

# Examining The Survival Strategies of Single-Headed Homes: A Case Study of Livingstone District

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**Abstract**— The phenomenon of single-headed households, where one adult assumes the responsibility of raising children without a partner, is a global trend observed in Zambia and beyond. These households face numerous challenges, from economic hardships to limited access to resources and social support. This research investigates the survival strategies of single-headed households in the unique socio-economic context of Livingstone District, Zambia. Livingstone District, with its diverse social and economic challenges, serves as a representative case study for regions facing similar issues. The rise of single-parent households is driven by factors such as increased divorces, separations, non-marital childbearing, and the loss of a spouse or partner. Economic factors, including poverty, also contribute to the formation of single-headed households. In Zambia, they constituted 28.4% of households, with 18.4% being female-headed and 10% male-headed, facing an increased likelihood of living in poverty. Single parents, primarily mothers, often bear the financial responsibilities alone, posing challenges in regions with limited job opportunities and lower incomes. This research fills a crucial gap by offering localized insights into the survival strategies of single-headed households, informing policy development, enhancing community support, improving service provision, empowering these households, and contributing to academic knowledge. Employing a mixed-methods approach in both urban and rural areas of Livingstone District, the study aims to examine economic survival strategies, assess empowerment program effectiveness, and understand poverty indicators and causes. Resilience theory and social capital theory guide the research, focusing on protective factors, adaptive processes, and the role of social networks in facilitating well-being. Ultimately, this study contributes to understanding the specific survival strategies of single-headed households in Livingstone District, offering insights for policy, community support, services, and academic understanding.

**Keywords**— single-headed households, survival strategies, Economic factors, Livingstone District.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the, background of the study, problem identification, purpose, rationale, objectives identification and stating the significance of the study. In addition, the research will outline the theoretical framework.

### 1.1 Background

The increase in the number of single-parent households is a significant social trend that has been observed in many countries. A single-parent household refers to a household that is headed by one person, either male or female, who assumes the responsibility of providing for the welfare and livelihood of the household members, typically their children. There are several factors contributing to the rise in single-parent households. These include an increase in divorces and separations, a higher prevalence of non-marital childbearing, and the death of a spouse or partner. Economic factors, such as poverty and financial instability, can also play a role in the formation of single-headed households. According to the 2010 Census of Population and Housing, single-headed homes constituted 28.4% of all households in Zambia, with female-headed households accounting for

18.4% and male-headed households for 10% (Central Statistical Office, 2012).

Single-headed households often face various challenges and risks that can have a significant impact on the well-being of both the parent and the children. One of the primary challenges is the increased likelihood of living in poverty. Single parents often have to shoulder the financial responsibilities of the household alone, which can be difficult, especially if they face limited job opportunities or have lower incomes. Another challenge faced by single-headed households is food insecurity. Limited financial resources can lead to inadequate access to nutritious food, which can negatively impact the health and development of children (Eamon, M. 2005). Lack of access to social services is another issue that single-headed households may encounter. They may struggle to access affordable housing, healthcare, childcare, and educational resources. This can further exacerbate their economic hardships and limit their opportunities for social and economic mobility. Single parents, particularly single mothers, may also face gender discrimination in various aspects of their lives. This can include unequal pay and limited career

advancement opportunities, making it even more challenging for them to provide for their families adequately (Rogan, M. 2015).

The survival strategies of single-headed homes in Livingstone district are not well documented or understood. There is a need to explore how these households cope with their challenges and risks, and what factors influence their choices and outcomes. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the survival strategies of single-headed homes in Livingstone district, Zambia.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

From the background, Single-headed homes are among the most vulnerable groups in Zambia. They face multiple challenges and risks that affect their livelihoods and well-being. However, there is limited research on how these households survive and what strategies they employ to cope with their situations. From the background information, single parented children are increasing in number in Zambia. According to the Basic Education Statistics in Zambia (BEST, 2009) a total number of 149,239 secondary school children were living in single parent families, the number has risen to 177,465 in the year 2012 which is equivalent to about 9.4% of all secondary school in Zambia. The number is increasing rapidly so this need research to identify the challenges encountered by these students as this increase is big in four years. As single-headed homes become more prevalent, it is essential to examine their survival strategies to inform policy interventions and support systems that can enhance the well-being and resilience of these vulnerable households. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze the survival strategies adopted by single-headed households in Livingstone District, shedding light on their coping mechanisms, resource utilization, and potential areas for improvement in support systems and interventions.

### **1.3 General objective**

To examine the survival strategies of single-headed homes in Livingstone district, Zambia.

### **1.4 Specific objectives**

- i. To examine the main economic survival strategies utilized by the vulnerable single headed homes
- ii. To examine the effectiveness of empowerment programs (institutional support) in supporting vulnerable single headed homes

- iii. To access poverty situation of vulnerable single headed homes.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- i. What are the main economic survival strategies utilized by vulnerable single headed homes in Livingstone district?
- ii. How effective are empowerment programs (institutional support) in supporting vulnerable single headed homes in Livingstone?
- iii. What are the indicators and causes of poverty among vulnerable single headed homes in Livingstone?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This research on survival strategies among single-headed households in Livingstone District is important for several reasons. Firstly, it fills a research gap by focusing on this specific geographical area, providing localized insights that enhance our understanding of how these households survive. Secondly, it can improve service provision by guiding organizations like NGOs to tailor their programs to meet the unique needs of single-headed households, offering services from financial support to counseling. Thirdly, it empowers these households by showcasing successful survival strategies, motivating others and fostering self-efficacy. Lastly, it contributes to academic knowledge, serving as a foundation for further research in this field. Overall, this study has the potential to positively impact the lives of single-headed households in Livingstone District by informing the development of more effective policies and programs.

### **1.7 Theoretical framework**

This study employs two key theoretical frameworks to analyze and comprehend the survival strategies of single-headed households in Livingstone District: resilience theory and social capital theory. Resilience theory highlights the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt, recover, and grow in the face of adversity, emphasizing factors like personal strengths, coping mechanisms, and social support networks that contribute to resilience. Social capital theory underscores the significance of social connections and support systems in promoting well-being, focusing on the role of social networks, relationships, and community resources in accessing information, resources, and opportunities (Eamon, M. 2005). By integrating these theories, the study examines how individual strengths, social networks, and community resources interact to shape the survival strategies of

single-headed households, offering insights into their well-being and resilience. Furthermore, these frameworks provide a foundation for evaluating existing support systems, identifying areas for improvement, and enhancing interventions and policies aimed at enhancing the lives of single-headed households in the region.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Overview

This section aims to present a critical review of existing literature on the research subject, drawing on empirical studies. As defined by Kombo and Tromp (2006), a literature review entails an account of publications by accredited scholars and researchers, including exploratory documents like books, magazines, journals, and dissertations relevant to the study. Specifically focusing on vulnerable single-headed households, particularly those led by single parents or individuals facing economic hardships, the literature emphasizes the distinct challenges these homes encounter in maintaining economic stability and meeting family needs. Understanding the economic survival strategies employed by these households is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems. Previous research highlights that such households often adopt diverse economic survival strategies to navigate financial challenges, aiming to maximize resources and mitigate vulnerabilities. This understanding can inform policymakers, researchers, and social service providers in devising targeted interventions and support systems for achieving economic stability in these households.

A half of all marriages seemed to begin in the mid-1970s projected to end in divorce (Kibel and Wagtaff, 2006). Recent statistics indicates that the future divorce rates may be even higher. The remarriage of a divorced custodial parent results in a third family configuration that is experienced by an increasing number of children predicted that 35% of all children born in the early 1980s will live with a stepparent during part of their childhood (Kibel and Wagtaff, 2006).

Single parenting is faced with many trials. Along are the problems on financial, emotional, and social aspects but even though it is hard to be a single parent. The elements such as financial, emotional and social aspect has be discussed in more details; where possible each of them should be given enough attention it deserves It also has a good result when it comes to the relationship between the parent and child the parent's problems have effects to the children (Kaimen, 2011)

Empowerment comes from the word empower which means 'to empower' (Keshab, 2013). Empowerment is an interdependent multidimensional process and reflects the changes in power relations (Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). Empowerment enables the poor individuals to think beyond their daily needs, to have control over their resources and to make better choices (Samia & Selma, 2013).

Jones and Smith (2018) conducted a comprehensive study evaluating the impact of empowerment programs on single-parent households. They found that programs providing financial literacy training and access to affordable childcare services significantly improved the economic stability of single parents. Additionally, these programs were associated with higher rates of employment and reduced reliance on social welfare.

Long-term assessments of empowerment programs' effectiveness are crucial. Anderson et al. (2023) conducted a 10-year longitudinal study on single-headed households that participated in empowerment programs. They found that sustained program involvement led to increased financial stability, higher educational attainment among parents, and improved overall family well-being over time.

The concept of valuable single headed household's empowerment has been articulated in the policy statements of several international institutions such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), etc. (Datta and Mukheerjee, 2009: 79). All the above conventions and programmes focused that, for successful empowerment of women, education of women and participation in decision making processes, providing them with economic benefits and large representation in politics needs to be encouraged. During the early stages of the first plan period (1951-56), the focus on single-headed households revolved around a welfare approach that encompassed the development of women along with other disadvantaged groups, including destitute, disabled, and aged individuals. This welfare approach to addressing the challenges faced by single-headed households remained effective throughout the second to fifth plans (1974-79), with increased emphasis on women's education, maternal and child health.

**2.2 Personal critique of the literature review**

While the existing research offers a comprehensive overview, there are certain aspects that merit further examination and critique. One notable limitation in the literature is the lack of diversity in the contexts studied. According to Kearney (2008), many of the cited studies primarily focus on single-parent households in Western societies. While these studies provide valuable insights into the experiences of single parents in these contexts, they may not fully capture the unique challenges faced by single-headed households in diverse cultural, economic, and geographical settings. It would be beneficial to include more research that explores survival strategies in non-Western or culturally distinct contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

According to Rogan, M. (2015) Much of the existing literature on single-headed households has traditionally centered on female-headed households. This emphasis often stems from the historical prevalence of women taking on the primary caregiving role in single-parent families. While this focus is valid and essential, it is crucial to recognize that single-parent households are not exclusively headed by women. There is a growing and diverse population of single fathers who are taking

on the responsibilities of raising their children on their own.

**2.3 Establishment of research gaps**

While a significant body of research exists on single mothers and their experiences, there is a conspicuous gap in the literature concerning single fathers. Single fathers represent a growing demographic within single-headed households (Marsiglio, 2004). However, their unique challenges, coping strategies, and experiences in the Livingstone District remain understudied. Understanding the distinct dynamics faced by single fathers is crucial to develop comprehensive support systems that cater to the needs of all single-headed households.

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Research Design/Methods/Approach**

The research methodology employed in this study focuses on understanding the survival strategies of single-headed households in Livingstone District, Zambia. Using a qualitative research design, the study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of single-headed household heads, providing insights into the challenges they face and the coping mechanisms they employ.

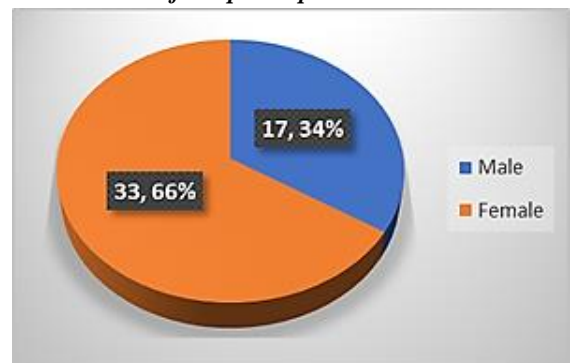
Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	50	41.8	8.386091	27	61

The research design outlines the systematic plan for the investigation, employing a case study method to investigate the contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context of Livingstone District. A sample size of 50 participants is chosen carefully to balance the need for sufficient data and resource constraints. Questionnaire surveys, featuring both closed-ended and open-ended questions, to efficiently collect quantitative data on income sources, coping mechanisms, social support, and overall well-being (Creswell, 2009).

Data collection methods include questionnaires and interviews, ensuring a comprehensive approach. The analysis involves Descriptive Statistics for quantitative data using SPSS software and Thematic Analysis for qualitative data using NVivo software. Triangulation is adopted to enhance validity through a combination of data sources. Economic hardships in peri-urban areas pose a limitation, as participants may be occupied with seeking income, affecting accessibility.

**V. HELPFUL HINTS RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1 Presentation of results on background characteristics of the participants**



*Figure 4.1 Gender*

Out of the total 50 participants, 34% (17 individuals) identified as male, while a larger proportion of 66% (33 individuals) identified as female as shown in Figure 4.1. This distribution indicates a higher prevalence of female-headed single households in the Livingstone District.

**Table 4.1 Age**

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	50	41.8	8.386091	27	61

The table 4.1 provides a summary of the age distribution among the 50 respondents. The mean age of the respondents is approximately 41.8 years, indicating that, on average, the surveyed individuals are in their early forties. The standard deviation, which measures the

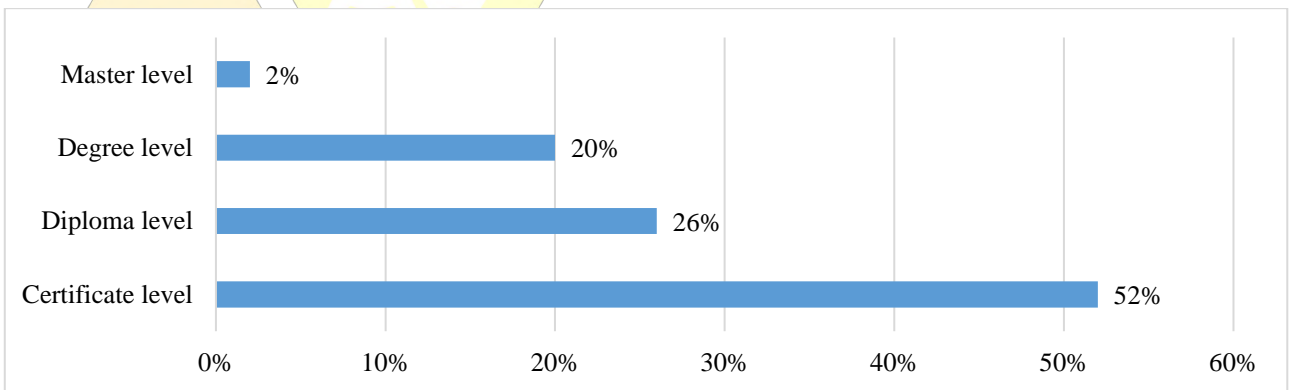
degree of variation in ages, is approximately 8.39 years. The age range within our sample spans from 27 to 61 years, highlighting the diversity in the ages of our participants.

**Table 4.2 Family size**

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Family size	50	3.88	1.39445	1	8

As shown in table 4.2, the mean family size is approximately 3.88, indicating that, on average, a single-headed household in the Livingstone District consists of nearly 4 individuals. The standard deviation

of 1.39445 suggests that there is some variability in family sizes among the surveyed households. The range of family sizes observed in the study varied from a minimum of 1 member to a maximum of 8 members.

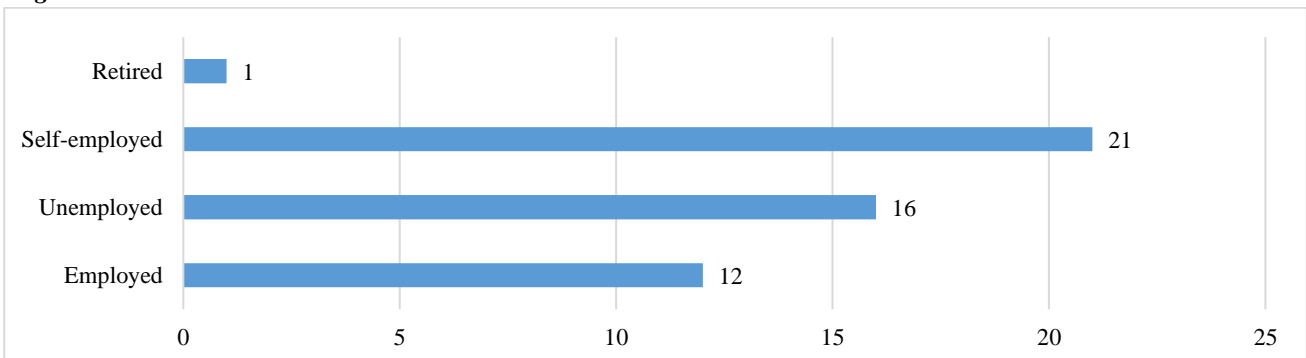


**Figure 4.2 Education levels**

Figure 4.2 displays the educational achievements of the 50 study participants, revealing the distribution across different levels. The majority, comprising 52%, have achieved the "Certificate" level, totaling 26 individuals. Following this, 26% reported holding a "Diploma,"

consisting of 13 participants. Approximately 20% reached the "Degree" level, involving 10 individuals. Lastly, a small fraction, constituting 2% of the total, have attained education at the "Master" level.

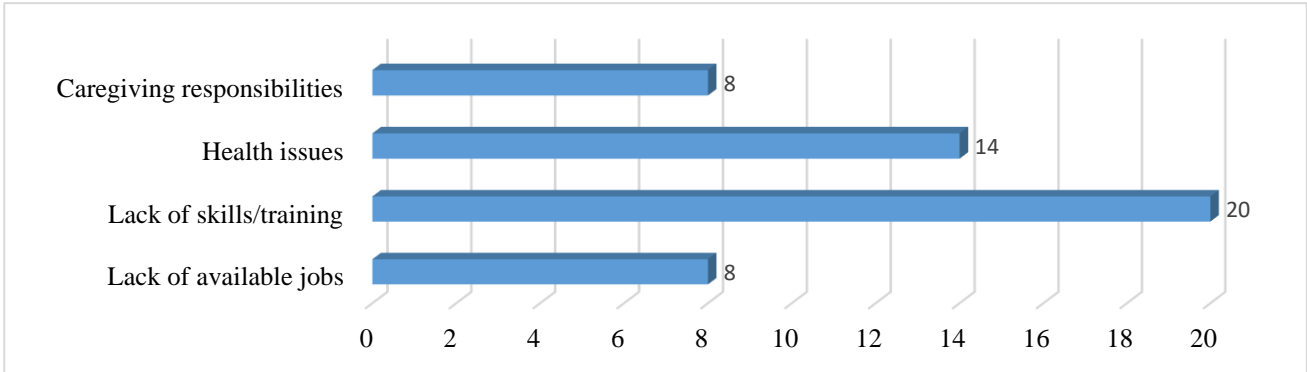
**4.2 Presentation of results based on examining the main economic survival strategies utilized by the vulnerable single headed homes.**



**Figure 4.3 Employment status**

The Figure 4.3 illustrates the employment status, among the respondents, 24% (12 individuals) indicated that they are currently employed, about 32% (16 individuals) of the participants reported being unemployed. Furthermore, 42% (21 individuals) of the respondents

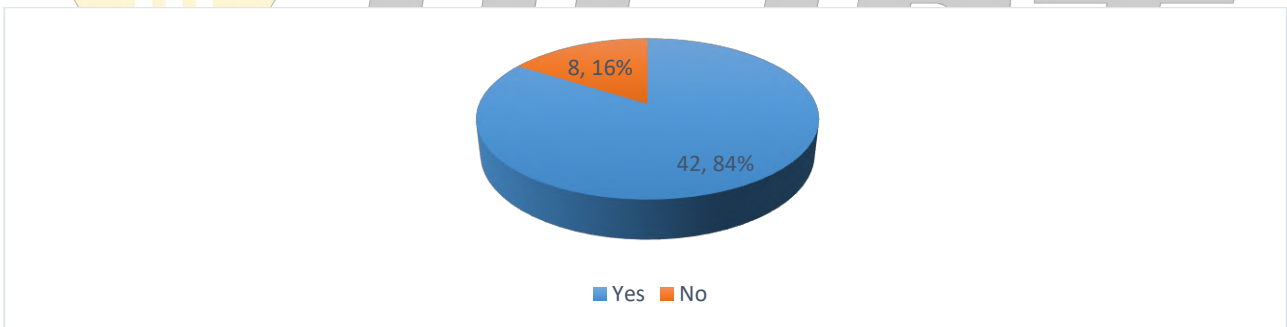
identified as self-employed. A minimal percentage 2% (1 individual) of respondents mentioned being retired, indicating that a very small fraction of single-headed households have transitioned to retirement.



**Figure 4.4** Reasons of unemployment

The above Figure 4.4 presents the primary reasons for unemployment among respondents who are currently not employed within the context of the study. Among 50 surveyed individuals, lack of skills/training emerged as the most prevalent reason, with 40% (20 individuals) citing it as their primary obstacle to employment. Health

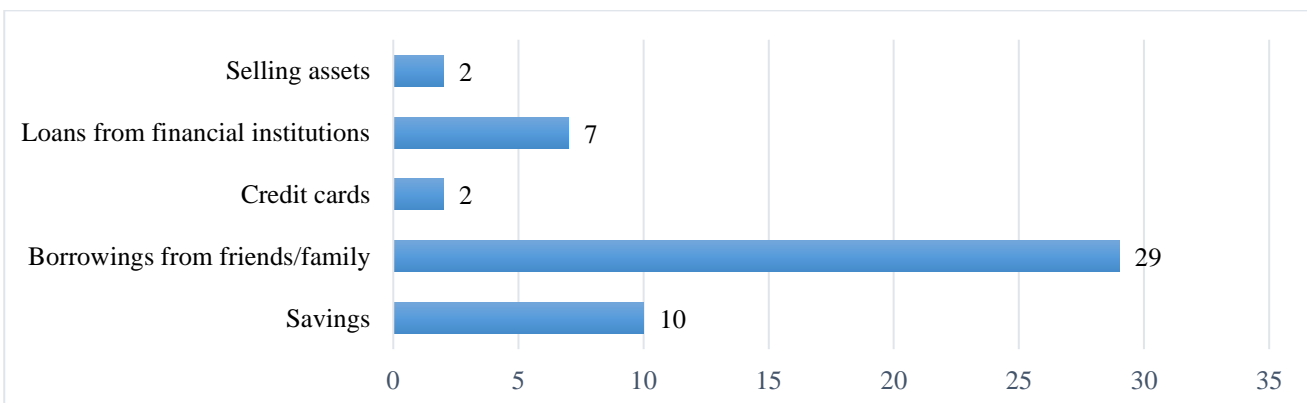
issues were noted by 28% of respondents (14 individuals), highlighting the significance of healthcare support. Caregiving responsibilities were reported by 16% (8 individuals), indicating the impact of family care duties on employment. Eight respondents (16%) also mentioned the lack of available jobs as a barrier.



**Figure 4.5** Income earner

Among the respondents, a significant majority of 84% (42 individuals) indicated that they are the sole income earners in their households. Conversely, 16% (8

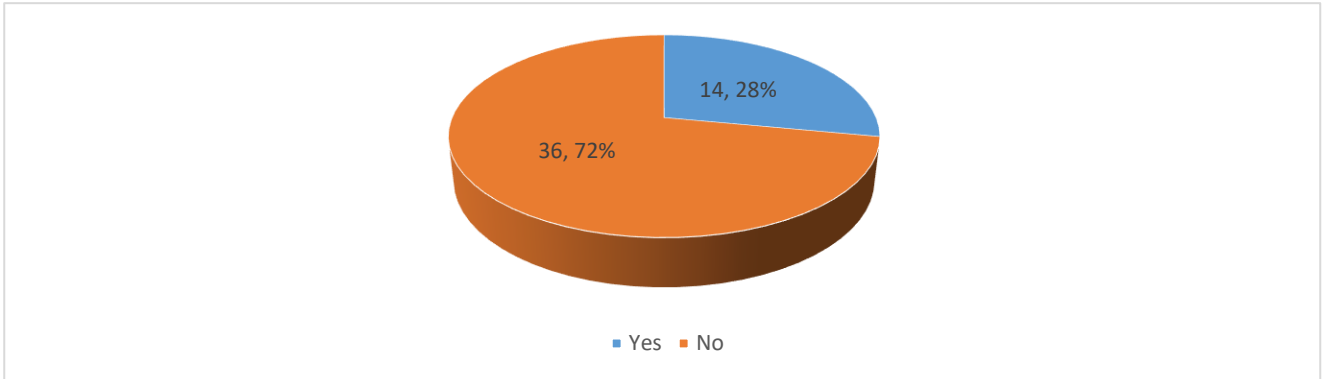
individuals) of participants stated that they are not the sole income earners in their households as shown in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4.6** Financial emergencies

Figure 4.6 provides insights into how respondents handle financial emergencies or unexpected expenses. The most common strategy is borrowing from friends or family, chosen by 58% (29 individuals). Savings are employed by 20% (10 individuals), while 14% (7

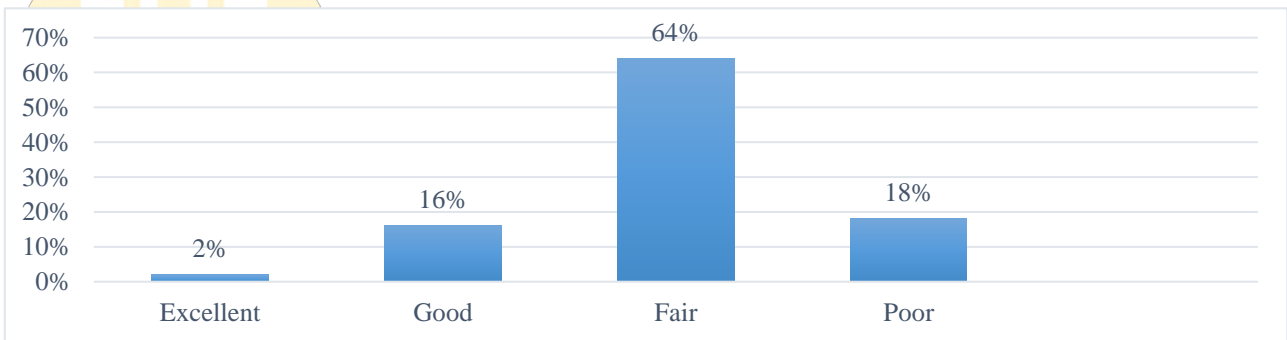
individuals) resort to loans from financial institutions. Selling assets and using credit cards are less commonly used, each selected by only 4% (2 individuals) of respondents.



**Figure 4.7** Receive any assistance

Figure 4.7 reveals that 28% of respondents (14 individuals) receive aid from local community programs or NGOs, while the majority, 72% (36 individuals), do not. This indicates that while a significant portion of

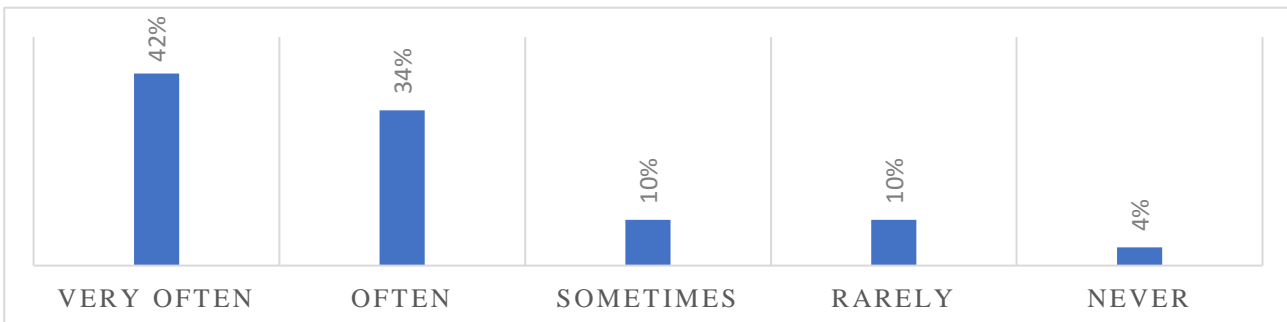
household's benefits from external support, a substantial number rely on their own resources and strategies to navigate their circumstances.



**Figure 4.8** Current financial situation

The Figure 4.8 provides insights into how respondents perceive their current financial situation, when asked to rate their financial situation, only 2% of respondents described it as "Excellent." A larger proportion of respondents, 16%, rated their financial situation as

"Good." While still a minority, the majority of participants, constituting 64% of the respondents, described their financial situation as "Fair." Lastly, 18% of respondents rated their financial situation as "Poor."



**Figure 4.9** Meeting basic

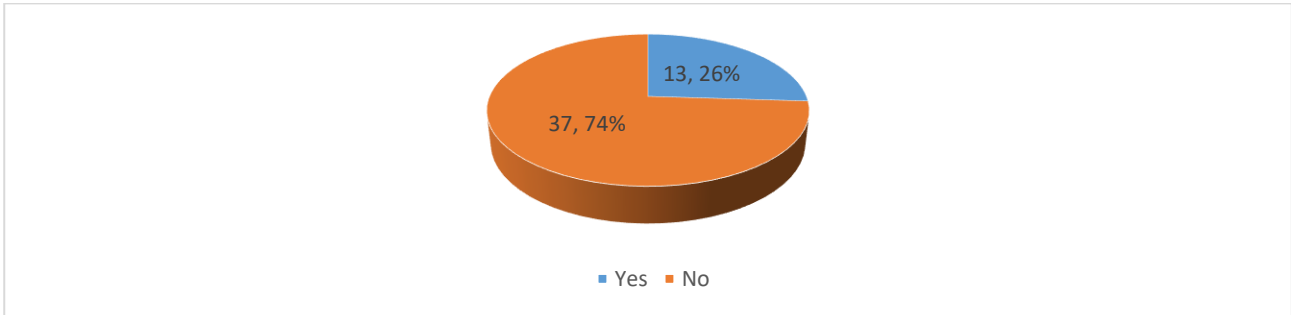
Figure 4.9 offers insights into the frequency at which respondents encounter challenges in meeting basic

needs, among the 50 respondents, 21 participants (42%) indicated that they face challenges in meeting basic

needs "Very often." Another 17 participants (34%) reported facing such challenges "Often." A smaller segment, representing 5 participants (10%), mentioned facing these challenges "Sometimes." Additionally, 5 participants (10%) reported encountering such

challenges "Rarely." A minority of 2 Participants (4%) reported that they never face challenges in meeting their basic needs. While this group represents a small portion of the sample, their perspective offers a contrast to the experiences of the majority.

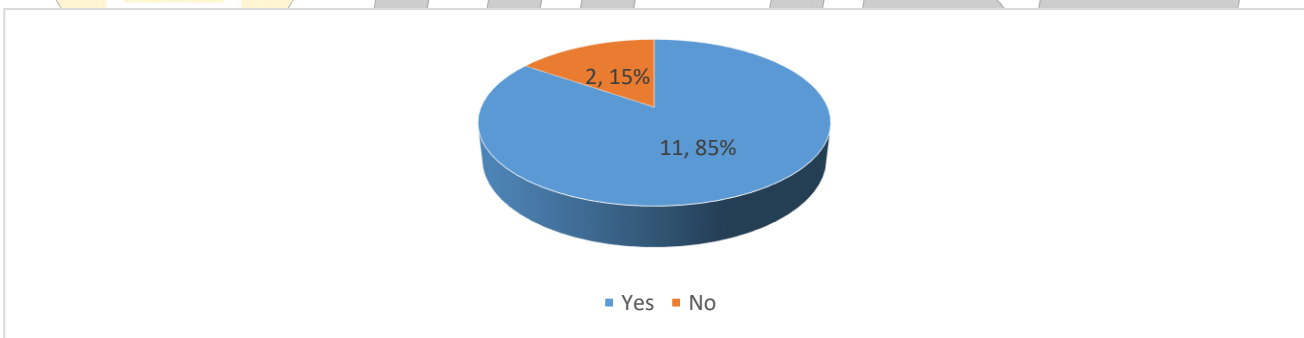
**4.3 Presentation of results based on examining the effectiveness of empowerment programs (institutional support) in supporting vulnerable single headed homes**



**Figure 4.10 Empowerment programs**

Figure 4.10 offers insights into respondents' awareness of empowerment programs or institutional support available to them, among the 50 respondents, 13 (26%) indicated that they are aware of empowerment programs

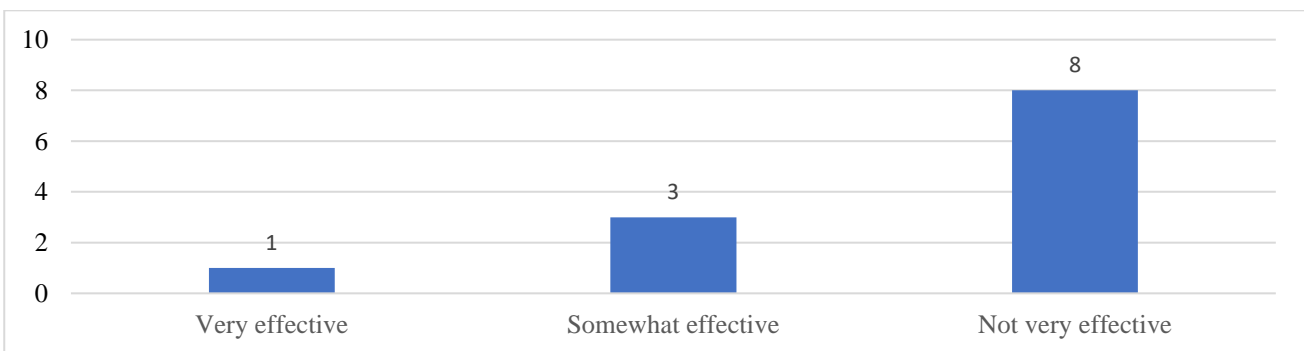
or institutional support available to them. On the other hand, the majority of 37 participants (74%) reported that they are not aware of any empowerment programs or institutional support.



**Figure 4.11 Participation**

Figure 4.11 offers insights into the participation of respondents who are aware of empowerment programs or institutional support, among the respondents who are aware of empowerment programs or institutional

support, 85% (11 individuals) indicated that they have participated in these programs. Conversely, a smaller proportion 15% (2 individuals) reported that they have not participated in any of these programs.

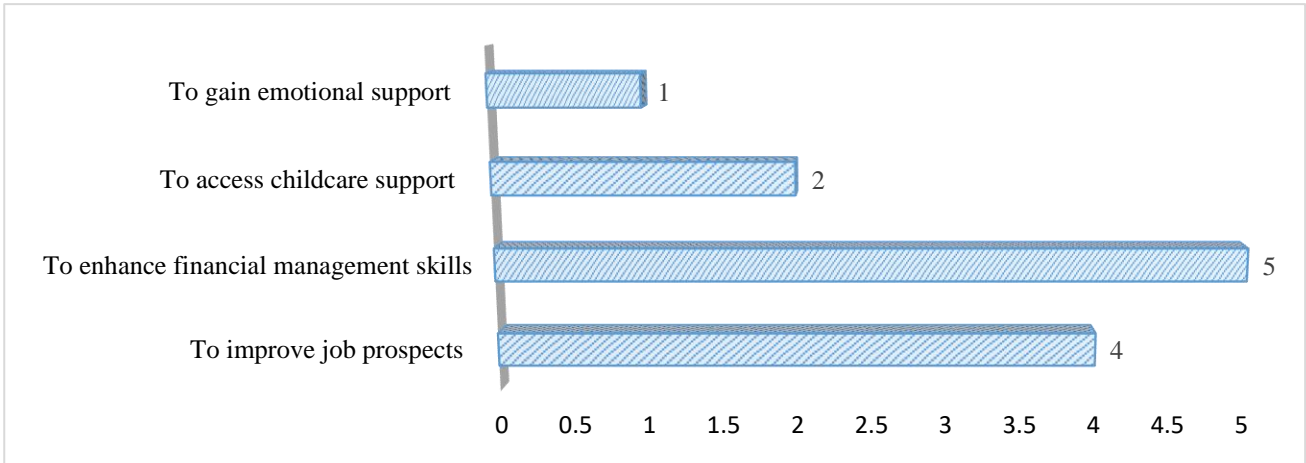


**Figure 4.12 the Effectiveness of this empowerment programs**



The study also provides insights into how respondents perceive the effectiveness of empowerment programs in supporting them, out of the 12 respondents who had participated in the empowerment programs. A small portion 8% (1 individual) perceived the empowerment programs as "Very effective" in supporting them. A

larger group of 3 individuals (25%) rated these programs as "Somewhat effective" in providing support while a notable majority 8 individual (67%) reported that they perceive empowerment programs as "Not very effective" in supporting them.

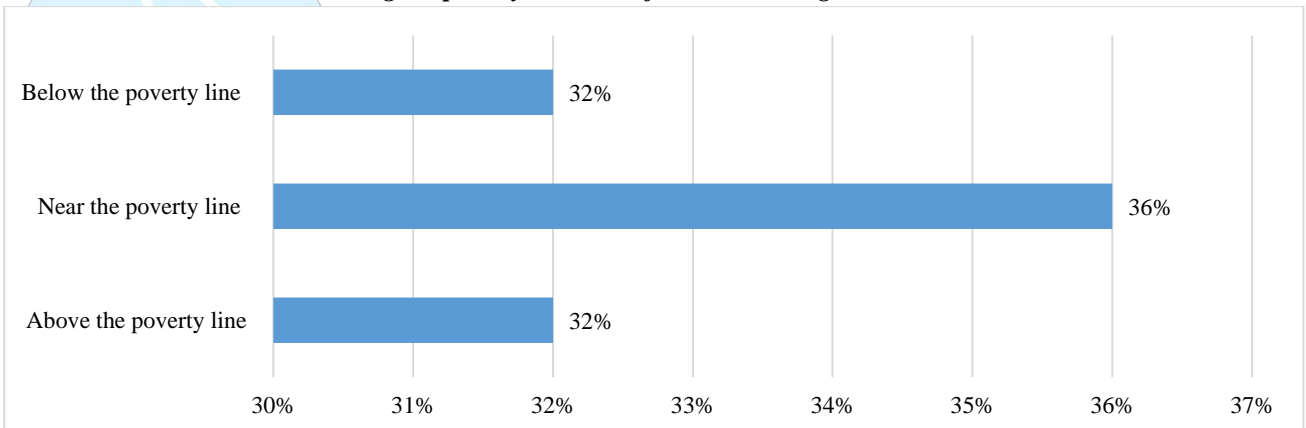


**Figure 4.13** Reasons for participating

According to Figure 4.13, Among the 12 respondents, the most frequently cited reason for participating in empowerment programs was "To enhance financial management skills," with 5 of participants selecting this option. 4 participants indicated that they participated in empowerment programs "To improve job prospects." A

smaller portion of 2 participants reported that they participated in these programs "To access childcare support." Lastly, 1 of respondents mentioned that they participated in empowerment programs "To gain emotional support."

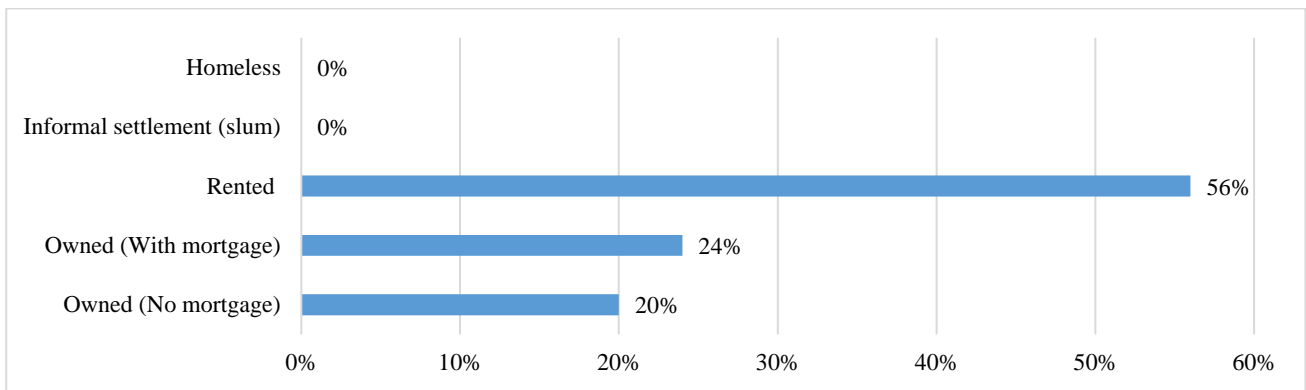
**4.4 Presentation based on accessing the poverty situation of vulnerable single headed homes.**



**Figure 4.14** Current economic situation

Figure 4.14 offers insights into how respondents perceive their current economic situations as part of the survey exploring the survival strategies of single-headed households in the Livingstone District. Among the respondents, 32% indicated that they perceive their current economic situation as "Above the poverty line."

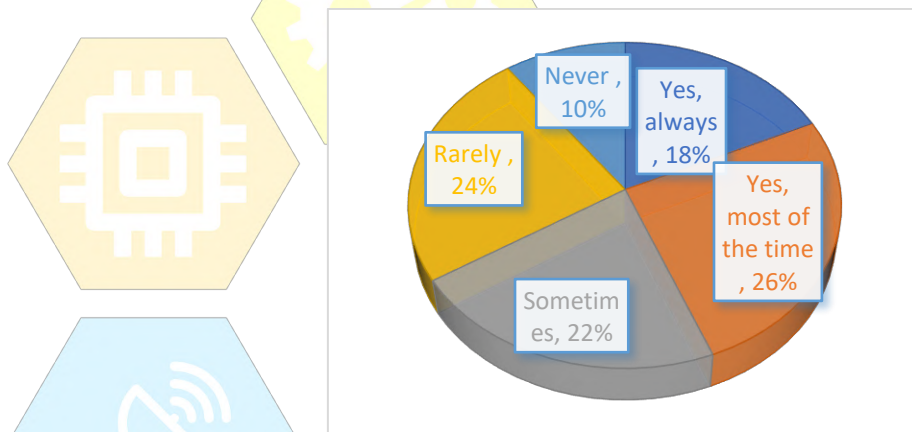
A slightly higher percentage (36%) of participants reported that they perceive their economic situation as "Near the poverty line." An equal proportion of 32% of respondents mentioned that they perceive their economic situation as "Below the poverty line."



**Figure 4.15** Housing situation

Figure 4.15 offers insights into how respondents describe the housing situation of their households. Among the 50 respondents, 20% (10 individuals) indicated that they own their housing without a

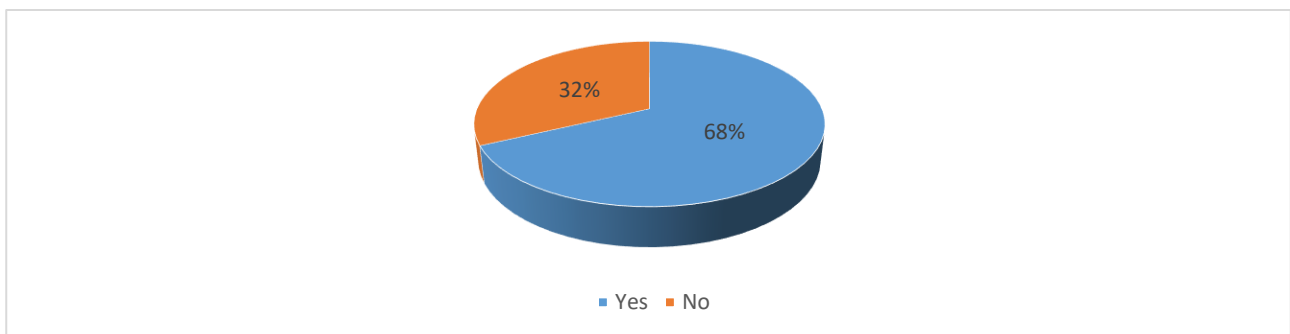
mortgage. Another 24% (12 individuals) of participants reported that they own their housing with a mortgage, the majority of respondents 56% (28 individuals) stated that they rent their housing.



**Figure 4.16** Meals a day

Figure 4.16 offers insights into respondents' ability to afford three meals a day for themselves and their dependents. Among the 50 respondents, 9 (18%) reported that they are always able to afford three meals a day. A larger portion, constituting 13 participants (26%), stated that they can afford three meals most of

the time. 11 respondents (22%) mentioned that they can afford three meals sometimes. 12 participants (24%) reported that they can afford three meals rarely. lastly, 5 respondents (10%) stated that they never have the means to afford three meals a day.



**Figure 4.17** Basic needs

According to figure 4.17 presents information about whether respondents are facing difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their households. Among the respondents, 68% indicated that they are facing

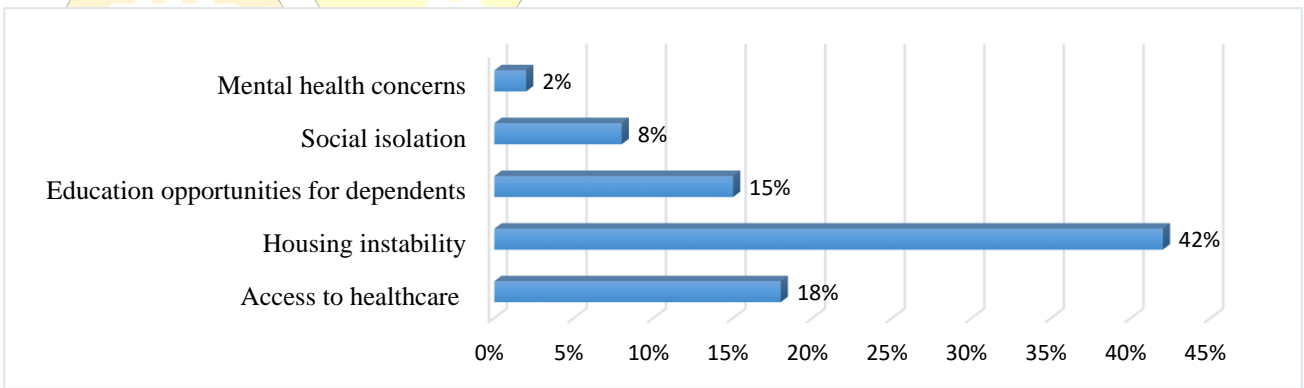
difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their households. Conversely, 32% of participants reported that they are not facing difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their households.

**Table 4.3 Challenges**

Characteristic	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Specific basic needs that respondents find most challenging to meet	Access to clean drinking water	1	3.70
	Education	3	11.11
	Employment	8	29.63
	Food	5	18.52
	Healthcare expenses	2	7.41
	Housing rent	4	14.81
	Job	4	14.81
<b>Total</b>		27	100%

The table offers insights into the specific basic needs that respondents find most challenging to meet when facing difficulties in providing for their households, as

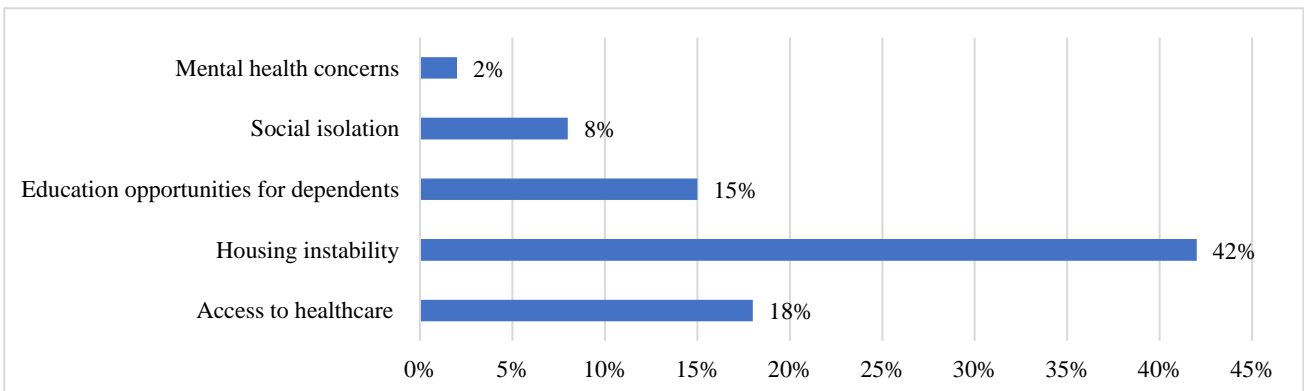
part of the survey examining the survival strategies of single-headed households in the Livingstone District.



**Figure 4.18 Difficulties**

Figure 4.18 highlights the challenges faced by vulnerable single-headed households. The most commonly cited difficulty, chosen by 42% of respondents, was "Housing instability," indicating a significant housing security issue. "Education

opportunities for dependents" was a concern for 30%, while "Access to healthcare" troubled 18% of respondents. "Social isolation" was mentioned by 8%, and "Mental health concerns" by only 2%.



**Figure 4.19 Difficulties**

Figure 4.19 offers insights into the various difficulties faced by vulnerable single-headed households, aside from economic challenges. Among the respondents, the most frequently mentioned difficulty was "Housing instability," with 42% of participants selecting this option. This indicates that a significant portion of single-headed households grapples with issues related to housing security and stability, which can impact their overall well-being. "Education opportunities for dependents" was cited by 30% of participants as a difficulty they face. "Access to healthcare" was mentioned by 18% of respondents as a difficulty. A smaller proportion of 8% participants reported "Social isolation" as a difficulty. Lastly, only 2% of respondents mentioned "Mental health concerns" as a difficulty.

## VI. PUBLICATION PRINCIPLES

### 4.5 Discussion of Research Findings

Livingstone District's participant demographics highlight significant aspects of single-headed households. Among the 50 participants, 66% identified as female, emphasizing a higher prevalence of female-headed households. This gender distribution suggests potential gender-related disparities in facing socio-economic challenges. The participants' mean age was 41.8 years, with a standard deviation of 8.39 years, indicating some age variation from 27 to 61 years. The surveyed households, on average, had 3.88 individuals, with a standard deviation of 1.39445, indicating some variability. Family sizes ranged from 1 to 8 members, underlining the importance of recognizing this diversity in shaping survival strategies. Regarding education, 52% reported a "Certificate" as their highest level, 26% reached the "Diploma" level, around 20% achieved a "Degree," and a small percentage (2%) had a "Master" level education. These educational backgrounds provide insights into the employment and income potential of single-headed households, influencing their survival strategies.

key insights into the economic survival strategies of vulnerable single-headed households in Livingstone District, encompassing employment status, reasons for unemployment, financial responsibilities, handling financial emergencies, community or NGO assistance, perceptions of financial situations, challenges in meeting basic needs, and confidence in future financial stability. Notably, 24% of respondents are currently employed, while 32% face unemployment challenges, with reasons including a lack of skills/training (40%), health issues (28%), caregiving responsibilities (16%), and a shortage of available jobs (16%). A substantial

84% are sole income earners, underscoring their heavy financial responsibility. In financial emergencies, 58% borrow from friends or family, 20% use savings, and 14% rely on loans from financial institutions. Only 2% perceive their current financial situation as "Excellent," with 64% rating it as "Fair." Challenges in meeting basic needs are frequent for 42%, while 34% face them "Often." Looking ahead, only 2% express "Very confident" about their household's financial stability in the next six months, revealing widespread financial insecurity and concern among a significant portion of the surveyed households.

The data findings indicate that 26% of the 50 respondents are aware of empowerment programs for single-headed households, while the majority (74%) are not, signaling a significant lack of awareness about available resources. Among the 12 respondents who participated in empowerment programs, perceptions of effectiveness varied, with only 8% finding them "Very effective," 25% "Somewhat effective," and 67% considering them "Not very effective." This suggests a need for improvement in supporting vulnerable single-headed households. Respondents' motivations for participating in empowerment programs varied, with the most common reasons being "To enhance financial management skills" and "To improve job prospects," emphasizing diverse needs. In summary, there is varying awareness of empowerment programs among single-headed households, mixed perceptions of effectiveness, and participation driven by diverse motivations, highlighting the importance of gathering qualitative feedback for guiding program improvements and better support.

Varying perceptions of the economic situation among respondents are revealed in the findings. About 32% see it as "Above the poverty line," 36% as "Near the poverty line," and another 32% as "Below the poverty line." This diversity highlights the complexity of economic circumstances, with some households experiencing stability and others struggling near or below the poverty line. In terms of access to clean drinking water, 62% of respondents have it in their households, while 38% do not. Despite a majority having this essential resource, a significant minority still lacks access, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to ensure equitable access. Regarding housing, 20% own housing without a mortgage, 24% own with a mortgage, and 56% rent, indicating the prevalence of rental accommodations among single-headed households, potentially impacting their financial stability and living conditions.

## VII. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Conclusion

In summary, this research provides a comprehensive examination of the challenges and survival strategies of vulnerable single-headed households in the Livingstone District, delving into demographics, economic circumstances, resource access, and overall well-being. Demographic analysis reveals a higher prevalence of female-headed households, emphasizing the necessity for gender-specific support programs. Economic survival strategies varied, with some households displaying resilience, while others faced unemployment and lacked access to basic necessities like clean water and regular meals. Participation in empowerment programs showed diversity, and perceptions of effectiveness varied, highlighting the need for tailored support programs. Poverty indicators, including water access, housing, meal affordability, and basic needs, depicted a nuanced picture of challenges, emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive approaches to enhance the well-being and resilience of single-headed households, addressing their diverse needs for a more equitable society.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Doctor Melvin Kabubi for his invaluable guidance and support throughout this research project. The expertise and insight have been instrumental in shaping my research and helping me navigate the complexity of my research.

Further, I extend my gratitude to the Information and Communications University School of Humanities for providing me with the necessary resources and facilities to conduct this research. Additionally, I appreciate the assistance and contributions from my colleagues and peers.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the kind gesture of UIJRT for giving me an opportunity to publish my journal with them.

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