures that impact service delivery capability, such as understaffed offices, a lack of staff, and poor inter-agency collaboration, often limits their potential to offer ongoing help. Additionally, the macrosystem, which consists of Mpanda's wider cultural values and social conventions, frequently stigmatises single parenthood, which influences how the

community and officials view and react to these mothers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These systemic issues highlight the need to consider the linked layers of the social environment when evaluating the efficacy of social welfare support. To provide fair and comprehensive support to single mother, the idea emphasises the necessity of multi-level interventions that combine individual support with institutional strengthening and cultural transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Chapter Overview

It is important to note that the study summary, recommendations, and conclusion were made from the study entitled "entitled "The Community's Perception on Single Motherhood Parenting. A Case Study at Mpanda Municipality" has three specific objectives, to assess the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting, to examine the community practices on single motherhood parenting, and to investigate the support provided by social welfare officers for single Mothers in Mpanda municipal council. Using these specific objectives, the chapter presents the findings, analysis and discussion. The study employed Social Cultural Theory to show its relevance to the presented specific objective. More details as presented.

5.2 Summary

The findings of this study on community perceptions of single motherhood in Mpanda Municipal Council are strongly aligned with the Social Ecological Framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which emphasizes that individual experiences are shaped by multiple, interacting layers of influence, including cultural, social, and institutional systems. At the microsystem level, single mothers rely on immediate social networks such as family and neighbors, which were shown to provide both support and occasional exclusion, reflecting the dual nature of community influence. At the mesosystem level, interactions between family, community, and institutions affected mothers' access to decision-making forums, childcare, and social inclusion.

The exosystem and macrosystem levels revealed the influence of cultural norms, traditions, and institutional support structures on parenting outcomes, where rigid patriarchal beliefs and limited welfare services created barriers for single mothers and their children. The qualitative findings, including stigma, exclusion from rituals, and reliance on informal support, underscore the ecological framework's relevance in explaining how multiple contextual layers interact to shape the lived experiences of single mothers.

This study also addresses a critical research gap identified in previous literature. While past studies have highlighted the rise of single motherhood in Tanzania and the socio-economic challenges associated with it, few studies have explored how cultural perceptions and community practices intersect with institutional support at the local level. By focusing specifically on Mpanda Municipal Council, this research provides localized insights into the cultural, social, and institutional barriers and supports experienced by single mothers highlighting both traditional constraints and emerging progressive attitudes. The findings demonstrate that despite social stigma and exclusion, single mothers exhibit resilience and rely on informal networks while institutional support remains limited and inconsistent. Therefore, the study contributes to closing the knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence of the complex interactions between cultural norms, community practices, and formal support systems, and how these influence the well-being of single mothers and their children in a Tanzanian municipal context.

5.2.1 The Cultural Perceptions on Single Motherhood Parenting

According to the study, conventional and patriarchal standards are at the core of

Mpanda Municipal Council's cultural views on single motherhood and parenting. Single motherhood is viewed by most community members, particularly elders and religious leaders, as a departure from normal family norms and is frequently linked to moral failure or irresponsibility. According to reports, single mothers face social stigma as they are viewed as "bad examples" or unsuitable parents.

In contrast to metropolitan areas, where younger populations demonstrated comparatively more tolerant attitudes, these perceptions were more prominent in rural wards. Furthermore, community attitudes were greatly impacted by cultural views on marriage, family honor, and the validity of offspring. As a result, single women and their children were frequently excluded from important social events like naming ceremonies and conversations about family inheritance. The self-esteem and social engagement of single mothers are adversely impacted by these cultural views.

5.2.2 The Community Practices on Single Motherhood Parenting

The results showed that discrimination and exclusion against single mothers and their children are still reflected in community activities. Single mothers are frequently disregarded or left out of decision-making processes like initiation rites or community gatherings. The idea that single mother' situation compromises traditional values is further supported by their reports of being excluded from leadership positions and ritual participation. Particularly in more traditional homes, it was discovered that customs like refusing to pay the bride price or opposing marriage proposals to daughters of single mother continued to exist. Additionally, because of the perceived "shame" of their family history, children of single mothers frequently experience social difficulties such as bullying and exclusion from peer

activities. Positive progress was observed, nevertheless, as some women's organisations and community leaders started to promote gender-sensitive and inclusive practices.

5.2.3 The Support Provided by Social Welfare Officers for Single Mothers

According to the report, Mpanda Municipal Council social welfare workers do offer counselling, legal assistance, and referrals to non-governmental organisations to single mothers, but the scope and efficacy of these services are restricted. Underfunding, inadequate outreach transportation, a lack of follow-up procedures, and an absence of official feedback systems are some of the main obstacles. Furthermore, many single mothers are deterred from requesting assistance by the stigma and bureaucratic delays in service systems. Despite these obstacles, some cops showed a great deal of dedication, especially when it came to connecting single mother with unofficial support networks like women's organisations. However, cultural resistance and institutional constraints continue to limit the overall impact.

5.3 Conclusion

The study indicates that cultural beliefs, community behaviors, and institutional support systems greatly shape single mothers parenting in Mpanda Municipal Council based on the results from the three specified objectives. Single mothers are still stigmatised by cultural views that are firmly anchored in traditional norms, portraying them as morally dubious and socially abnormal. This stigma restricts their children's social acceptance and has a detrimental effect on their involvement in traditional rites. Furthermore, by keeping single mothers out of cultural rites and decision-making forums, communal practices further marginalise them and their

children. Change is still sluggish, despite some new voices, especially from progressive leaders and young people, expressing changing perspectives.

Social welfare officers offer crucial institutional support services like counselling and legal help, but their influence is diminished by bureaucratic obstacles, a lack of funding, and inadequate outreach. As a result, unofficial networks are frequently used by single mothers to get help. The general conclusion is that a comprehensive strategy that includes strengthening of social welfare system strengthening, cultural change, and community sensitisation is needed to address the issues lone mother face. Single mothers and their children will continue to experience systemic exclusion, limited prospects, and enduring socioeconomic disparities in the absence of such initiatives.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proposed.

5.4.1 Community Sensitization and Cultural Transformation Campaigns

It is proposed that the Mpanda Municipal Council launch ongoing community awareness and sensitisation programs in cooperation with civil society organisations, religious institutions, and local leaders to counteract the stigmatisation and unfavorable cultural conceptions of single mother. While advancing the ideals of inclusivity, respect, and shared responsibility, these campaigns ought to concentrate on informing the public about the rights, worth, and contributions of single mothers. The initiatives should dispel antiquated notions that link being a single mother to moral failure by using venues including community meetings, religious assemblies,

and educational forums. Cultural changes towards equity and tolerance can be promoted by promoting communication between women, youth, and elders.

5.4.2 Inclusive Participation of Single Mothers in Community Practices and Decision-Making Forums

Promoting the active participation of single mothers in decision-making, cultural customs, and community leadership is crucial. Guidelines should be established by local government officials to guarantee that women, particularly single mothers, are represented in parenting groups, village committees, and traditional events like initiation rituals and naming ceremonies. Single mothers can become more visible and have an impact on establishing community standards and meeting their family' needs by instituting inclusive participation. Additionally, this strategy can aid in the elimination of discriminatory practices like denying children of single mothers the ability to inherit or to marry.

5.4.3 Strengthening Social Welfare Services and Outreach Mechanisms

The study suggests that the Mpanda Municipal Council's Department of Social Welfare expands its ability to offer single mother responsive, high-quality, and easily accessible services. This entails hiring more employees, educating police on client-centered and gender-sensitive methods, and decentralising services to reach outlying regions. Service shortfalls can be filled by setting up mobile welfare clinics and enhancing cooperation with nearby NGOs. Furthermore, the establishment of official feedback and follow-up mechanisms will guarantee that services are continuously enhanced in response to customer experiences. Additionally, social welfare agencies must organise frequent meetings where single mothers can express their worries,

make suggestions for enhancements, and establish connections with support systems. These initiatives will boost single mothers' use of services and foster more confidence in the welfare system.

5.4.3 Area for Further Study

Future studies are recommended to concentrate on the mental and emotional health of kids raised by single mother in culturally conservative community like Mpanda Municipal Council. Even though the current study looked at institutional support systems and cultural attitudes, further research is needed to fully understand how stigma, exclusion, and restricted access to community rituals impact children's development, self-esteem, and social integration in single-mother households. Deeper understanding of the generational effects of cultural attitudes would be possible with this additional research, which would also help guide child-centered initiatives that support single mothers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

To whom it may concern,

Ref: Academic research on assessing community's practices on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda Municipal council.

I, Victoria Eliya Massatu, a student of the Open University of Tanzania doing an academic research on community practices on single motherhood parenting, Mpanda municipal council. The study is in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW). The purpose of this letter is therefore to request you to fill in the attached interview guide questions and interview checklist questions that provide necessary information relating to the research. The information provided in the Interviews was solely be used for academic purposes and was treated with utmost confidentiality. Your assistance was be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

…… .....

Victoria Eliya Massatu

APPENDIX II

(Interview guiding questions for Health Care Providers and Community Health workers)

1. Would you please tell me about how you define single motherhood parenting in your community?……

2. Would you please share with me about the cultural perceptions on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council?.....

3 Would you please tell me about the communities' practices on single motherhood parenting in Mpanda municipal council?

……

4. Would you please share with me about any traditional practices or customs that affect single motherhood parenting?

……

5. Would you please tell me about the challenges single mothers face in accessing education, healthcare, or employment?

……

……..

6**.** Would you please share with me about the support provided by social welfare officers for single motherhood in Mpanda municipal council? ……

……..

7. Would you please tell me about the challenges social welfare officers face in supporting single motherhood parenting??

……..

APPENDIX V: Interview checklist guiding questions (Focus Group Discussion)

(Focusing on religious leaders, street/local leaders, village executive officers)

1. Would you please tell me about how religious/traditional values influence people's views on single motherhood parenting?

.....

2. Would you please share with me how cultural beliefs/traditions influence people's perceptions of single mothers in your community?

.....

3. Would you please tell me about any community programs or initiatives aimed at supporting single mothers?

……

4. Would you please share with me how community practices impact the parenting experiences of single mothers?

.....

5. Would you please tell me about the challenges single mothers face in your community?

.....

6. Would you please share with me your perceptions as religious leaders on single motherhood parenting? And when they experience abuse, how do you address it compared to a married mother raising her child alone?

.....……

…

APPENDIX III: Interview checklist guiding questions for single motherhood

1 Would you please tell me about how cultural perceptions on single motherhood affect the lives of single mothers in your community?

.....

2. Would you please share with me about any cultural stigma associated with single motherhood in your community? If so, what are they?

.....

3. Would you please tell me about any traditional values or norms which either support or discourage single motherhood parenting in your community?

.....

4. Would you please share with me about the kind of challenges single mothers experience from the community in terms of social interactions and acceptance?

.....

APPENDIX VII: Interview guide questions for Social Welfare Officers

1. Would you please tell me about the kind of support social welfare officers provide to single mothers?

……

2. Would you please share with me about any specific programs, interventions, or services offered by social welfare officers to assist single motherhood parenting?

……

3. Would you please tell me about the improvements you think could be made to the support provided by social welfare officers to single motherhood parenting?

……

APPENDIX IV: Interview guide questions for Municipal Director of Mpanda

1. Would you please tell me about how your community generally views single motherhood parenting? And how do cultural beliefs influence these perceptions?

.....

2. Would you please share with me about any specific community-based initiatives or programs aimed at helping single mothers? If so, how effective are they?

……

3. Would you please tell me about the role social welfare officers play in supporting single mothers in your area?

……

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

KIAMBATANISHO V

(Maswali ya mahojiano kwa Watoa Huduma za Afya ngazi ya Jamii na Wataalamu wa Afya.(Madaktari,wauguzi na wakunga)

1. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia jinsi unavyotafsiri malezi ya uzazi wa mama asiye na mume katika jamii yako?

……

2. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu mitazamo ya kitamaduni juu ya uzazi wa mama saiye na mume katika halmashauri ya manispaa ya Mpanda?

.....

3. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu desturi za jamii kuhusu uzazi wa mama asiye na mume katika halmashauri ya manispaa ya Mpanda?

……

4. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu desturi au mila zozote zinazohusiana na uzazi wa mama asiye na mume?

……

5. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu changamoto wanazokumbana nazo wamama wa wasio na mume katika kupata elimu, huduma za afya, au ajira?

……

6. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu msaada unaotolewa na maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii kwa wanawake wasio na wanaume katika halmashauri ya manispaa ya Mpanda?

……

7. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu changamoto wanazokumbana nazo maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii katika kusaidia wanawake wasio na wanaume?

……

KIAMBATANISHO V: (Maswali ya mwongozo wa mahojiano – Majadiliano kwa viongozi wa kidini, viongozi wa mitaani/mitaa, maafisa watendaji wa vijiji)

1. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu jinsi maadili ya kidini/kitamaduni yanavyoathiri mitazamo ya watu juu ya malezi ya uzazi wa wanawake wasio na wanaume? .....

2. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu jinsi imani/mila za kitamaduni zinavyoathiri mitazamo ya watu kuhusu wamama wasio na wanaume katika jamii yako? .....

3. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu programu au mipango yoyote ya jamii inayolenga kusaidia wamama wasio na wanaume? ……

4. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu jinsi desturi za jamii zinavyoathiri uzoefu wa malezi wa mama wasio na wanaume? .....

5. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu changamoto wanazokumbana nazo wamama wasio na wanaume katika jamii yako?

.....

6. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu mitazamo yako kama viongozi wa kidini juu ya uzazi wa single motherhood? Na wanapokutana na dhuluma, unashughulikiaje ukilinganisha na mama aliyeolewa na kulea mtoto peke yake?

KIAMBATANISHO VI:

(Maswali ya mwongozo wa mahojiano kwa wanawake wanaolea watoto wao wenyewe).

1. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu jinsi mitazamo ya kitamaduni juu ya uzazi wanawake wasio na wanaume inavyoathiri maisha ya wamama hawa katika jamii yako?.....

2. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu unyanyapaa wa kitamaduni unaohusiana na uzazi wa wamama wasio na wanaume katika jamii yako? Ikiwa upo, ni upi? .....

3. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu maadili au mila zozote ambazo zinaunga mkono au kupinga uzazi wa malezi ya wanawake wasio na wanaume katika jamii yako? .....

4. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu aina ya changamoto wanazokumbana nazo wamama wasio na wanaume kutoka kwa jamii katika masuala ya mwingiliano wa kijamii na kukubalika? .....

KIAMBATANISHO VII

(Maswali ya mahojiano kwa Maafisa wa Ustawi wa Jamii)

1. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu aina ya msaada unaotolewa na maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii kwa wamama wasio wanaume/wasioolewa?

……

2. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu mipango, maingilio, au huduma maalum zinazotolewa na maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii kusaidia uzazi wasio na wanaume?

……

3. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu maboresho unayofikiri yanaweza kufanywa kwa msaada unaotolewa na maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii kwa uzazi wasio na wanaume?

……

KIAMBATANISHO VIII

(Maswali ya mwongozo wa mahojiano kwa Mkurugenzi wa Manispaa ya Mpanda)

1. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu jinsi jamii yako kwa ujumla inavyotazama malezi ya mama mlezi pekee? Na jinsi imani za kitamaduni zinavyoathiri mitazamo hii?

.....

2. Tafadhali, unaweza kushiriki nami kuhusu mipango au programu yoyote maalum ya jamii inayolenga kusaidia wamama mlezi pekee? Ikiwa ipo, zina ufanisi gani? ……

3. Tafadhali, unaweza kuniambia kuhusu jukumu la maafisa wa ustawi wa jamii katika kusaidia wamama walezi pekee katika eneo lako? ……

AHSANTE KWA KUSHIRIKI

APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTER

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

Ref. No OUT/PG202386582 **24th May 2025**

Municipal Director, Mpanda Municipal Council,

P.O. Box 216,

KATAVI.

Dear Director,

RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MS. VICTORIA ELIYA MASATU, REG NO: PG202386582

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1st March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1st January 2007.In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance,

on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Ms. Victoria Eliya Massatu, Reg.No: PG202386582,** pursuing **Master of Social Work** (**MSW**)**.** We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled **"Assessing The Community's Perception On Single Motherhood Parenting: A Case Study at Mpanda Municipality"** She will collect her data at your area from 26th May to 30th June 2025.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820.We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

Prof.Gwahula Raphael Kimamala

For: VICE CHANCELLOR

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
REGIONALADMINISTRATION AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MPANDA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
Please specify
Ref. NO.KTV/MMC/P.IO/I
VICE CHANCELLOR 25/05/2025

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA
P.O.BOX 23409
DAR ES SALAA – KINONDONI

REF: ACCEPTANCE TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH WORK

Reference is hereby made to the letter with reference number OUT/PG202286897 data on May 24, 2025 requested for permission to conduct data collection and research working from May 26 to 30 June, 2025.

With this letter, the Director of Mpanda Municipal Council has agreed to allow Ms. Victoria Eliya Masatu to conduct her research and practical training at Mpanda Municispal Council.

The Office expects the student to utilize her skills and knowledge learnt in the classroom into Office practices that could help our organization to grow as well as the Nation

Thank you for your cooperation

Sophia J. Kumbuli
Municipal Director

Municipal Director
MPANDA

MKURUGENZI WA MANISPAA
MANISPAA YA MPANDA
S. L. P. 216
MPANDA-KATAVI

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, Phone : +255 252957128 Fax: +255 25 29357129 email adress: md@mpandamc.go.tz;