

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO



Title of dissertation

Investigation of economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong, Lesotho

By

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A research project submitted to the Department of Sociology Anthropology and Social Work in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Master of Social Work.

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DECLARATION

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I declare that “Investigation of economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong, Lesotho” is my own and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature L. Halahala

Date 22_August_2022

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho. The study employed mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods to reach samples, collect, and analyze data. The study sample was 20 people resident and married as children which were selected using a Simple Random Sampling from a Sampling Frame of people of Menoaneng only. Two Key Informants were further selected using Purposive Sampling. The main tool for collecting data was the semi-structured questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis through Univariate analysis, bivariate analysis, multivariate analysis, and thematic analysis. The study found that people married as children were economically disadvantaged, experienced negative psychological effects, were socially isolated, and deprived of decision-making powers within their families during the early years of marriage. At a later stage in marriage, there was some leverage they were afforded in decision-making.

Recommendations raised in the study include: Improving agricultural methods to improve the economic status of people married as children, partnership with the government and non-governmental organizations to introduce vocational training skills development programs was recommended to ameliorate the ordeal of people married as children. Vocational training was seen as crucial as some of the people married as children were not willing to go back to school because of the parenthood responsibilities and humiliation and stigma. The study further recommended curbing child marriage through legislation and penalties for perpetrators and enablers of child marriage. Making education more accessible for children from poor households through free exemption and combined social grants would be instrumental in helping curb child marriage.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Chapter Introduction

This study investigated the economic and psychosocial implications of Early Marriage on adult residents of Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho. Thus, in addition to the background on which the study was conducted, the chapter delineates the problem under study along with operational definitions of key concepts used in the study. Furthermore, study objectives and a summary of the methodology used are presented, and finally, the chapter states the anticipated limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Child marriage is becoming a global concern which continues to violate Children's Rights, exposing them to a range of risks including intimate partner violence, economic exploitation, and poor long-term health outcomes (Gender Links, 2014; Nasrullah, Muazzam, Bhutta, & Raj, 2014; Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni, Sexton & Wodon, 2015). It can therefore reasonably be considered a global pandemic requiring close social and empirical consideration by Social Scientists and Policy Makers (World Bank, 2017; Beattie, Bhattacharjee, Isac, Davey, Javalker, Nair, and Heise, 2015; United Nations OHCHR, (2013).

In Lesotho, child marriage, which is more prevalent in rural compared to urban areas, is an equally growing concern regardless of the programs to prevent and control it (Lesotho Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey [Lesotho- MICS] (2018:183). Thus, approximately 19.4% of Basotho women living in rural areas were married as children compared to the 13.8% living in the urban areas (Gastón, Misunas, and Cappa, 2019). Overall, 20% of girls in Lesotho marry before their 18th birthday while 2% of boys marry by the age of 15 years. The percentage of boys marrying before they turn 18 years old may be considered insignificant but could cost the country economically (World Vision,

2016; the Lesotho National Census, 2016; Lesotho Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018; World Vision, 2019). Twenty-four percent of women also experienced at least one unplanned pregnancy in their lifetime. The most troubling impact of child marriages is that it is associated with a high school dropout rate, whose lifetime impact needs no explication (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2020a). Secondly, child marriage fosters an inorganic transition from childhood to adult and parenthood responsibilities, which undermines children's ideal developmental progress. Alongside child marriage is a challenge of childbearing at a young age which introduces a range of other problems to an already imperfect situation. In addition, marriages of people married as children reportedly hold a higher likelihood of disintegration (Solotaroff, and Rohini, 2014).

1.1.1 Early Marriage, Poverty, and Economic Activity in Mokhotlong

Poverty is generally more pronounced in Lesotho's rural than urban areas (BOS, 2019). This urban/rural economic disparity may account for the corresponding disparity in child marriage prevalence between urban and rural areas. In these parts of Lesotho, marriage seems to be considered a path out of poverty, particularly for girls' families. Hence girls from poorer families in Mokhotlong were found to be most at risk of marrying young (UNICEF, 2021). It has been reported that girls were regarded as families' "lottery ticket" since they could be used to help their families attain wealth through *bohali*¹. This attitude seems to have resulted in compromised parenting responsibility for some parents by making them hinder girls' right to education in favour of marriage. Whenever rich men demanded to marry girls who were thought to be mature (as young as 16 years old), the parents and/or guardians would not hesitate since their families benefited from the marriage economically (Metsing, 2015; UNICEF, 2021).

While in Mokhotlong girls were found to be most prone to being married by affluent older men, boys are equally at risk as shown under economic activity below. These so-called affluent men were largely feared in the communities even by the community

¹ Transfers of money or livestock from the husband's family to the wife's family as a token of appreciation for their daughter.

gatekeepers (UNICEF, 2021). As a result, they normalized marrying many wives in the name of status and praise (UNICEF, 2021).

1.1.2 Economic Activity and Family Wellbeing in Menoaneng

The following account is based on a preliminary investigation conducted ahead of the study. Economic Activity in Menoaneng is distinctly divided along sex lines.

1.1.3 Menoaneng Women's Economic Activities

Locally, the Menoaneng Community relies on Subsistence Crop Farming together with Commercial Wool and Mohair Farming. It is worth mentioning that the latter agricultural activity comprises one of Lesotho's main GDP contributors with the centres of production being Mokhotlong and Thaba Tseka. The fore mentioned trades are performed mostly by men.

Menoaneng women, on the other hand, are reported to generally establish Community Savings Clubs to generate income. There are two types of such clubs in Menoaneng: the larger club, formed by 10 or more members, and a smaller club made up of 3 - 4 members. The larger clubs generate money throughout the year, which is divided among members at the end of the year. It is reported that the women often leave Lesotho in large numbers to seek employment in the Republic of South Africa subsequent to receiving Savings Clubs disbursements. The downside of such Migratory Job Seeking Labour is job and income uncertainty in host countries. Thus the women are often blamed for not sending remittances to families for extended periods, impacting children negatively. Children left in Lesotho while mothers migrate to the Republic of South Africa can be as young as 3 years old.

Partly on account of the uncertainty of mothers' Migratory Labour, the frequent illness which impacts school attendance, leading to a higher possibility of being behind academically, and a loss of interest in studies due to struggling increases the likelihood of eventually dropping out of school. Non-attendance to school leads to greater

vulnerability to getting married young. Additionally, in mothers' absence, children are exposed to abuse, such as child labour, and sexual abuse. As UNICEF (2021) has reported, both boys and girls living in the described circumstances are at risk of child marriage.

1.1.4 Menoaneng Men's Economic Activity

Apart from subsistence and commercial farming, some men from Menoaneng work in South African mines and the majority of them are Seasonal Workers in Kwazulu Natal employed by Timber Companies. As a result, there are families where both parents are absent, leaving children unsupervised, although there are somewhere men work from home as farmers (Morojele, 2012).

1.1.5 Factors which promote child marriage in Lesotho

Apart from poverty, there are numerous factors which seem to promote child marriage in Mokhotlong. Two of the most prominent ones are discussed in the subsequent section and include gender disparity and long standing traditions which are discussed for the purpose of the background of this study.

1.1.6 Gender Disparity and attitudes towards child marriage

The major drivers of child marriage in Lesotho are gender disparity as well as permissive societal attitudes toward the practice. In Lesotho, men have more power to control and lead families and the larger society alike. This position affords men the liberty to exercise dominance over their female counterparts without necessarily always demonstrating responsibility for caring for and/or protecting the women. Consequently, men appear to hold a sense of entitlement over women which they have used over a long time to marry young girls. Owing to this perception, child marriage is still practiced, especially in the rural areas of Lesotho. Girls were reported to be disproportionately affected. There have been reported incidences whereby rape survivors have been forced into child marriages with their violators. In such instances, the "marriages" are

solemnized by community gatekeepers who do not bother to report them to the relevant government officials. Rather, they forced the perpetrators to marry their victims in the name of justice and protection of the victims while exposing them to lifetime abuse (Gender Links, 2018). Lastly, 20.8% of child household heads were at a higher risk of marrying early because of financial constraints and role strain (UNICEF, 2021).

1.1.7 Longstanding Traditions

A major longstanding practice which appears to have contributed to the increase in child marriage in rural areas of Lesotho was that of exposing girls who had just experienced menarche to society by performing celebratory rituals that gave men and boys a signal that girls were ready for sexual activity. That practice may have indirectly promoted child marriage as such girls would get abducted, or taken in by older men as their replacer of deceased wives. Apart from practices associated with menarche, girls who were victims of sexual abuse were and continue to be forced to marry their perpetrators. In Lesotho for example, this happens in the presence of the gatekeepers such as the chiefs and the community councillors, therefore it becomes a challenge for victims of forced marriage for any reason to report the violence (Molapo, cited in Ramakhula, 2010; Molupe, 2019).

In addition to the public celebration of menarche, traditional circumcision in Mokhotlong and other rural areas of Lesotho seem to be more favourable over academic schools. Traditional circumcision initiates were regarded as responsible members of their communities and entrusted to start families and take good care of them because it is generally believed that they have been taught good morals and how to run families.

It is well known in Lesotho that its citizens engage in crop farming, illegal cannabis farming, and animal farming as some of the livelihood means of subsistence. For this reason, crop, marijuana, and animal theft are rife. Men are the front-line performers of these activities. Hence they do not welcome strangers in their communities because members of the government security disguise themselves to fight against crime in the communities (Grugel and Hammett 2016).

1.1.8 Emerging trends which lead to child marriage: Intergenerational Relationships

While some adults are known to take sexual advantage of teenagers by raping or forcing them into commercial sexual exploitation or other forms of transactional sex, some enter into sexually exploitative relationships with them. Adults in sexually exploitative relationships with children are called “sugar mummies” and “sugar daddies”. Some end up even marrying the children in exchange for material things, putting the children at risk of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV along with other lifetime social adversities. In the absence of a known study that explores the social and cultural aspects of child sexual maltreatment In Lesotho, it is not possible to encourage either children or adults to take action to stop harm from occurring. Issues of early marriage, rape of boys, and some forms of exploitative labour such as cattle herding, were seen as just a way of life (Lefoka, Motlomelo, & Nyabanyaba, 2012; Molupe, 2019).

1.1.8.1 Unstable households

According to Qibtiyah (2014), people opted to get married as children as a way of escaping abusive situations at home. They left their homes because they have experienced violence at their homes and were not able to fulfil their dreams. These were in accordance with Mennen and O’Keefe cited in Thabane and Kasiram (2015); Desiyanti’s (2015) findings that there was an ongoing trend of abusive family members, who experienced abuse in their childhood stage.

Lawler, Shaver, and Goodman (2011); Desiyanti (2015) stated that attachment disorders in children are preceded by age-inappropriate communication which resulted in aggressive behaviour and child abandonment. The behaviour was passed on to the next generation. Household stability was highly compromised and resulted in people marrying as children, in an endeavour to escape from abusive behaviours and experiences.

According to Lesotho Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (2018) unstable households had witnessed physical violence in their homes, such as beating a parent,

seeing or hearing parents fighting, or their intimate partners. Forty-six point nine percent of females and forty-three point five percent of males had seen physical violence in their homes before they could turn 18 years old. Therefore, this showed that children might have opted for marriage at a young age because of these traumatizing experiences. They were also likely to view violence as a norm and become violent perpetrators in the future. Likewise, sexual violence was also experienced in children's residential homes, with a devastating 29.9% of females who had been sexually abused on their home premises. They were therefore forced to marry their perpetrator and experienced prolonged abuse.

1.1.8.2 Highlights on Legislation against child marriage Lesotho

Child marriage is a growing concern in Lesotho. Regardless, a review of legislation and consultations with a Women's Rights Lawyer in Lesotho revealed no specific law against child marriage in Lesotho. Laws which are interpretable as relating to child marriage in Lesotho include Marriage Act number 10 of 1974; Penal Code Act number 6 of 2012 and of Sexual Offences Act number 29 of 2003. The consultation further revealed that the aged Marriage Act is still current in Lesotho as there was no updated Marriage Act. The Acts are quoted below to remove misinterpretation by the researcher, who is not a lawyer:

Marriage Act number 10 of 1974:

"[Section 27 (1)] No boy under the age of 18 years and no girl under the age of 16 years shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage except with the written permission of the [government] Minister ..."

Before that, the Marriage Act stipulates:

"[Section 3] No person may be compelled to enter into a contract of marriage with any other person or to marry against his or her wish."

Apart from the above, a review of the Marriage Act did not locate a section prohibiting child marriage.

The Penal Code Act on the other hand reads:

“Section 49 (1) an adult who has sexual relations with a child commits an offense and the consent of the child is irrelevant.”

And Sexual Offences Act number 29 of 2003:

“[Section 8 (1)] A person who commits a sexual act with a minor commits an offense.”

“Section 8 (4): Notwithstanding subsection (1), it shall be an offence where a person who is below the age of 18 commits a sexual act with a child without that child’s consent.”

Thus, while from 2003 Lesotho Legislation explicitly prohibited sexual relations between adults and children, A 1974 Statute, which is still in operation, permits marriage between adults and children. The researcher did not come across a Lesotho Law prohibiting sexual relations between children. Further to the foregoing, Lesotho Customary Laws set the Marriage Age at 16 and 13 for boys and girls, respectively. Customary and “imported” laws in Lesotho operate concurrently, posing an application conundrum in most cases. The conundrum is more evident in the above highlight of Laws against child marriage which pose uncertainty as to the exact marriage age in Lesotho. The conundrum aside, child marriage is permissible by law in Lesotho.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to the UN (2021), child marriage is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. Contrary to fore-cited Section 27 and section 3 of Lesotho’s Marriage Act, child marriage is considered a form of forced marriage, given that one or both parties lack the developmental capacity to personally express full, free, and informed consent to marriage. child marriage was acknowledged by the United Nations Human Rights Council as a detrimental practice against children which violates, abuses, and/or adversely impacts Human Rights (UN, 2021).

Although child marriage affects both boys and girls adversely, its effect on girls can outweigh its effect on boys under certain circumstances (Antony 2021; United Nations Children's Fund, 2021). Married children are forced to prematurely assume adult responsibilities while the practice further results in additional socioeconomic pressures like having to provide for families, early pregnancy, and social isolation. It may also result in an increased school drop-out rate. Lack of schooling further compounds the problem as it restrains career advancement and renders girls prone to domestic violence (Gender Links, 2018; Maphaha, 2016).

1.2.1 Challenges of people married as children

Child marriage is somewhat the socially legitimized platform for numerous forms of child abuse such as intimate partner violence, rape by some in-laws, child labour and trafficking in persons and domestic slavery which mostly affects girls in marriages (Chaudhuri, 2015).

Child marriage was identified as having a substantial impact on women's potential earnings and productivity. This is because child marriage curtails education attainment which in turn reduces women's expected earnings in adulthood. It also can curb their influence within the household and limit their bargaining power. By ending child marriage, countries could increase their national earnings on average by 1%.

1.2.1.1 Health implications on children who marry early

It is noteworthy that child marriage is widespread in Mokhotlong. However, there was almost no apparent positive effect of child marriage except for the fact that it prolonged a woman's fertility period thereby leading to excess births (UNICEF 2020). In the long run, the aftermath of high fertility posed some adverse effects and outcomes on the mother and her baby as it leads to short birth spacing, low birth weight, and malnutrition, all of which increased the risk of infant and maternal mortality. There was a need therefore to focus on the health repercussions of early childbearing. It was noteworthy that early pregnancy often followed on the heels of early marriage. There was a

predominance of girls who developed fistula during their first deliveries. Girls between the ages of 15 and 19 were twice as likely as older women to die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, their children were more likely to be stillborn or die in the first month of life (Turkur 2015; UNICEF 2020).

There is also evidence that points out that early child marriage results in negative psychological wellbeing and its sub-domains are: depression, anxiety, and stress. People married as children are reported to suffer from emotional distress induced by the burden of handling marital responsibilities at an early age (John, Edmeades, and Murithi, 2019).

1.2.1.2 Generalized Anxiety Disorder

It is characterized by unrealistic or excessive, uncontrollable and often irrational worry about events or activities. Sufferers make up nearly one and half of all anxiety diagnosis in adults, and are characterized by excessive, exaggerated worry or fear about everyday issues such as money, family, work or health; the symptoms can be overwhelming, at times to the point of being completely debilitating (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). People married as children are susceptible to the stated conditions as they assume adult responsibilities at a young age which leads to fear associated with uncertainty. They are unable to secure well-paying jobs as they did not acquire higher education which can be stressful as they have to fend for their families. Anxiety disorders ultimately trigger ill health especially in cases where they are not conversant with intervention strategies including therapy.

1.2.1.3 Depression

According to Harrison (2018) most people feel depressed for various reasons including; losing a loved one, getting fired from a job, going through a divorce, and other difficult situations which trigger sadness, loneliness, being scared, nervousness, or anxiety. Depression transcends sadness and can interfere with daily life resulting in pain among those experiencing it including their loved ones. The term depression often characterizes feelings of being sad, discouraged, hopeless, irritable, and demotivated as well as a general lack of interest or pleasure in life. Experiences of depression differ across people; to some people the state of depression may be temporary. In cases

where the state of depression is prolonged, it is likely to be a depressive disorder and usually lasts for more than two weeks and interferes with regular daily activities. Depressive disorders also known as mood disorders, include three main types: major depression, persistent depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. Depressive disorders can affect people of any age, including children, teenagers and adults.

1.2.1.4 Stress

Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when one is in a situation where one feels incapable of managing or controlling the situation. Sometimes small amount of stress can be useful in order to complete some tasks and feel energized, during which case the stress experienced invokes a need to go an extra mile. In some cases, stress can affect physical and mental health (Harrison, 2018). People married as children may experience stress because of the challenges associated with child marriage which include among others; lack of preparedness for parenthood responsibilities.

1.2.1.5 Employability

There is evidence that suggests that child marriage imposes significant economic costs at all levels of society. United Nations has already classified child marriage as a form of Human Rights violation as it infringes on the children's right to acquire education. Lack of education is associated with a lack of the ability to earn in adulthood. Early childbirth and a sudden change of parental responsibilities are reported to interrupt employment or reduce earnings in the adulthood stage. Lack of education as a result of dropping out of school at an early age correlates with lower paying jobs which are characterized by unstable work conditions (International Centre for Research on Women, 2018).

1.2.1.6 Communication challenges in marriage

Child marriage heightens problems of communication for married children. Women married as children find themselves at the receiving end insofar as communication is concerned. They have a more compromised voice, choice, and decision making. The

decision making power of women married as children is inadequately considered which undermines effective communication between spouses McDougla, Jackson, McCledon, Belayneh and Sinha, 2018). A healthy relationship can only be founded on healthy communication. Thus when couples optimize communication, communication barriers are minimized. In child marriages, this requisite component lacks as children married at a young age are in no position to communicate effectively. Another phenomenon that acts as a barrier to effective communication for people married as children is the pre-conceived ideas and beliefs by the in-laws who often impose decisions on the young married couple (Smith, 2020).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the economic and psychosocial status and wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng Mokhotlong, Lesotho.

Thus the study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To determine the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.
- To assess the psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.
- To find out the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.
- To assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1.4 Justification of the study

When it comes to child marriage, a well-developed body of research has been more concerned with the causal factors and statistics, failing to take into account the impact in the long run. The significance of this study was that it looked into the characteristics of survivors, focusing on their economic, psychological, and social characteristics. The present study, therefore, examined the wellbeing of survivors from the fore-listed

perspectives including their ability to fend for themselves and their families. The study also took into account the prolonged effects of child marriage and the deprivation of opportunities it had on survivors and their families.

The study was found necessary to facilitate change in perceptions, attitudes, and practices with regard to child marriage. Secondly, it may also serve as a baseline for future researchers on economic and psychosocial characteristics literature of people married as children in Lesotho.

1.5 Research Questions:

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the nature of the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho?

To address this question, two main questions were asked: respondents' means of livelihood and the types of property they owned. Under property, respondents were asked about the houses, crop fields, and livestock they owned.

- What is the psychological well-being of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong, Lesotho?

To address this question, 8 questions relating to the respondent's Psychological Health which were in line with DSM-V were asked. Examples of such questions, which appear on the attached Data Collection Tool included questions on suicidal thoughts and changes in sleeping and eating patterns in the recent past.

- What is the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho?

To address this question, respondents were asked about their interrelationships with spouses, children, in-laws, and the community. It was believed that people's social relations with others are co-influential with their Psychological Health.

- What are the dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong, Lesotho?

Household Power Dynamics were considered an important measure of Psychological Wellbeing which is also co-influential with Psychological Health. Hence respondents were asked whether they had the freedom to make decisions in their families along with the types of decisions respondents were free to make.

1.6 Definition and measurement of terms

Child: According to the Lesotho Child Protection and Welfare Act (2011) and Millett, Kohl, Jonson-Reid, Drake and Petra (2013) a child is any person younger than the age of 18. This definition was adopted throughout the study.

Child marriage: According to the United Nations Human Rights Council (2015) child marriage is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18 and is acknowledged as a harmful practice that violates, abuses, and impairs human rights. For the purpose of this study, child marriage was adopted in line with McDonald (2015), who defines child marriage as a legal or customary union between two people, one or both of whom is below 18 years old.

Forced marriage: Tew (2012) defines forced marriage as a marriage into which one party is coerced to enter without full and free consent, including through threats or psychological manipulation. For this study, forced marriage will be referred to as a situation in which a person is deprived of the freedom to marry or to stay single or to choose their partner.

Abduction: According to Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2013) abduction is defined as unlawfully taking a minor out of the control of his or her custodian to enable someone to marry or have sexual intercourse with that minor. However, this research is going to adopt the definition of the Penal Code Act no.6 (2012) which defines abduction as the process of unlawfully taking a child or any person out of the custody of the lawful guardian with or without the consent of such guardian for marriage purpose, sexual intercourse, commercial and labour exploitation.

Economic wellbeing: The economic wellbeing of people is when their households have the economic resources that are available and are within their control to sustain their living conditions. The economic wellbeing of people may be affected by their circumstances as well as their lifestyle choices (Irwin, and Pilkauskas, 2016). However, this study defines economic wellbeing as a state in which households own at least one housing unit, one crop field, and an investment of five animals of their choice.

Psychological wellbeing: Psychological wellbeing denotes the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities (Adler, Unanue, Osin, Ricard, Alkire, and Seligman, 2017). This study refers to psychological wellbeing as the absence of stress or mild depression according to DSM-V.

Social wellbeing: Social wellbeing can be defined as the sharing, developing, and sustaining of meaningful relationships with your immediate household members (spouse and children) as well as in your community. This allows one to feel authentic and valued, and provides a sense of connectedness and belonging since one interacts with one's family members and friends, and other community members. (Nicolas, 2017). This study is going to adopt this definition.

Power dynamics: the power is invested solely to the male spouse because he is believed to have natural power and must lead the family. The man needs to be the narcissistic while the wife is expected to be soft, quiet and a subservient follower (Lee, Kim SI, Jung-Choi, Kong, 2022). This research is going to refer to power dynamics as involving among others; a relationship in which a spouse contributes to the household decision making including, having the leverage to decide on how to spend excess income, the choice of family diet and animals to procure or rear.

1.7 Summary of study methodology

This study followed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study site was Menoaneng in the district of Mokhotlong Lesotho. The study site was selected since child marriage is most prevalent in Menoaneng. The sampling frame in this study comprised 60 people who were married as children. The sampling frame was selected with guidance from the area chief. The sample size amounted to 20 respondents who

were selected using simple random sampling. There were two key informants who were selected using purposive sampling. The final sample, therefore, amounted to 22. Selection of the respondents using simple random sampling was done using intervals of 3 and 4 replacements using an interval of 2.

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents while an interview guide was used with the key informants. The data from the respondents were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. More specifically the Univariate Analysis, Bivariate Analysis, Multivariate Analysis, and Content Thematic Analysis were used to analyze the data relating to the economic and the psychosocial characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1.8 Limitations of the study

There was very limited information on child marriage in Lesotho, its driving forces were, traditional customs that is, the cultural practices and traditions regarding child marriage often took precedence over formal legislation. Limited awareness, for example, children were forced into marriage because they lacked knowledge. Available literature focused more on the causal factors of child marriage, to the neglect of survivor characteristics which were equally important in order to help survivors cope with the aftermaths of child marriage. There was a possibility that COVID 19 restrictions will pose a challenge during data collection. Moreover, the researcher anticipated that the interviewees would be reluctant to give out information because of the impunity of perpetrators when reports were made, and the gatekeepers' tendency to believe that matters should first be resolved in the families prior to outside intervention.

1.9 Chapter conclusion

Based on the background and problem statement, the researcher concluded that there was indeed a high prevalence of child marriage in Mokhotlong. There was a need to clearly understand the psychosocial and economic characteristics of people married as children in Mokhotlong. The factors that promoted it ranged from different levels of life including the micro, mezzo, and macro.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents reviewed literature on economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children. In this chapter factors which promote child marriage are illustrated. The previous studies on child marriage as a global phenomenon negatively impacting both girls and boys. The themes looked into in this study included culture, adolescent pregnancy, interpersonal relationships, health, and poverty. Lastly, this chapter discussed the theoretical framework which the study was aligned with.

2.2 Empirical literature

2.2.1 Overview of child marriage

According to UNICEF (2018), child marriage is defined as a union between adolescents, young, or juvenile boys and girls who are below 18 years. It does not matter whether the marriage was formal or informal, arranged, out of eloping, or cohabiting; it is considered illegal. However, in most African countries, it is culturally normal and acceptable for children below age 18 to get married (UNICEF, 2016).

2.2.2 Types of child marriage

Just like in any marriage, child marriage takes different forms and also has different types including transactional marriage, responsibility-based marriage, self-decided, retroactively 'consented' marriage, and the traditional or 'ideal' marriage. The types are described in turn subsequently:

Transactional marriage is based on economic rewards. In this type of marriage, there are defined material rewards by one individual where the other individual is the beneficiary including the family members (UNICEF, 2016). In another type called the duty or responsibility-based marriage, girls get married to fill up specified gender roles including procreation (UNICEF, 2016). As for self-decided or peer marriage, the peers

or people under the age of 18 marry each other despite the fact that they do not have consensual rights. There is also the retroactively 'consented' marriage which is the marriage happening when there was a denied pregnancy. The boy responsible for the pregnancy waits for the child to be born for a marriage arrangement to be made. Another type is the traditional or 'ideal' marriage. In this type, children get married off by their families without their consent and the payment of bohali happens before the children could get married. Lastly, there is the cohabitation-based type of marriage where children live together as a husband and wife for some time, and then their relationship comes to be understood by the whole society as marriage (United Nations OHCHR, 2013). Adolescent pregnancy became associated with marriage as a way of avoiding stigma and other costs that came with it (Lesotho Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018). Adolescent Pregnancy was in a way valuable for girls from disadvantaged households. This resulted from the societal belief that when married off because of pregnancy, the girls would receive a better sense of belonging, security, and hope that their children would be raised in stable families (UNICEF, 2016; World Bank, 2017).

Adolescent pregnancy rates continued to be alarming despite the fact that education about access to birth control was spread throughout the country and globally. Adolescent pregnancy and parenthood continued to be a major public and health professional concern because of the potentially adverse consequences of these conditions for individuals, families, and societies. It is the major contributor to the alarming increase rates in birth, maternal death, and morbidity rates. In Africa 24% to 40%, of all women have their first child before the age of 18 years and up to 40% of all children are unwanted at birth (Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey, 2014).

According to UNICEF (2020), child marriage was predominant among girls from poor families. They had poor access to health services and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services due to a lack of knowledge and the norm that sexual issues were taboo. These circumstances lead them to resort and or to being forced to marry as children and to also fall pregnant.

2.2.3 Characteristics of people married as children

2.2.3.1 Social characteristics

2.2.3.1.1 Interpersonal relationships

According to Marphatia, Ambale, and Reid (2017), people who marry earlier were found to be less likely to have healthy relations with immediate family members. They struggled with a sense of belonging because they were no longer expected to mingle with their age mates since they were now out of their league and were culturally prohibited to discuss parenthood topics which would corrupt those naïve and not yet married. On the other hand, mingling with older people was also difficult due to the age gap. Because of their age, it was not easy for them to seek parenting skills from those with prior experience thus, failing to relate well with their offspring as well, leading to incongruent attachment styles which resulted in children developing attachment disorders.

Additionally, the marriage environment isolated girls from school, and friends, since they were expected to behave differently because of the new title (MRS) and were not allowed by their husbands to ever befriend nor socialize with their school friends anymore (Duflo 2011).

United Nations General Assembly (2014) stated that people who married young were denied their overall well-being by skipping their childhood stage and were forced to prematurely assume manhood and womanhood roles. The practice of marrying as children accelerated their transition and minimized their opportunities for psychosocial, emotional, and personal development. They were married at stages when they were supposed to gain knowledge about reproductive and sexual health and to develop selfhood, identity, and a sense of place in their communities in line with the cultural norms (World Health Organization (2021). However, failed acknowledgment of the adversities of people married as children implied unfavourable outcomes in relation to autonomy, agency, and empowerment, leading to low status in households and broader society (UNICEF 2016).

2.2.3.2 Power Dynamics in Families of People married as children

Child marriage placed girls married before turning 18 years under the control of their husbands and often in-laws, limiting their ability to voice out their opinions or pursue their own plans and aspirations (CPWA, 2011). Culturally, women are considered perpetual minors, and therefore when in their natal or marital homes, they were expected to be submissive and carry out the demands of their household head. This meant that they were not expected to partake in any decision-making such as choosing the spouse, how to run their families, or raising their children.

By virtue of their low levels of education, women and girls were often not valued by their partners and their in-laws as capable of earning or managing finances or making financial decisions for their households (The World Bank 2012). Those who were enrolled in the workforce rarely had control over their earnings and when they attempted to air their views concerning funds, they were regarded as disrespectful and were liable to brutal punishment.

Additionally, marrying young highly compromised the social status of the victims of child marriage and minimized their opportunities to participate in societal issues such as job opportunities, educational development, social networks, and broader civic engagement (Malhotra, Warner, and Lee-Rife et al, 2011). For example, during community development issues, they were not able to brainstorm let alone fully participate. This resulted from the socialization and or norm of respecting adults. Therefore, they would not voice their opinions in the presence of adults. Moreover, due to being married young and not completing their academic journey, their opinions were regarded as of low value and would not be considered (Klugman et al. 2014).

2.2.3.2.1 Dynamics Low autonomy

People married as children did not have the skills, to make adequate decisions about their life choices. They lacked critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and

negotiation skills which perpetuated them to be married as children. The connections between these challenges and marrying at a young age were propelled by their educational levels. They were mostly married while still studying and were forced to drop out of school. Therefore, they have not yet acquired adequate life skills, therefore they lacked psychosocial competencies and abilities that would enable them to face and tackle marriage life challenges adequately. They were unable to foresee the lifetime consequences of being married as children because they did not have sufficient skills as well as adequate autonomy when it came to marriage-related decision-making. Since they also lacked empowerment, decisions relating to marriage were anticipated to be made by their caregivers (Willan, 2013).

Willan, (2013) continued to say that there were high levels of illiteracy in the rural areas, and adequate efforts are not being made to address issues concerning child marriage. Families and educational institutions did not offer sufficient information in regard to preparing them for marriage. Suffice to say, boys and girls did not have sufficient access to information on child marriage-related issues.

2.2.3.2.2 Independence and social identity

People married as children viewed marriage as a passport to transition from adolescence to adulthood. It was anticipated that once they got married there was automated liberty in decision making and social identity, respect, love, and peace for the rest of their marriage life. However, child marriage happens mostly because children did not have adequate information about it and, were not entirely independent but dependent on their caregivers for survival. It would be almost impossible for them to assume adult responsibilities at a very young age. Meaning that their goals and aspirations in their marriage life were just a dream, and also because they did not have the skills and essential substructures to reach them (Santhya and Jejeebhoy 2015).

Husbands limit their wives when it comes to negotiating sexual activity and the use of contraceptives or birth spacing. This was seen to be a strategy to keep wives at home and in many cases were unable to speak up against the physical or emotional violence

they experienced at the hands of their husbands or in-laws within their own homes. Wives were treated like children, even in the presence of their own children by their husbands. Women who married at a young age were likely to experience worse forms of psychological challenges, poorer health, self-esteem, and self-confidence than women who marry later would not. These are often perpetrated by the in-laws and husbands (UNFPA 2013).

In addition to the individual and intergenerational effects of reduced voice and agency, constraining women's and girls' voices and agency contributed to losses in productivity and had long-term effects on development goals (Klugman et al. 2014). The lack of voice and agency in household decision-making and civic participation that typically accompanied child marriage also limited girls' input into community and national decision-making. Beaman, Duflo, Pande, and Topalova, (2012) suggested that women's greater involvement in political decision-making increased the likelihood of greater investment in social services, including those directly related to economic growth, such as education.

2.2.3.2.3 Stigma and social sanction

Stigma and social sanction fuelled people being married as children, the connection was a result of fear of being gossiped about by other members including their peers. This strongly influenced their preference for caregivers to marry off their children as soon as they reached puberty. Girls and boys were honoured for their good behaviour, especially girls. Girls who were married as virgins were spoken to and addressed well by the entire community, however, those who were found not to be virgins on their wedding day were significantly sanctioned by society and would even be sent back to their families. This was extremely humiliating and disgraceful (Rufaedah, and Putra 2018).

Girls were married as children as a strategy to dodge rumours about their reputation, and this was clearly a very important consideration for families and a significant factor pushing adolescent girls towards marriage. They would even not accept jobs or school

offers because they feared being rumoured to have been seen with boys, especially in the rural areas. Therefore, if those boys and girls did not marry there and then, the rumours that would follow if it was discovered that they were dating or even if they were just socializing together, caregivers were left with no choice but to marry them off. This was done to stop the rumour from spreading and to avoid pregnancy out of wedlock (Rufaedah, and Putra 2018).

2.2.3.2.4 Social life

In Sweden, people who married as children were restricted to socialize with their friends and relatives to some extent. However, the restrictions on girls/ women married as children's movement outside the home and contact with peers were more rigidly enforced. The interconnectedness between restrictions on girls/ women married as children's mobility and contact with peers were gendered social norms (Miething, Almquist, Östberg, Rostila, Edling, and Rydgren, 2016). They were also restricted from utilizing social media, where to socialize and have access to friendship and support networks that may improve their social well-being. In cases where they were allowed to use social media, their accounts were entirely managed and controlled by their husbands, they decided who and who were not to be befriended and deleted everything that they disapproved. Girls married as children lost a sense of self because marriage worked in favour of their husbands who had all the power to dictate their wife's life in totality. They became the property of their husband's families, and they were no longer themselves. They were treated like children (UNICEF, 2018).

2.2.3.2.5 Fear of being left behind

It was strongly believed for boys and girls that above a certain age, it was difficult to get married. For boys, the notion is that it is difficult and unusual to marry and or settle with someone you met up with as an adult. They believe that if you fail to marry your school sweetheart you were never going to find a steady or a marriage partner. Therefore, you were going to be in between marriages and were never going to settle. It also increased

pressure on girls, to get married as children because they did not want to be left behind and did not want to be called degrading and humiliating names such as (Lefetoa). This was most prevalent in the rural areas. It was regarded as okay, for girls to marry at a young age because they kept their reputation, honour, and create a good and strong family (Mohammed, 2020).

The sooner, the better because according to Mohammed, (2020) girls mature faster than boys cognitively and physically. Girls go through the process of puberty earlier than boys with an age difference of 1 to 2 years and finish the stages of puberty faster than boys because of their biological makeup. While the process of puberty was not exactly known as to why girls would undergo it faster than boys, the evolutionary perspective theorized by Steinberg (2019) that, girls developed faster because they did not want to marry their age mates who will not provide and protect them and their potential child or children.

It was a norm in Lesotho for girls to look for a partner who was much older, especially in preparation for marriage; the belief is that since females mature earlier in relationships, for a marriage to be stable the man has to be older than his partner (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and National Aids Commission 2013: 11). It is important to note that cultural norms pertaining to intergenerational sex are plagued by gender inequality, with women less able than men to exercise control over their bodies in Taiwan. (Qian, Chou, Deily, Liu and (2018).

2.2.3.3 Economic characteristics

2.2.3.3.1 Poverty

Poverty is one of the key drivers of child marriage globally and in Lesotho. It played a critical role in promoting child marriage and girls were twice as likely to be married before the age of 18 if they were poor than if they come from higher-income households. At least 75% population of Basotho were referred to as poor because of living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2019; UNICEF, 2022). Parents and guardians became at increased risk of using marriage as an economic opportunity. They,

therefore, married off their children in exchange for receiving the bohali which was meant to boost them financially, reducing their food insecurity as well as improving their social statuses (Rukmini, 2016).

Child marriage remained fashionable in rural areas and among the poorest communities. Moreover, poverty was a factor that seemed to be legitimizing marrying off boys and girls as a way of ensuring the economic subsistence of boys and girls with autonomous access to productive resources and living in its extremes. For instance, boys may be married off to older women (sugar mummies) who were financially stable so that they may provide for the entire family (UNICEF, 2012).

Children from poor families were at an increased rate of staying out of school due to their parents not being able to afford their fees and as a result, they were exposed to adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. The girls believed that their husbands would provide them a better life while boys would look for employment and if they secured one, felt they were mature enough to become fathers so, they got married as children (Karam, 2015).

Karam (2015) added by showing that, most unmarried pregnant adolescents faced immediate financial difficulty, leading to poverty. These considerable risks caused physical impairment, sterility, mental trauma, and even death, as well as lifelong consequences such as a decrease in women's productivity and earning capacity, which contributed to their own and their children's poverty.

Where poverty was high, boys and girls were highly likely to be stunted, wasted, and malnourished, as a result, it was hard for them to assume adult responsibilities when married as children (US State Department, 2016; CRC, 2017).

2.2.3.3.2 Adolescents who were not ready

Child marriages were predominantly practiced in cost-affected households. As a result, the economic wealth of households fuelled child marriage because girls were regarded as a liability for the limited economic budget and food security for the whole household

(Rukmini 2016). However, according to Manehat, Irianto, & Purwanti (2019), bohali was not burdensome on the husband's side since it could be paid in instalments with no time limits. Bohali was therefore considered as a perpetuating factor for people to have been married as children. Consequently, any child, more especially girl children were married off for as long as their parents and or guardians received or were promised the money. There was no age limit and as a result, most child marriages were in fact unregistered customary law unions (Polasi, Majara, Mohapi, & Mosola, 2015).

Bohali was seen as a practice that perpetuated child marriage, as it was also loved and used as a way of blending different cultures. It can easily be abused as world cultures became more and more blended together. Henceforth the practice of paying bohali to persuade parents and guardians to marry off their girls to foreign nationals for financial security. It was also practiced in wealthy families, where it was perceived as a means of preserving wealth amongst families from the same socioeconomic class. Child marriage possessed traits of a monster because it increased opportunities for trafficking in both boys and girls and child marriage is also strongly associated with girls who have received little or no formal education (UNICEF, 2012); (Lesotho Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2021).

Bohali was not practiced for its legitimate goal of appreciating the other family for blessing them with a new member of their respective family, but, rather as a potential abuser that set the young couple up for failure. It does not help them set up their goals for a successful marriage future. Parents and guardians were the front liners in decision-making it was impossible for the couple to make any decisions concerning marriage arrangements. It was entirely parental or guardians' authority in this arena (Polasi, Majara, Mohapi, and Mosola, 2015); (Lesotho Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2021).

Where poverty was high, boys and girls were highly likely to be stunted, wasted, and malnourished, as a result, it was hard for them to assume adult responsibilities when married as children (US State Department, 2016; CRC, 2017).

2.2.3.3.3 Educational attainment

Early marriage practices were according to UNFPA (2013) the most powerful causes of the low educational attainment of boys and girls in African countries, especially in the rural areas. Education is not only a human right but also a powerful instrument playing an important role in paving way for a bright future for boys and girls (Klugman et al 2014). Education and child marriage were closely related in that, the promotion of school attendance prevented child marriage, and difficult access to school promoted child marriage (Lemmon and ElHarake 2014).

The school dropouts due to poverty, adolescent pregnancy, and other factors placed children at increased vulnerability to child marriage as they considered marriage as a gateway to escape poverty and the stigma of being idle at home (de Monchy, 2015). Girl children who had dropped out of school were at an increased risk of not going back to school and maximizing their chances of being married (Lesotho Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018). Child marriage continued to be rife among disadvantaged children because they could not afford school fees. In addition, dropping out influenced child marriage. Dropping out of school caused the victim to have a lower level of education which in turn led to lowered household decision-making ability and low social status.

Child marriage, therefore, impeded the victim's career development minimizing their chances of employment. As a result, they became prone to exploitation and human trafficking. Since they lacked any qualifications because of dropping out early at school, child marriage victims were forced to settle for any employment opportunity that came at their disposal without being able to scrutinize such opportunities to screen for and detect danger. In turn, they worked in unhealthy conditions or fell prey to sexual exploitation through human trafficking putting them at increased risk of dying (Lesotho Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2021); (ICAP 2018).

Education is a powerful tool for both boys' and girls' empowerment and strategic development investment. There was a clear multiplier effect to educating boys and girls. Men and women who were not married as children were educated, healthier, participated more in the formal labour market, earned more income, had fewer children,

and provided better healthcare and education to their children compared to those married as children. The benefits of education thus transmit across generations as well as to communities at large. Where boys and girls had greater educational and economic opportunities, they were more likely to pursue those opportunities than to have children in their adolescent years (Klugman, Hanmer, and Santa Maria 2014).

Among women with no education, more than 60 percent were married before age 18 this showed how important education is to children as opposed to marrying them off. And nearly 40 % of women with only primary education were married before they could turn 18 years old. Comparatively, only 5 % of girls with secondary education or higher were married young (Erulkar, 2014).

However, in Lesotho child marriage was still an obstacle to improving the lives of boys and girls, especially in the rural areas. Because as they grew older the barriers to pursuing an education became more difficult to overcome. School attendance at the secondary level was 34.3 % among all secondary school-aged children in Lesotho. There were large differences between urban and rural settings (57.2 % for urban and 27.6 % for rural). The lowest rates of secondary school attendance were found in Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka at 20.8 % and 16.8 %, respectively (ICAP, 2018).

2.2.3.3.4 Employment

According to Wondon and Petroni (2017), child carriage is much more of an economic issue than it is a social issue. It prevents full participation in the economic, political, and social spheres of the victims. Since the victims get married at a very young age with a lower level of education, it becomes difficult for them to secure employment, let alone well-paying jobs. As a result, child marriage reduced potential earnings by 9% (UNICEF 2016).

Additionally, Klasen and Pieters (2012), made mentioned the fact that being married as a child influenced labour force participation in many ways. Since some married as a strategy to drop out of school. There their levels of educational attainment were

relatively low and it was unlikely for them to acquire better pay jobs. However, upon the decision not to be engaged in the labour force, it meant that they were to face lifelong negating implications.

2.2.3.4 Health Characteristics

2.2.3.4.1 Somatic health

Child marriage is a health concern for both young girls and young boys, though it affects young girls more. Child marriage and early pregnancy were inseparable (UNICEF, 2022). Married girls were socially expected to give birth, fulfilling the procreation role of marriage. Early pregnancy and childbirth put young girls as well as their children at a higher risk of maternal and child morbidity and mortality (Blanc, 2014). Adolescent pregnancy was very risky and fatal in many cases and resulted in high maternal morbidity and mortality (UNICEF, 2016). This was because the adolescent bodies were not yet fully developed to cater to pregnancy and they experienced complications that put their lives and those of their children at risk (UNFPA, 2021).

The adolescent birth rate was reported to be at 94% between 2003 and 2018 (UNFPA, 2021). Child marriage posed challenges to girls who became pregnant before they could turn 18 years old more than those who became pregnant later. Many of these pregnancies and childbirth-related morbidities carried a risk of death. The risks were higher among adolescents especially those under the age of 16 years (Blanc, 2014; Nove, Matthews, and Camacho. 2014).

Children born from adolescents were according to UNICEF (2016) more likely to have low birth weight and poor nutrition throughout their childhood. Maternal physiological immaturity put adolescent mothers at 3 times the increased risk of low birth weight (Kaplanoglu et al, 2015). Pregnant adolescents hardly followed maternal ante and postnatal instructions due to their lower level of understanding and tendency not to seek maternal services out of fear of stigma (UNFPA, 2021). Additionally, the fact that adolescent mothers were less likely to be educated or wealthy minimized their chances

to access ante-natal care which could help them negotiate a safe path through pregnancy and childbirth (UNICEF (2016)).

UNICEF (2016) continues to state that under 5 stunting was attributed to less than 18 years of motherhood. Mothers who were less than 18 years were not mentally mature and were still trying to figure out life, therefore, having the role of taking care of another child as they themselves were children overwhelmed them. Therefore, under 18 motherhood placed children at risk of dying before their 5th birthday as being born young also increasing their deaths (UNICEF, 2016).

According to Government of Lesotho (2014), 19 percent of adolescent girls aged between 15 to 19 had already bore their first child and on average married girls were pregnant or gave birth to their first child within the first year of marriage. Girls residing in poverty-stricken households were most prone to early childbearing in Lesotho and then four times more probable to have given birth to their first child as opposed to girls in the richest households (Ganchimeg, Ota, and Zhang, et al 2014).

In addition, the HIV prevalence rate was high among people married as children. Child marriage accounted for a disproportionate number of new HIV infections (3.8%). The overlapping risk factors for high adolescent HIV included age-disparate sexual relationships, early sexual debut, and gender-based violence (UNICEF, 2022). Adolescent pregnancy increased the risk of maternal mortality, delivery complications, obstructed labour, systemic infections, stillbirth, premature birth, and severe neonatal complications (UNICEF, 2022).

2.2.3.4.2 Generalized anxiety disorder

People suffering from generalized anxiety disorder feel anxious or worried most of the time. They are usually worried about small and unrealistic concerns about a specific thing, place, or situation. What is more challenging about is that people with it is that, their fears and worries cannot be controlled hence they continue repeating themselves in their brains? This disorder impairs people's functioning such as attending sufficiently to community activities or job obligations. The feeling is long-lasting. They are unable to

put it aside and can make life unbearable (Munir and Takov 2022: Hammett, Castañeda, and Ulloa, 2016).

2.2.3.4.3 Stress

Stress is defined by Butcher, Manker and Hooly (2007) as adjective demands placed on an organism and to the organism's internal biological responds to such demands. Therefore, an organism has to have mechanisms to cope with stressors in any given situation, so stress manifests when the organism is unable to cope with stress. A stressor could be anything that evokes a demand on an organism for some kind of adaptive response, the response that is meant to induce change which is made up of a various combination of reactions taking place on a number of levels, including among others, emotional, psychological, behavioural, and cognitive. Fink, (2016) adds that if the stressor does not disappear and the body begins to acclimatize it builds up resistance. Therefore, the prolonged exposure to stressors may result in death.

2.2.3.4.4 Depression

Depression is the most common of the mental disorders in which disturbance of mood is the primary symptom. Depression may range from a very mild condition, bordering on normality, to severe (psychotic) depression accompanied by hallucinations and delusions. It is a main cause of disability and premature death. When people are exposed to frequent and intense negative reactions to life's situations people develop signs of depression. Depressed people have depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration. These problems can become chronic or recurrent and lead to substantial impairments in an individual's ability to take care of his or her everyday responsibilities. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. People married as children are at the risk of being depressed and this may affect them, their spouses and their children. For example, postpartum depression is a common cause of depression. Oftentimes, people marry to multiply, and this is evident in that, the birth of a child is a

pleasing event, however, postpartum depression may occur in new mothers and occasionally fathers. This may affect the mother if she has lack of social support or difficulty adjusting to her new identity and responsibilities (Bhowmik, Kumar, Srivastava, Paswan, Shravan and Dutta 2012).

2.2.3.4.5 Psychological health

The child marriage victims got into marriage before they were psychologically prepared to take the roles of being fathers and mothers. The abrupt transitioning into adult responsibilities as well as moving to a new place to settle for marriage was overwhelming for them exacerbating their risk of psychological distress (John, Edmeades, and Murithi, 2019). The intimate partner violence, labour-related stress, and role strain that victims of child marriage experienced exposed them to mental health problems. (WHO, 2012).

People married as children failed to cope with anxiety and depression caused by the abrupt and 'came too soon' adult roles (Burgess, Jeffery, Odero, Rose-Clarke, and Devakumar, 2022). Additionally, sexual health issues, marital violence and forced sex-related illnesses increased the chances of mental illness among victims of child marriage (burgess et al, 2022).

Adolescent mothers were also reported to be at a high risk of experiencing postpartum depression (Sezgin and Punamäki, 2022). The suicide rate and self-harm were also reported to be high among people married as children as a result of having psychological distress (John, Edmeades and Murithi, 2019; Gage, 2013). The suicide was mainly fuelled by depression resulting from partner violence and lack of family support (Bacchus et al, 2018; Sezgin and Punamäki, 2022).

2.3 Theoretical literature

This study was guided by Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory. Erikson believed that personality develops in a prearranged order where each of the eight

stages builds subsequent to the previous one. The successful achievement of the skills in each stage determines healthy psychosocial development for individuals, while failure indicates a reduced capacity to complete further steps and a more unhealthy personality and sense of self (McLeod, 2018).

Child marriage has affected people in different ways, economically and psychosocially. This practice has affected people, economically, socially, and health-wise. This research focused attention on the economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children. Therefore, Erick Erickson's psychological development theory was found appropriate for this study. According to Cherry, (2020a) Erickson's theory details the impact of social experiences on a person for as long she/he can live. Erikson breaks his theory into eight stages, and each stage indicates a conflict that serves as a turning point in human development, from childhood to adulthood. He believed that individuals may develop or fail to develop psychological wellbeing.

Stage one

Syed and McLean, (2018), state that the first stage of Erikson's theory development starts when a child is born and continues up to the second year of the life of a child. This stage is called the infancy stage and it is the crucial stage for human psychosocial development. This is where infants are reliant on their caregivers for everything they need for survival: food, love stability, warmth, nurturing, and safety. If a caregiver is reliable and predictable, the infant gains confidence, a feeling of safety, and a sense of security, and if the caregiver is not reliable, the infant will feel that they cannot trust or depend on the caregiver or adults in their entire lives.

Stage two

The second stage is when children are 18 months to three years old. They begin to acquire a little sense of personal control and a feeling of independence. Basic actions begin in this stage and they start formulating their own but simple decisions about their preferences. In his stage, they are beginning to gain some power and control over their increased mobility or body function, choice of food, selection of clothes, and toy preferences, as well as asserting their independence. If caregivers or parents allowed

them to make their own choices and let them be in control, they tend to develop a sense of autonomy. The crucial emphasis in this stage is potty training in order to learn physical control and once a child masters it they gain autonomy. However, if they are denied the chance to make their own decisions or choices they may be ashamed and doubtful and this may impact negatively on lifelong psychosocial development. Hence, the need to tackle child marriage because it may be cyclical in nature, affecting future generations (Malone, Liu, Vaillant, Rentz, and Waldinger, 2016).

Stage three

McLeod (2018) states that in this stage psychosocial development takes place during the preschool years when children are between the ages of three and five years. At this stage, children are more interactive and assert this power through playing with other children. Once they are successful at this stage, they develop the ego quality of purpose. Excessive restrictions from exploring their environments either by caregivers, parents, or teachers may result in a sense of guilt. People married as children may be overwhelmed by the sudden transition from childhood to parenthood. They may lack the skill in raising their children which can impact negatively on the upbringing of their children. They may also be restricted by their cultural norms to interact with other members of the community including their own children.

Stage four

The fourth stage of development occurs when children are approximately five to eleven years. This is when they are occupied with school. They need to get feedback, and encouragement while executing their tasks and exploring their abilities. They are occupied with school, and teachers play an important influential role, as do their peers as well as the social interactions. Such is the case because they help children at this stage to develop self-esteem, and a feeling of pride when they successfully complete their tasks which serves as positive motivation. At this stage, success is a motivating factor which may lead to a sense of competence valued by peers and adults. However, children who receive little or no encouragement from their peers or adults may feel

inferior and doubt their abilities to perform the specific skill. Additionally, people married as children may not have enough funds to take their children to school and this may limit or deny them from exploring their abilities. (Alzahrani, Alharbi, and Alodwani, 2019)

Stage five

The fifth stage takes place between the ages of 12 and 18. This stage is essential for an individual's in-depth exploration of goals, beliefs, and values while searching for their personal identity. Now, this is where child marriages occur; they occur at this crucial time between childhood and adulthood stages. This is a stage where individuals become independent and begin to consider careers, family, houses, friends, and their place in their communities. This is the crucial stage where individuals also learn about the role they will play in their communities as adults. Success in this stage leads to identity while failure leads to confusion (Darling-Fisher, 2019).

Role confusion occurs when adolescents are not sure about themselves or their place in society. Because of that, adolescents begin to experiment with different roles to establish a sense of self like choosing marriage when they are still very young and immature. It is the way for adolescents to get independence toward their own self, (Cherry, 2020).

Stage six

This is a young adulthood stage and takes place between the ages of 18 and 40. This is where they are motivated to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Varying degrees of conflict may arise in this stage when individuals are trying to form lasting relationships with varying degrees of success. Success in securing a lasting relationship may bring good health, happiness, and a relationship full of love, care, and support. Those who were married as children may have been forced by unfavourable circumstances and the likelihood of failure may be high in this stage of psychosocial development. This is where they may be divorced, or separated at a high rate. When relationships are lasting and meaningful, it may mark the ultimate goal of success at this

stage. Those with a poor sense of self are likely to have less committed relationships and have high chances of suffering from emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression (McLeod, 2018).

Stage seven

The seventh stage of psychosocial development occurs between 40 and 65 years of age. In this middle adulthood stage, there is a need for longevity mainly by having children or by creating change for the betterment of other people. It may be very challenging for survivors of child marriage to reach this stage happy as most of them have not achieved high levels of education and most probably do not qualify for well-paying jobs. However, those who have succeeded feel worthwhile for having achieved some set goals, and this may help them build a legacy for themselves. It also makes people proud of who they have become, the children they have, and value their long-lasting relationships with their significant others. Failure, on the other hand, leaves people with feelings of unworthiness or little or no remarkable impact in the world (Cherry, 2020).

Stage eight

Cherry, (2020) continued to say that Erikson's final stage of psychosocial development occurs from 65 years of age to death. Individuals in this stage focus mainly on their reflection on life in general. This is where they are less productive and slow, and most of their time is spent reviewing their achievements and or failures throughout life. Success in this stage leads to integrity because of believing that they have accomplished their goals and found happiness ever after. Additionally, they have a sense of peace and harmony. They become ready to meet their end with a sense of peace and happiness. Failure, however, leaves a person with bitterness, despair, and regret. People married as children may reach this stage of difficulty because of numerous adverse challenges they may have faced facing in their married lives.

Table 1 Eric Erikson's summary of the eight psychosocial development stages

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age	Components of the theory
1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0-1	This is where they need their caregivers for survival
2	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	1-3	They begin to acquire a little sense of personal control and a feeling of independence
3	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	3-5	At this point, children are more interactive and assert this power through playing with other children
4	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	5-12	They need to get feedback, and encouragement while executing their tasks and exploring their abilities to build confidence and self-esteem. Inspirational motivation becomes is key to empowerment.
5	Identity vs. Role confusion	Fidelity	12-18	In-depth exploration of goals, beliefs, and values while searching for their personal identity
6	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	18-40	This is where they are motivated to form intimate, loving relationships with other people
7	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	40-65	There is a need for longevity
8	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	65+	The focus is mainly on their reflection on life in general.

2.4 Gaps in the literature

There is little literature on the psychosocial support offered to child marriage survivors and their affected family members. Therefore, this research will help the government and non-governmental organizations in developing programmes that are aimed at helping survivors of child marriage. The empirical literature tends to focus more on a girl child, however, the researcher believes that they both suffer. Therefore, efforts towards helping them should not differ that much.

2.5 Summary of the chapter

Child marriage robs both boys and girls of their autonomy to make decisions about their lives, disrupting their education, making them more vulnerable to violence, discrimination, and abuse, and preventing their full participation in economic, and social spheres. The aftermaths of child marriages had become severe on girls and boys who were usually pulled out of primary or secondary education and were more likely to cope with emotional, corporal, and sexual violence. Boys and girls aged 13 and younger were much younger for sexual, marital, and reproductive transitions. In the same vein, children aged 15 to 17 were also too young to fall prey to this monstrous practice and still need a caregiver's protection.

CHAPTER THREE

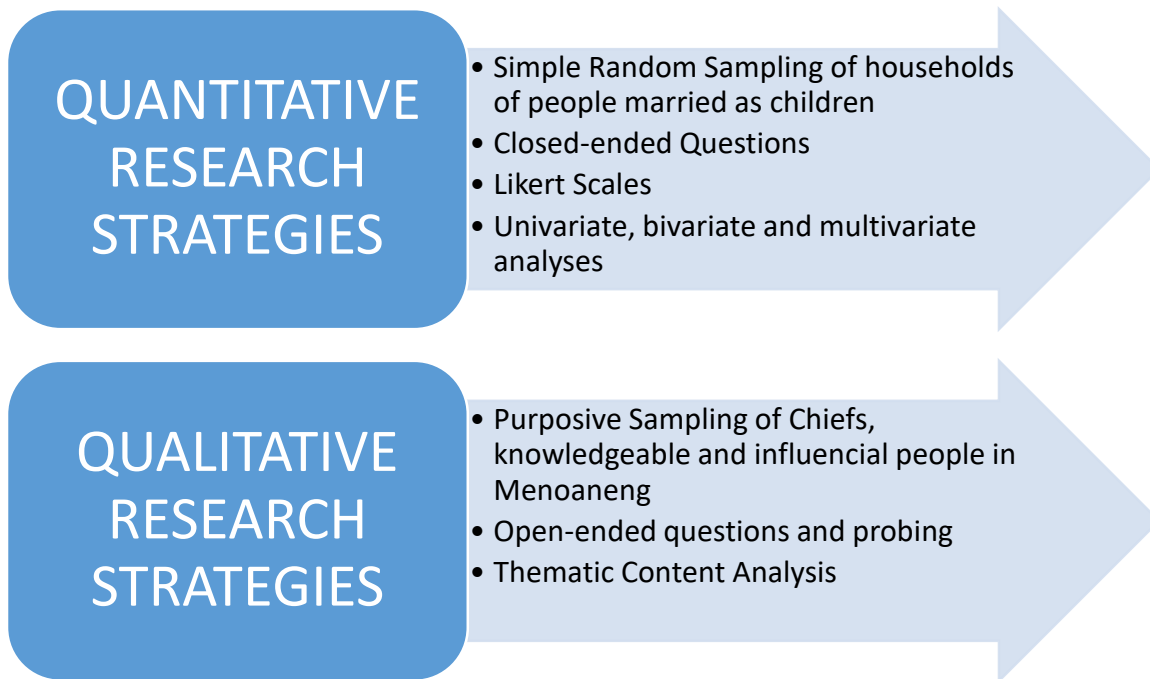
METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses the Research Design and methods used in this Short Dissertation. Thus it states the Unit of Analysis, discusses Research Approach, Population or Sampling Frame, Sampling Strategy, Data Collection, and Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

A Research Design is a framework for study conceptualization, collection, and analysis of data used to answer Research Questions (Bryman and Bell, 2019; Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017). This study was a mixed methods cross-sectional study of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong. Cross-sectional studies are those in which units of analyses are studied in a single instance and are usually conducted with the use of questionnaires although questionnaires are not the only mode used for cross-sectional studies (Babbie, 2021; Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017). In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used as they were found to be most appropriate in answering the study's four Research Questions. The methods used included Simple Random Sampling and Purposive Sampling, open-ended and close-ended questions asked using a questionnaire as well as qualitative and quantitative Data Analysis strategies. The stated Research Design of mixed methods was determined by the study purpose, objectives and research questions, discussed subsequently (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017; Shorten and Smith, 2017; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Before a narrative discussion of the methods used, below is a pictorial representation of the Research Design naming the Research Strategies used:



QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGIES

- Simple Random Sampling of households of people married as children
- Closed-ended Questions
- Likert Scales
- Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGIES

- Purposive Sampling of Chiefs, knowledgeable and influential people in Menoaneng
- Open-ended questions and probing
- Thematic Content Analysis

3.1.1 Research Objectives which informed selection of Research Design

The following research objectives; To determine the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho, to assess the psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho, to find out the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho, to assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho sought to understand varied indicators of the respondents' wellbeing such economic status, psychological and social wellbeing. Mixed Methods were hence found necessary to generate data on the varied aspects of social life.

3.2 Study Site

The site for the study was the Local Government Council of Menoaneng, in Lesotho's Administrative District of Mokhotlong. Mokhotlong was selected on account of reports of widespread child marriage in the area which was further reported to be concentrated in

and around Menoaneng (Lesotho Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey [Lesotho- MICS] (2018); Gastón, Misunas, and Cappa, 2019); Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2020a).

3.3 Unit of Analysis

A Unit of Analysis is the focus of measurement or the element under study (Babbie, 2021). The study's Unit of Analysis was households of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong. The Units of Analysis were studied using data collected from people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong as well as two Key Informants for the purpose of data triangulation.

3.4 Sample Frame and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a process of selecting study units from a Study Population of Sampling Frame (Babbie, 2021). A Sampling Frame on the other hand is a list of Sampling Units from which a Probability Sample is selected while a Probability Sample is a sample in which all units or members of a Sampling Frame have an equal chance of being selected, thus removing sampling bias (Babbie, 2021). Probability Sampling is a non-subjective strategy in that it does not rely on researchers' judgment. A Sampling Frame should be composed of carefully populated units with all characteristics of the identified Study Population. Probability Samples are understood to be suitable for studies which seek representativeness of findings beyond the study sample (Babbie, 2021). The study had two samples: A Simple Random Sample of people married as children as well as a Purposive Sample of key informants who had knowledge of the population and were conversant with the economic and psychosocial wellbeing of the community.

3.4.1 Sample of people married as children

The study used Simple Random Sampling to select people married as children. Subsequent to University and Gatekeeper Permission, the researcher accessed a Sampling Frame of 60 households of people married as children from which she used a Sample Selection Interval of 3 to arrive at 20 households. All the members on the Sampling Frame were still married with both spouses still alive. However, upon arriving

at the households, only women Out of the 20 members from the Sampling Frame were available. The Researcher was informed that 15 were women while 5 were men whose spouses were not home on account of Migratory Labour practiced in the area which was described in Chapter One. However, the 5 men included in the sample were not found in their homes and were further replaced on the Sampling Frame using a Sample Selection Interval of 2.

To populate the Sampling Frame, the Gatekeeper, who was the Chief of Menoaneng, called an open-air meeting in which he introduced the Researcher and informed the community of the Researcher's request to conduct a study within their community along with the purpose of the study. The community was in general consensus that they would participate in the study and many gave the Chief permission to divulge their names and addresses to the Researcher².

3.4.2 Sample of Chiefs

The chiefs of Menoaneng were selected using Purposive Sampling on account of reports of high rate of child marriage in Menoaneng.

3.5 Data Collection

Data for the study was collected using a mixed-question questionnaire containing both open and close-ended questions under the different objectives. A questionnaire was considered the most appropriate tool which could be used to conduct a cross-sectional study while mixed questions were appropriate to address the Research Questions which covered several aspects of respondents' wellbeing. On the contrary, the interview guide was used to gather information from the key informants.

² In remote areas of Lesotho, "address" simply refers to a general location of a house or building as there are no formal street names or house numbers.

Table 2: Types of questions asked in the study per study objective

Study objectives	Types of questions asked
To find out the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.	Open-ended and closed-ended questions with pre-codes
To assess the psychological well-being of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.	Close-ended questions were asked which were later coded into qualitative responses.
To find out the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.	Open-ended questions
To assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.	Close-ended and pre-coded questions

3.6 Data Analysis

The following steps of Qualitative Data Analysis were followed in line with an Analysis Plan:

1. Data Capturing and Data Preparation
2. Data Study
3. Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

3.6.1 Data Capturing

The Quantitative Data for the study was captured on Microsoft Excel of 2013 to generate Frequency Tables, pie and bar charts for illustration of proportions and comparisons were made where appropriate for bivariate and multivariate presentation of data. The purpose of summarizing the data as mentioned was to present it in a meaningful form to enable the researcher to study it.

3.6.2 Data Preparation

Data Preparation is the process of organizing and sorting data in line with research objectives while Data Familiarization entails studying and sorting data from the field (Babbie, 2021). Subsequent to capturing, therefore, data was considered through Data Familiarization with a view of formulating a strategy of how to best present it in summary and/or narrative form. In the fore-described process, frequency tables and graphs were tested and generated to summarize the data to arrive at meaningful data summaries. The summarized and narrative data appears in Chapter Four.

3.6.3 Discussion and Interpretation of Data

Once the data was presented summatively, contextual meanings were arrived at and interpreted as presented in Chapter Five.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics are Research Morals. Ethics are the moral principles that a researcher must follow regardless of the place or time. Ethical aspects in the research paper represent the issues of how researchers should treat respondents during the process of the research or how to maintain equality between the researcher and respondents, (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Anyone who is engaged in a social science research has to take note of the general agreement shared by the researchers about what is right or wrong in the conduction of the research inquiry. Ethics in the academic research also focuses on giving maximum rewards to the subjects and research integrity is maintained when

following ethical principles. There are various important research ethics that should be noted in carrying research.

3.7.1 Informed consent

Salkind (2010) articulates that the principle of informed consent stresses the researcher's responsibility to wholly inform participants of diverse aspects of research in a comprehensible language. The participants were told about the nature of the study, the objective or the aim of the study, and what the study is all about. Comprehensive information about research is necessary to able participants to make informed and voluntary decisions on whether to participate in the research or not. As a matter of fact, participants were told to participate freely without being coerced therefore; they gave the researcher their consent. The Researcher told participants that they can pull out of the research anytime they feel like they want.

3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Allen (2017) highlighted that confidentiality is sorting out or transforming personal, identifying data provided by the participants while anonymity is collecting data without gaining any personal, identifying information. The participants were made aware of the measures being taken to safeguard their anonymity and that confidentiality of the information will be kept. The researcher made it clear to participants that there would be no compensation of any kind but they will be thanked for their cooperation at the end of the study for sharing their own stories or ideas. The researcher clarified that the research will benefit social science studies and can contribute to the establishment and improvement of policies.

3.7.3 No harm to participants

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the research subjects are protected from the potential harmful consequences that might affect them as a result of participation (Halai, 2006). As a result, the researcher has ensured at all efforts that there was no harm to participants throughout the research process. Those who were

emotionally affected were referred the Ministry of Social Development for emotional, behavioural and social support. The participants were provided with researcher's contacts as a means of reference where they clarity.

3.8 Validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the findings

Validity is a piece of research that shows what it claims to show. A valid instrument measure is one that captures reality (Braun and Clarke, 2013). According to Bernard (2013: 46) reliability refers to whether or not the researcher gets the same answer by using an instrument to measure something more than twice. Braun and Clarke (2013:79) further add that reliability is the possibility of generating the same results when the same measures are administered by different researchers to a different participant group. Thus, a reliable system of measurement is consistent in that, each time it is used on the data, it yields the same measure. Trustworthiness aligns itself with the quality of the research project, the rigor of the methodology applied. The research findings should convince the reader that trustworthiness was established. Readers should have confidence in the study findings (Leavy, 2017).

3.8.1 Measures taken to ensure validity, reliability and Trustworthiness of findings

To ensure reliability and validity of the instruments used in this research, the data collection tools were piloted before the actual collection of data. Poor structure of concepts threatens validity and reliability according to (6 and Bellany, 2012). To guard against poorly structured concepts, the data collection tools were presented to the study supervisor and thereafter piloted on 4 individuals who were not part of the final sample. Findings of a pilot gave out consistent results as they were more similar to those of the main study. Reliability was used based on the DSM-V. Also there were clear definitions of and literature on the economic wellbeing in Lesotho in chapter one. Caution was also taken to avoid the intrusive and ambiguous questions.

Validity and reliability are crucial in establishing the trustworthiness of the findings. Validation is a process of building confidence in the research community and requires

the appropriateness of the research methods applied for a particular purpose. Validity is established through strategies of triangulation where multiple sources address the same question. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher did not only rely on the information given by the respondents but had to obtain information from the key informants to ascertain the truthfulness of the primary data obtained from the people married as children. As a means for both increasing and documenting the trustworthiness of qualitative research, the researcher used an audit trail to record the researcher's decisions throughout the conduct of the research and the analysis of data. In order to adhere to trustworthiness the researcher formulated the questions based on the relevant literature and theoretical framework that were employed. The interview schedule formed part of the ethical application to conduct the research and this contributed in ensuring trustworthiness (Leavy, 2017).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the study which was meant to investigate the economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng Community Council in Mokhotlong, Lesotho. Firstly, the demographic information of the participants from which the data was collected is put forth in the form of a summary followed by the findings of the study. The findings were thematically presented in this chapter based on the main objectives. The primary sub-themes and the secondary sub-themes which emerged were also discussed using direct quotes to emphasize the findings. The chapter ends with the findings' conclusion.

Primary Data for the study was collected from 20 people who were married as children and two Community Gatekeepers, from whom a Sampling Frame was obtained subsequent to permission. Simple Random Sampling (with replacements as discussed in the previous chapter) was used to sample people married as children in Menoaneng while the community gatekeepers were selected using Purposive Sampling. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from all the participants. The overall interviews and questionnaires conducted were 22, comprising of the 20 survivors and 2 Community Gatekeepers in Menoaneng Mokhotlong, Lesotho.

Data was analyzed qualitatively to find commonly occurring threads and to determine the possibility of some Psychological Illnesses among respondents (Jnanathapaswi, 2021 and Bryman, 2016).

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Information

The Demographic Information reported below includes the respondents' sex, age, age at marriage, age difference with their spouses, payment of Bohali, the highest level of education, the highest level of education of their spouses, the number of children, the age they conceived their children, contraception use, property ownership, and power dynamics in families and further demonstrated in figures, tables, bar charts, and pie charts.

4.2.1 Respondents' Sex

There were more female respondents than males in this study. Out of 20 respondents, there was only a 5% minority of male respondents while the females constituted 95% majority. This is simply because Lesotho is a patriarchal society where men are regarded as superior to women. Women are viewed as passive human beings that could just be ordered around. They are also regarded as children and voiceless, hence most of them were married as children and are expected to be taken care of by their spouses in marriage. They were not in a position to question or deny orders from men. Table 1 below gives out the summary of the sex of people married as children.

Table 3: Respondents' Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	1	5%
Female	19	95%

4.2.2 Respondents' Age

Figures 1 and 2 below demonstrate that the respondents' age ranged from 18 to 29 years old. The majority (40%) of the respondents were aged 18 years old. 25% were

aged 20. 10% were aged 19 while another 10% were 29 years old. 5% were aged 21 while the other 5% were aged 22 respectively. The last category comprised 5% who were aged 24.

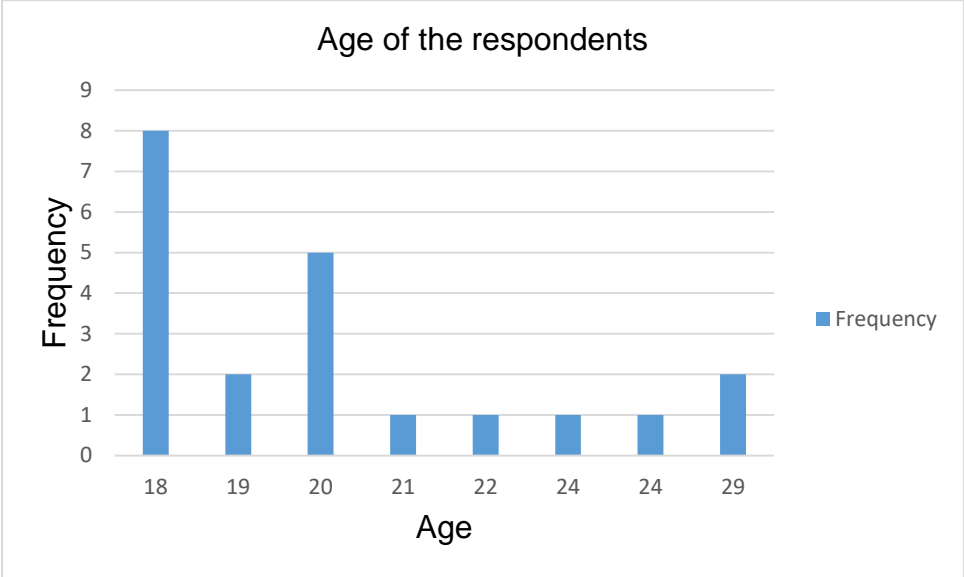


Figure 1: Respondents' age in numbers

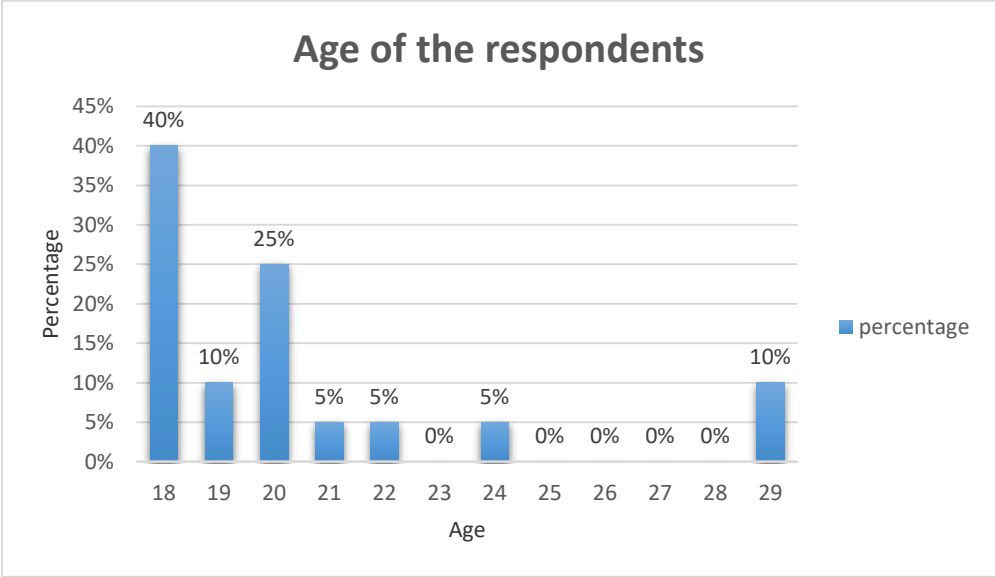


Figure 2: Respondents' age in percentages

4.2.3 Respondents' age at marriage

The majority (35%) were married at the age of 16 years old. This is followed by 30% who were married at 17 years old. 20% were married at the age of 14. 10% of the respondents were married at the age of 15. The least minority (5%) were married at the age of 13. This is presented in figure 2 below.

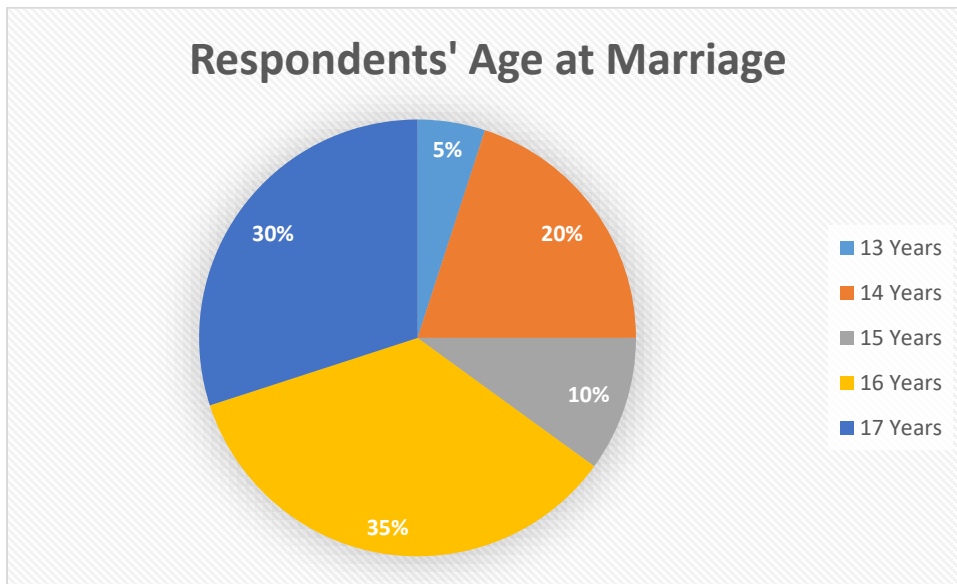


Figure 3: Respondents' Age at Marriage

4.2.4 Respondents' consent to marriage

There was a huge difference between those who have agreed to be married as children as opposed to those who did not agree. Figure 3 below displays that 80% of the respondents had agreed to be married as children while 20 percent of the respondents did not consent to marriage.

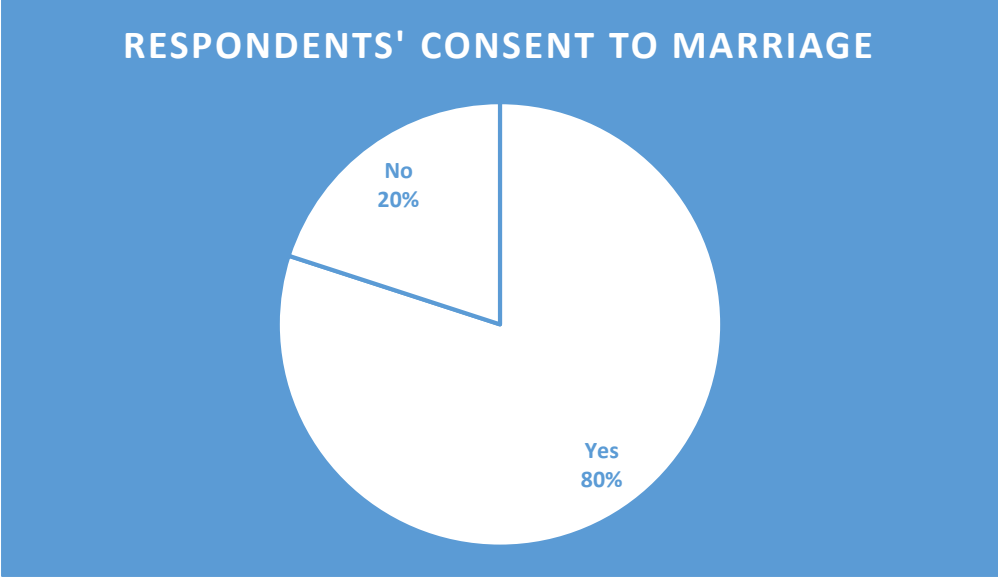


Figure 4: Respondents' consent to marriage

4.2.5 Spouse's age differences

Figure 4 below presents spouses age differences. 10% of the respondents had an age difference of 2 years. 20% had an age difference of 3 years. 15% had an age difference of 4 years with their spouses. 10% reported an age difference of 5 years. 15% had the age difference of 6 years with their spouses. The other 15% had an age difference of 7 years. 5% had the age difference of 8 years; the other 5% had the age difference of 9 years and the last 5% had the age difference of 16 years.

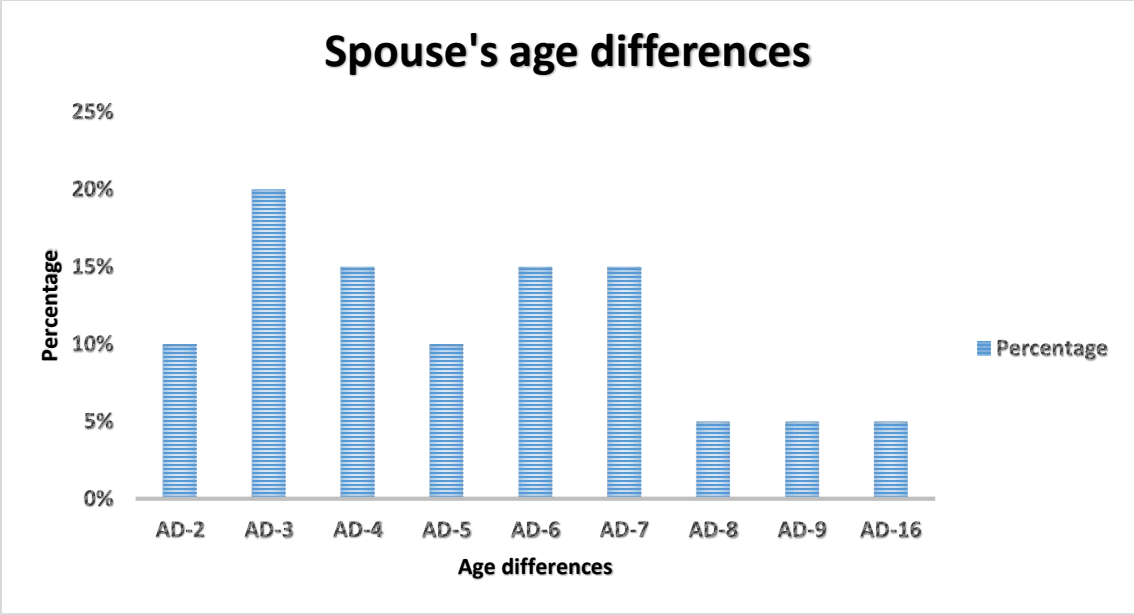


Figure 5: Spouse's age differences

4.2.6 Payment of Bohali3

Lesotho is a developing country with most of its citizens living below the poverty line. Therefore, the payment of Bohali tends to be practical for a few affluent families. Hence the 10% minority of respondents mentioned that Bohali was paid to seal their marriage and no Bohali was paid for the 90% majority. Figure 5 below demonstrates the summary.

3

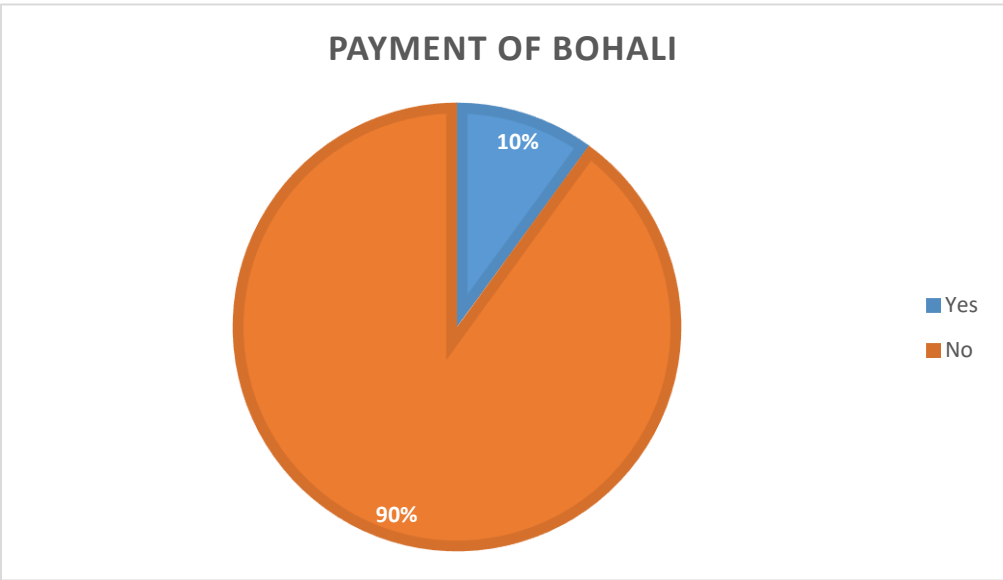


Figure 6: Payment of Bohali

4.2.7 Respondents' Highest Level of Education

The findings of the study as depicted in figure 8 below revealed that people married as children hardly reached high School education as most of them drop out at the primary or secondary level. The highest level of education among all the respondents was Form C and it was attained by a minority of the respondents (10%). Majority of the respondents (35%) reached Form A as their highest level of education. The respondents with the lowest level of education had attained Standard 5.

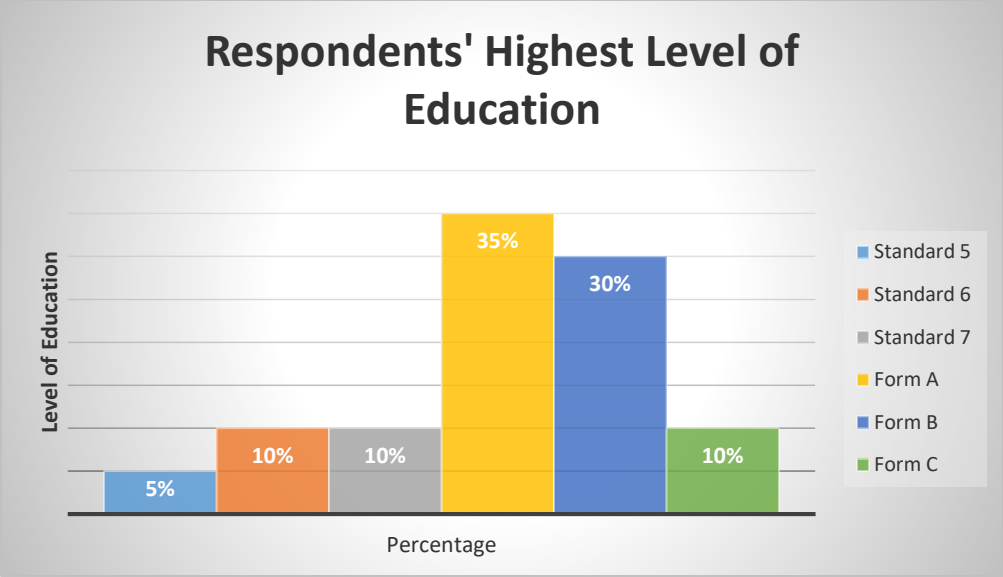


Figure 7: Respondents' Highest Level of education

4.2.8 Spouse’s Highest Level of Education

Table 2 below highlights the level of education attained by the respondent’s spouses. Their educational attainment ranged from Standard 1 to Form B and the majority of the respondents achieved Standard 5 and 7 as the highest levels of educational achievements.

Table 4: Spouses' Highest Level of Education

Spouses' highest level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Standard 1	1	5%
Standard 2	1	5%
Standard 3	2	10%
Standard 4	2	10%
Standard 5	4	20%
Standard 6	3	15%
Standard 7	4	20%
Form A	2	10%
Form B	1	5%

4.2.9 Respondent's age when they had children

In response to the question of how old the respondents were when they had their first children, the majority of the respondents mentioned having had their first children when they were 17 years old. 6 of the respondents said they had their second children between the ages of 19 and 20 years old while only two respondents had their 3 children when they were 21 years old and above.

Table 5: Respondent's age when they had children

Respondent's age when they had children

Age	First child	Second child	Third child
15	3	-	-
16	1	-	-
17	7	-	-
18	4	1	-
19	1	3	-
20	-	3	-
21+	-	1	2

4.2.10 Women's contraceptive use

Of the total of 19 female respondents, 55% majority used contraceptives while 45% did not. Some of them were not knowledgeable about contraceptives while others did not use them because they wanted to conceive.

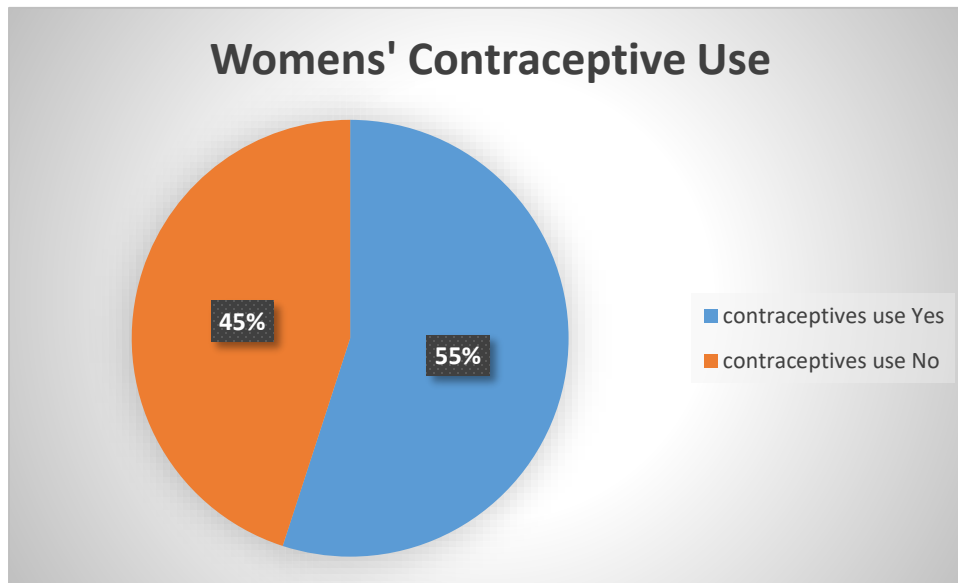


Figure 8: Women's Contraceptive use

4.3 Findings

This section presents data which emerged along with their primary sub-themes and their secondary sub-themes. Confidentiality was observed while conducting this study, hence the use of fictional names instead of real names of the respondents, and respondents were recognized by the assigned numbers. For example, R-1 (Respondent 1). Data was presented using the study's specific objectives as the main themes. The table below illustrates the summary of the objectives.

Table 6: An overview of the objectives, themes, primary sub-themes, and secondary sub-themes

Theme	Primary sub-theme	Secondary sub-themes
The economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong, Lesotho	Means of livelihood	The means of livelihood of the respondents, means of livelihood of the respondents' spouses, the types of jobs people married as children have according to chiefs, the economic status of the respondents before marriage according to chiefs, and the economic status of the respondents after marriage according to chiefs
	Property ownership	–
	Economic struggles related to early child marriage	–
	Relationship between educational level and economic status	Relationship between the educational level of the respondents and economic status
		Relationship between educational level of the respondents spouses and their economic status
Assessment of the psychological wellbeing of people married as children	The psychological characteristics wellbeing of people married as children	–
	the choice to get married if time could be reversed,	
	Divorce rate	
	Interpersonal	Interpersonal relations with spouse

	relationships	Interpersonal relations with children
		Relations with in-laws
	The view of the community gatekeepers about the psychological wellbeing of the people married as children	the community gatekeeper's view regarding the happiness of people married as children
		the community gatekeeper's view on whether people married as children cared for the children
		the community gatekeeper's view regarding family stability and intimate partner violence
The social wellbeing of people married as children.	The involvement of people married as children in the community	–
Assessment of the power dynamics in families of people married as children	–	–

4.3.1 The economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho

The impacts of child marriage have implications for economic well-being. Child marriage intensely affects people who marry early as well as their children in a number of ways. This could lead them to have children earlier and more children over their lifetime than if they had married later. It also affects their educational attainment negatively, thereby curtailing future opportunities for them to compete for well-paying jobs (Wodon, 2017a).

Under this objective, economic wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho were understudied through both qualitative and quantitative data. As mentioned in Chapter Three, it was thought that respondents' "means of livelihood", which differ from employment or "source of income" could best be understudied through qualitative data as it was considered necessary to gather explanatory details per respondent. Specific details of means livelihood were considered necessary on account of the broad and multiple livelihood strategies employed by people in the mountains of the country, particularly those in the study who have been described as having attained low levels of education.

An array of factors which were discussed by respondents in relation to their means of livelihood clustered into the following categories; the respondent's means of livelihood, respondents' property ownership, and the economic struggles related to child marriage.

4.3.1.1 Means of livelihood

The sub-themes under this theme were; means of livelihood of the respondents, means of livelihood of the respondents' spouses, the types of jobs people married as children have according to chiefs, the economic status of the respondents before marriage according to chiefs, and the economic status of the respondents after marriage according to chiefs.

4.3.1.2 Means of livelihood of the respondents

The study found that most respondents found it hard to secure well-paying jobs. Employers require people with experiences, qualifications, and expertise while people married as children rarely possess such due to early school dropouts and marrying young. Most of the respondents indicated that they were not employed full-time but were engaged in the following multiple and/or seasonal income generating activities: while some said that they relied on Community Savings Clubs to generate income within their communities. They also showed that they were eligible for securing seasonal employment such as firewood fetching, herding, babysitting, and or

housekeeping. They also stated that the wages or incentives they received out of those jobs could barely sustain their basic needs and those of their families. The following is a sample of their responses:

“I make a living out of (cutting, collecting and) selling firewood for domestic use. The money I get from this is too little to make ends meet because we also have a child. The child’s basic needs are hardly met. The money I get from selling wood is being complemented by the social grant our grandmother is getting from the government. (The old-age pension). It comes in handy since it comes in when it is almost impossible to meet our basic needs.” (R-7)

“It is very hard to survive when you were married as a child, so, as young wives, we strategized and united and started rotational village savings and loan associations as means of subsistence. We contribute money and sell bread and home-brewed alcohol at the designated host’s home. Bread and alcohol are sold to the group members and other interested members of the community.” (R- 4)

“No, I am unemployed and my husband does not want me to look for piece jobs because his parents work in South Africa and sent us money to pay for the grocery scheme and depend on the remaining amount for our basic needs. Sometimes it is very little and cannot cater for our basic needs.” (R- 8).

4.3.1.3. Means of livelihood of the respondents’ spouses

In response to the question of the employment means of the person with whom they were married to as children, most of the respondents mentioned that their spouses were not working in formal employment. The unemployed spouses, particularly the male spouses were either working seasonally in their crop fields or herding animals in the animal posts.

“He is currently not working, but we survive on the money he invested while herding sheep in Mokhotlong town. He managed to save the money because he stayed with his boss and did not have to spend money on food and accommodation.” (R- 5)

Those who indicated that their spouses were working mentioned that they did not have stable or well-paying jobs.

“He is a subsistence farmer and a herd man. He owns animals and works as a herd man and gets paid in cash once in six months. He manages because he shares a cattle post with his sibling therefore, he does not have to be there all the time to herd his animals because his sibling is a trusted herd man. Animals are reared for selling wool and mohair and occasionally sold when cash is needed.”

(R-1)

“My husband works in Kwazulu Natal, as a part-time worker at a timber logging company. He does not send me money every month though, he at least skips one or two months because they are casual workers and don’t get paid well. He had never sent money exceeding M1500.00 per month even after he had skipped two consecutive months.” (R- 2)

4.3.1.4. The types of jobs people married as children have according to chiefs

Most of the people married as children do not have well-paying jobs because they were still young (ICRW, 2017). In this study, people married as children depended on their parents for survival or acquire low-paying jobs, such as herding, and domestic work while some are self-employed.

“In this community council, a dignified man is regarded so, by owning animals. That is why most of the people married as children work as herd men. Most herd men do not prefer to be paid in cash, rather they prefer their payments in the form of animals. They believe that when you have acquired a lot of animals, you are going to make your own money and eligible to get married.”

“Most of them work as part-time workers in South Africa, while some work as seasonal workers in the crop fields here in the community. Some get paid in cash or in kind.”

“Some of them are self-employed, they survive on selling home-brewed alcohol

in the villages.”

4.3.1.5. The economic status of the respondents before marriage according to chiefs

Oftentimes, people married as children come from disadvantaged household's families, such as child-headed households, single-parent households, and poverty-stricken households.

“Most child-headed households were usually ultra-poor. My observation is that they believe that marriage is a way of escaping poverty. Getting married at a young age affords them an opportunity to be taken care of.”

“Most parents allow for their children to be married at a young age for economic gain. These parents target rewards in the form of bride price.”

“Many parents agree for their children to get married at a young age as they perceive that as a strategy to reduce the burden of feeding, clothing, and taking their daughters to school, especially in single-parent households.”

4.3.1.6. Economic status of the respondents after marriage according to chiefs

The economic statuses of people married as children mostly stay the same even after marriage. Where change occurred it was often a slight change as they are still young and it was not easy to fend for themselves.

“Breadwinning becomes a challenge for these families because most of them are not working and those who are working do not get paid well.”

“They are economically struggling because most of them depend on their parents working in South Africa. Sometimes they delay sending money home, as a result, the couple is forced to ask for food or borrow some money from their neighbours and this is very shaming.”

“Some of them cannot afford to take their children to the clinic because the clinic

is too far and they have to walk long distances carrying their babies on their backs. It is almost impossible to walk long distances on an empty stomach. For this reason, they are forced to resort to traditional herbs/medicine which may pose some health problems as there are no guidelines on the correct dosages. They also cannot afford decent clothing.”

4.3.1.7 Property ownership

The ownership of goods variables refers to owning land, a house, animals and other property owned alone or jointly in families (UNICEF, 2018).

This study found that the majority of the people married as children (70%) do not own housing units but live with their in-laws. Only 30% indicated that they had their housing units.

There were few (less than 40%) who owned domestic animals such as sheep or cattle and were mostly attained as payment for their spouses for working as herd men. Most of the properties they mentioned belonged to their in-laws since most respondents indicated that they dwell in their marital places. The respondents showed that it was not easy for them to own any property since they were married at a young age and were unemployable. Therefore, it was difficult for them to accumulate wealth as what they had was enough for food and clothing only.

Table 7: Property Ownership

Property Ownership						
	0	1 to 10	11 to 20	21 - 50	51 – 100	More than 100
Housing Units	14	6	0			
Crop Fields	16	4				
Cattle	16	3		1		

Sheep	9	3	4	5		1
Goats	9	8	1	2		
Chicken	13	6	1			
Equine	13	7				

4.3.1.8 Economic struggles related to child marriage

Child marriage impacts negatively on those married as children as well as their significant others economically (Rukmini, 2016).

The finding of this study showed that people who married as children struggled economically. The respondents mentioned that their spouses were working in Kwazulu Natal Province in South Africa but neglected them financially as they remained behind taking care of their families and their in-laws. They also highlighted that they suffered financially regardless of their husbands working outside the country. They mentioned that their husbands hardly sent money home and this raised suspicions that their husbands had extra-marital affairs which adversely impacted the economic wellbeing of their households. The respondents indicated that what increased their struggle was the in-laws being in charge of everything and also having to share the little they have with them.

The respondents also reported that they started engaging in infidelity because they felt lonely and were avoiding madness resulting from prolonged lack of sexual intercourse as their spouses come home at least twice a year, during Easter and Christmas holidays. They highlighted that those extramarital relationships came in handy because some economic gains came out of them.

“I hardly survive with my children since there is not enough yield because of climate change. If it was not because of my lack of skills, I would have left my husband a long time ago. That man is useless and spends our money with his mistresses forgetting that I am suffering.”

“It is hard to survive when uneducated. Since I was married while doing my Form

C, it has been difficult for me to secure employment since most employers need educated people (Form 5 and above). I was working as a domestic worker in South Africa until I got ill and was sent home. We currently survive by selling trash cans. My husband is a herd man at a cattle post and he is paid with the cattle which he intends to rear. Life is indeed hard but we are surviving by God's grace."

Some of the respondents mentioned that their children received compromised basic needs since they had to opt for the cheapest because they could not afford the basic needs of their choices such as proper clothing or a balanced diet. They highlighted that education for their children was compromised because their children were always among those who were frequently expelled from Pre School because of being behind with paying their school fees. In addition, they stated that having resorted to the compromised basic needs resulted in poor feeding leading to severely malnourished children. One stated that;

"Most of the time, it is hard to put bread on the table, so much that when I had managed to acquire maize meal, it felt like I had won the lottery. For us to eat food with meat, we attend every funeral in the village and we make sure to bring along takeaways."

In addition to respondents' description of their economic wellbeing, Community Chiefs referred to property owned by people married as children and the types of jobs they have.

The Chiefs mentioned that families of people married as children do not own a lot of property. This is because most of them are still young, and have not acquired the property for themselves. They have a few livestock and most of them still reside with the husband's family because they do not have any housing units.

"Most of them depend solely on their parent's property for survival because they are still very young. You cannot expect a child to own any property, they are expected to be at school so that they may have the qualification to qualify for a well-paying job to own property of their choice."

“It is a problem in this community council, most of them have absolutely nothing in their names, except for those who have inherited the property. Otherwise, they depend entirely on their parent’s property.”

“A married couple is expected to be independent as far as property is concerned, so that they may take care of their families. However, most of them cannot even afford to rent a housing unit or crop field.”

4.3.1.9 Relationship between educational level and economic status

The findings revealed that there was a direct relationship between the attainment of the highest level of education and the economic status of the respondents and their spouses. All the respondents had not attained a high school education. A few respondents had attained secondary education level. This therefore, has negatively impacted the economic status of both the respondents and their spouses. There is also a relationship between the level of education and employment as depicted in figure 6 under section 4.2.7.

4.3.1.10. Relationship between the educational level of the respondents and their economic status

The findings revealed that most of the respondents had attained only primary education and only a few had attained secondary education which had rendered them not suitable for formal employment and well-paying jobs. It, therefore, suffices to deduce that majority of the respondents were living below the poverty line.

4.3.1.11. Relationship between the educational level of the respondents’ spouses and their economic status

The majority of the respondents had attained Standard 5 and 7 as the highest educational level. A minority of the respondents had attained Form B as the highest educational level. The spouses could therefore not provide for the family needs

adequately. The situation was aggravated by marrying partners who were young, uneducated and could barely assist their husbands.

4.3.1.12. Reintegration of people married as children into school

Chiefs further revealed that people married as children do not get the opportunity to continue studying after marriage because of their new roles and identity. Some are discouraged by their partners and their in-laws.

“We conducted public gatherings with government officials on child marriage sensitization. However, the more sensitization the more they got married. I recall that last year 2020, we had a public gathering, where the government officials sensitized our community about Covid 19 pandemic and child marriage. What surprised me was that after the gathering I got reports from my colleagues that most of the girls got married in large numbers in the community. I learnt that they opted for marriage as a posture of resistance that they did not want to be told how they should live their lives. The matter has since been reported to the police for further interventions.”

“Their partners are not supportive as far as continuing with school is concerned”.

“Some of them have the opportunity, but, they did not want to return to schools for fear of stigmatization after becoming young mothers.”

4.3.2 Assessment of Psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho

Psychological wellbeing signifies the degree to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities (Adler, et al 2017).

The following data categories emerged under the psychological wellbeing of the respondents; the psychological characteristics of people married as children interpersonal relationships, the view of the community gatekeepers regarding the psychological wellbeing of the people married as children and their family stability. Key

to the assessment of the psychological wellbeing of people married as children was the adoption of Likert scale and DSM-V.

4.3.2.1 The psychological characteristics of people married as children

The study did not seek to make a diagnosis but to determine respondents' general psychological wellbeing. To this end, rudimentary psychological scales adapted from DSM-5 were used along with Likert Scales. These were incorporated into the study's main Data Collection Tool with a careful attempt to avoid leading/suggestive questions. The rudimentary Psychological Scales were subjected to intensive review by The Department of Sociology and Social Work at the National University of Lesotho. The findings on the psychological wellbeing of the people married as children suggested they could be well while at the same time have concerning psychological conditions. Almost half of the respondents reported signs of stress and/or moderate depression as defined by (Lee, Jeong and Kim, 2021) as they were chronically tired, had insomnia and were irritable and hopelessly apathetic.

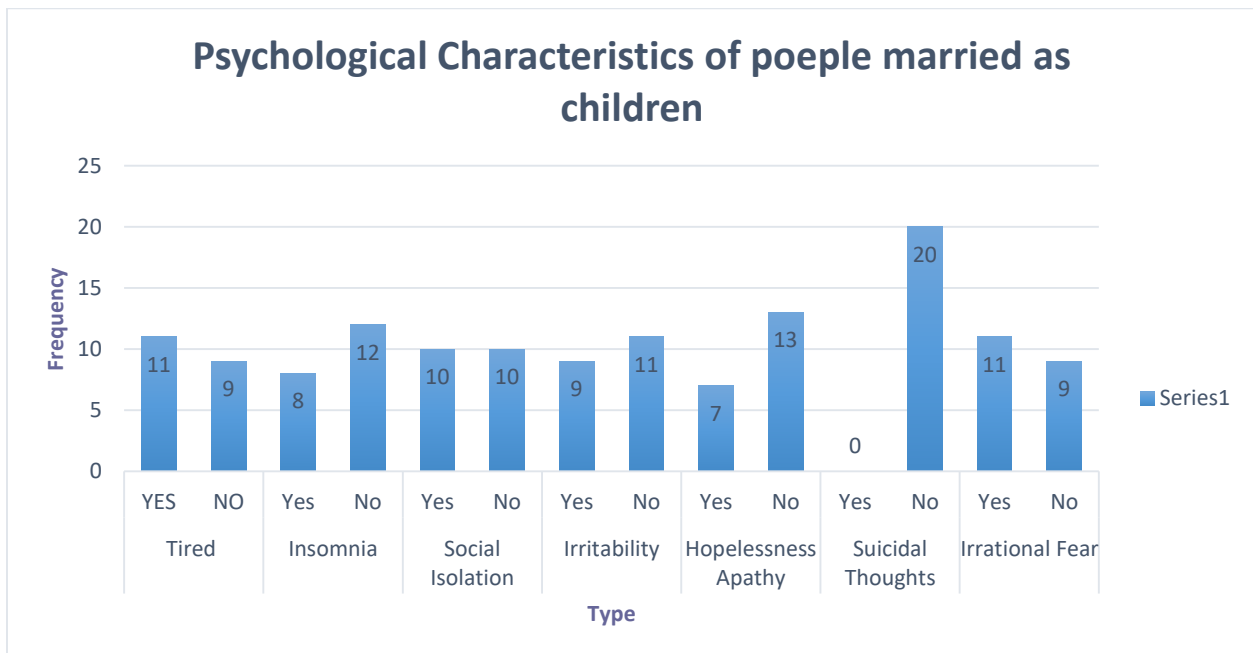


Figure 9: Psychological characteristics of people married children

Table 6: Cross tabulation of Psychological characteristics and respondents' age at study

According to table 6 below, 55% of the respondents across all ages had fatigue despite getting enough hours of sleep while 45% did not exhibit signs of fatigue. A minority of 40% of the respondents experienced insomnia while 60% had no insomnia. Forty five of the respondents revealed that they were irritable while 55% did not exhibit signs of irritability. 35% of the respondents were hopelessly apathetic while 65% were not. 100% of the respondents had no suicidal thoughts. Fifty five of the respondents experienced irrational fear while 45% did have such. More than half of the respondents had a determining symptom of Generalized Anxiety as defined by (Llera, Sandra, Newman & Michelle, 2015). All the respondents did not have suicidal thoughts or ideations which was a hopeful sign that they were not severely depressed. Respondents' psychological characteristics are summarized in table 6 below.

Table 8: Cross tabulation of the Psychological characteristics and age at study

Psychological characteristics	Age at study (respondents age at study)							Total
	18 years old	19	20	21	22	24	29	
Tired								
Yes	2	1	3	1	1	1	2	11
	25%	50%	60%	100%	100%	100%	100%	55%
No	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	9

	75%	50%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	45%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Insomnia								
Yes	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	8
	25%	50%	20%	0%	100%	100%	100%	40%
No	6	1	4	1	0	0	0	12
	75%	50%	80%	100%	0%	0%	0%	
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Social Isolation								
Yes	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	10
		50%	40%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%
No	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	10
		50%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Irritability								
Yes	3	0	1	1	1	1	2	9
		0%	20%	100%	100%	100%	100%	45%
No	5	2	4	0	0	0	0	11
		100%	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	55%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20

Hopelessness/ apathy								
Yes	2	0	1	0	1	1	2	7
	25%	0%	20%	0%	100%	100%	100%	35%
No	6	2	4	1	0	0	0	13
	75%	100%	80%	100%	0%	0%	0%	65%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Suicidal thoughts								
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Irrational fear								
Yes	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	11
		100%	40%	100%	100%	100%	50%	55%
No	5	0	3	0	0	0	1	9
		0%	80%	0%	0%	0%	50%	45%
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20

4.3.2.2 The choice to get married if time could be reversed

When asked if they would still agree to get married as children if it was the year 2000 today, most of the respondents (60%) mentioned that they would not have been married as children, while the minority (40%) agreed that they would still opt for marriage still be as illustrated in figure 9 below.

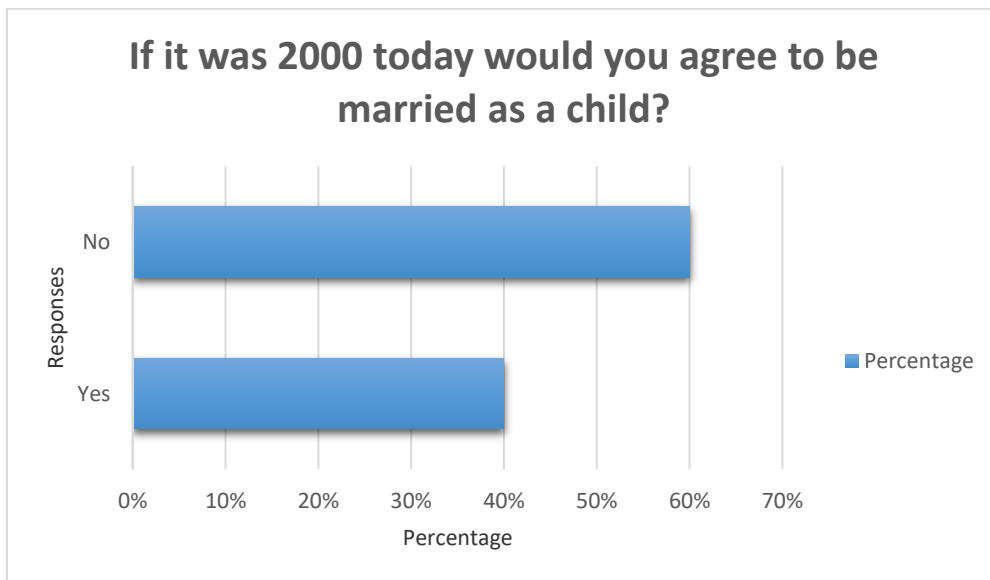


Figure 10: If it was 2000 today would you still agree to be married as a child?

4.3.2.3 Divorce rate

Child marriage may fuel the rate at which divorce occur, this happens because people married as children were forced by circumstances such as poverty (Karam (2015)

When asked if they were still married to the same person with whom they got married to as children, all the respondents said they were still married to the person with whom they got married to as children as shown in table 7 below, probably because of the Basotho's patriarchal culture and avoiding public shaming, labelling, and humiliation associated with divorce.

Table 9: Are you still married to the same person you got married to as a child?

ARE YOU STILL MARRIED TO THE SAME PERSON WITH WHOM YOU GOT MARRIED TO AS A CHILD?	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	20	100%
NO	0	0%

4.3.2.4 Interpersonal relationships

The interpersonal relationships that were discussed in this section included relations with the spouse, their children, and their in-laws as well as the community gatekeeper’s view about the psychological characteristics of people married as children.

4.3.2.5. Interpersonal relations with spouse

The study found that the majority of the respondents had good interpersonal relations with their spouses.

“I relate well with my husband. We respect and love each other dearly. I cannot complain except that he works far away from home and I miss him so much every day.” (R-2)

“We are so much in love. He supports me a lot and helps me understand and get used to being married. My husband tries by all possible means to make sure that I cope. He is literally my best friend.” (R- 6)

On the other hand, some respondents indicated they did not relate well with their spouses. The reasons for not getting along very well were the age gap between them and their spouses and the patriarchal culture. These age gaps and cultures caused their spouses to regard and treat them as children and this was what they had to say:

“Our relationship used to be good. Everything changed as soon as we had the disabled child. He became much stressed and distanced himself from us and started having extra-marital relationships. His support for his household had become very minimal. We argue a lot with him in front of the children and the elder son complains about it and does not want us to quarrel.” (R-1)

“I was married when I was 15 years old and the age difference between my husband and I is 16 years. He doesn’t see me as his partner but as his elder daughter. There is nothing he discusses with me and I am not expected to question his decisions or quarrel with him or else, I get whipped.” (R-10)

4.3.2.6. Interpersonal relations with children

Almost all the respondents (95%) were found by the study to have good interpersonal relations with their children.

“My two boys and I have a very good relationship. I love them with all my heart. They are securely attached to me more than their father because he is hardly there and when he’s at home he is usually drunk and doesn’t not help me look after them.” R-1

“He is still young but we get along very well. He warms my heart.” (R-2)

On the contrary, only one respondent (5%) said she was the second wife and had challenges with how she relates with the stepchildren. She and the children did not get along well the stepchildren felt that she was there to steal their late mother’s spot. Some of them pointed out that:

“I have three stepchildren, the eldest is older than me, the second born is my age mate, and the last born is younger than me. I have a problem relating with them especially the elder one (a boy child) since he is older than me and does not regard me as a parent to him. One day he stabbed me with a knife because I demanded respect from him. He insulted me and told me to my face that it is because of me that their mother died. He never agrees when I give him orders and his father told me to stop bothering his kids.” (R-10)

4.3.2.7 Relations with in-laws

The majority of the respondents indicated that they did not have good interpersonal relations with their in-laws. Some stated that distance has contributed to fragmented relations and lack of interaction because they have never met since they work in South Africa. They substantiated that:

“I have never met nor talked to my mother-in-law even over the phone. She works as a domestic worker in South Africa. She has never visited the home at all since I got married to her son.” (R-3)

“We used to get along so well with my in-laws. Everything changed immediately after the in-laws discovered that we have built the second housing unit. They used to pay us visits frequently, but since that day they had never set their foot at our place. They no longer call us but rather spread the false information that I am cheating on my husband. This is because they do not understand how we managed to build the second housing unit. They also believed that I had an extra-marital relationship and that is how I got the money for the house.” (R- 1)

“My mother-in-law does not like me at all, because my husband gives the money to me not her. She wants the money to be given to her because we live under the same roof (in her house). The living condition is unbearable, if I had my parents, I would have divorced a long time ago. I have to stay since my aunt is even worse than my mother-in-law.” (R-5)

“A lot has now changed because I live with my mother-in-law. She is such a control freak and we do not get along well. For example, I am not allowed to participate in public activities, to make friends, and to even interact with my peers.” (R- 6)

4.3.2.8 The view of the community gatekeeper's observations on the psychological wellbeing of the people married as children

Under this theme, the following sub-themes emerged: the community gatekeeper's view regarding people married as children and whether they are happily married, respect each other, care for their children, and offer one another mutual support.

4.3.2.9 The community gatekeeper's view regarding the happiness of people married as children

In addition to the respondents' reports, Chiefs revealed that the happiness of the majority of people married as children was short-lived. They supported that these people need to be empowered and motivated by their parents, relatives, and in-laws.

“As much as they are married and regard themselves as adults because of the assumed adult responsibilities after getting married. Reality still stands that they are still children and their elders still order them around like children. Therefore this impacts negatively on their happiness in marriage.”

“Given their level of maturity and the lack of knowledge concerning marriage they are unable to tolerate each other when challenges arise. They are unable to solve problems the way adults should and the level of their intolerance for each other's attitudes is high.”

“Their happiness is short-lived because their decisions are illogically impaired by infatuation.”

Some people married as children still have respect for each other, although this is applicable to a small fraction.

“Even though most of them have a challenge making ends meet, you would find out that they still have respect for each other. The support they give each other would amaze you.”

“Some respondents have lost respect for their partners who work far away from home (South Africa) because there are rumours that they have extramarital

relationships at work. As a result, the partners who are left at home revenge by also having extramarital relationships.”

4.3.2.10 The community gatekeeper’s view on whether people married as children cared for their children

The majority of the respondents loved and cared for their children although they were not well equipped to render their full support. Among other factors, they lacked resources that would enable to fend for their families especially their children.

“They struggle a lot because their parents and their in-laws work in South Africa, and they do everything all by themselves.”

“Some of them were not ready for parenting and the responsibilities of motherhood.”

“Their new roles and responsibilities overwhelm them and they distance themselves from their families, especially from children, and do not take good care of their children.”

4.3.2.11 The community gatekeeper’s views regarding family stability

Intimate partner violence emerged as a secondary sub-theme in this sub-theme.

4.3.2.12 Intimate partner violence

Children who experienced IPV when growing up were likely to have families lacking stability (Duvvury, Callan, Carney, and Raghavendra 2013).

There were few incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV), while the majority of the respondents had not experienced IPV incidents.

“Some of their families were still stable because they reside with their parents and the in-laws. Whenever conflicts arise, parents and the in-laws were able to intervene.”

“They were stable because they have to be obedient, especially the female partners. This is because they got married in order to escape poverty. Therefore they were obliged to stay because they cannot afford to divorce because that would mean going back to poverty, humiliation and stigmatization.”

“Some were not stable because their spouses are abusive because of the role strain.”

4.3.3 The social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng Mokhotlong Lesotho

Under this theme, the study was aimed at finding out the involvement/ engagement of people married as children in the community.

4.3.3.1 The involvement of people married as children in the community

The study found that less than half of the respondents were not actively engaged in community activities. Among the reasons mentioned, the respondents indicated the role strain caused by the sudden change of responsibilities.

Some respondents mentioned that they had to wait until they had been fully initiated into their new identities and roles before they could be involved in community activities. They highlighted that they had to complete at least a minimum of three months in marriage before they could interact with mainstream society. Moreover, the study found that this was done purely to protect them from role strain as they were considered young and incapable. Therefore, three months is believed to be enough time for the newlyweds to adjust to the new roles and identity.

“... I was promised to be introduced to the chief and the community for correlation. When we got back home, my in-laws sat me down and told me that I am not allowed to socialize with anyone except for my family members. I was also restricted from attending/participating in community activities. It used to hurt me then, but I am now used to it and it feels normal. I don't have friends outside the family and my only and best acquaintance is my husband.”

“My mother-in-law told me that she hated gossip and lies, therefore I am not allowed to have friends because they are likely to spread lies and gossip which would impact negatively on the family ties.”

“I was married when I was thirteen years old, and my mother-in-law told me that I am still young and have to limit my outings. She told me that I needed to focus on my family, not friendship because friendship in marriage correlates with trouble.”

One respondent pointed out that she was unable to participate in community activities because of her disabled child;

“I cannot participate in community activities because I am looking after my disabled child who was born with severe cerebral palsy. He is four years old but his body is very floppy. He has no balance when sitting, he lacks control of his head, mouth, and trunk. The lack of hand-eye coordination restricts him from using his hands. I always have to carry him on my back whenever I am around people. Moreover, I have developed very low self-esteem since we face a lot of social rejection.”

On the other hand, there were more than 50% of the respondents showed that they actively engaged in community activities. These were mainly those who did not live with their in-laws such as those who moved out and those whose in-laws worked in South Africa as domestic workers. They survived on part-time jobs and village loan associations.

“I am actively engaged in the community pop-up shops and they help me so much because I get to meet a lot of people with many different ideas on how to tackle challenging situations. I have a lot of friends and we get along so well.”

“Moving out from my house has helped me a lot. I used to live like a prisoner/slave, I missed my friends and peers. Now I am an active member of the community. My household chores are being performed well without any supervision. I have never been this happy.”

4.3.3.2 Assessment of the power dynamics in families of people married as children

Power Dynamics in families of people married as children as defined by Abera, Nega, Tefera, and Gelagay (2022) as the arrangement where power would be exerted in the hands of male spouses who are usually older, people married as children are usually structurally fixed to submissive position in their own marriages and households. The power dynamics in families of people married as children were measured using the following pre-codes: respondents, spouse, both [respondent and spouse], parents-in-law. The dynamics were studied to understand the general age and whether people married as children were able to acquire full responsibility of their lives. Under this objective, therefore, the study found that majority of the spouses were the decision makers with regard to land procurement and location. The people married as children were actively involved in minor decisions such as the choice of diet for their families.

Table 10: Power Dynamics in families of people married as children

Power Dynamics in families of people married as children					
	Respondent	Spouse	Both	Parents	Total
Land Procurement & Location	0	9	10	1	20
How Family Spends excess income	7	4	9	0	20
Choice of place of residence	6	10	4	0	20
Choice of animals to be reared or procured	0	20	0	0	20
Choice of Family Diet	17	3	0	0	20
Contraception Use	8	0	12	0	20

Table 9: cross tabulation of respondents' age at marriage and power dynamics

Table 9 below depicts that all the respondents had no say with regard to land acquisition in their marriage. Forty five percent of the respondents indicated that their spouses had a say in the procurement of land and residential location. Fifty percent of both respondents and spouses were in agreement about procuring and locating a place of residence. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that the parents-in-law were the sole deciders regarding procurement and acquisition of land. Thirty five of the respondents showed that they had a say on family expenditure while 20% reflected that the decisions with regard to family expenditure centred arouse their spouses.

Forty five percent of the respondents indicated that they both agreed with their spouses when it comes to family expenses. None of the respondents indicated that their parents' in-laws were directly involved in their family spending. Thirty percent of the respondents decided on the place of residence while 50% revealed that their spouses decided on the residential place. Twenty percent of the respondents agreed on the residential acquisition with their partners. Zero percent of the respondents showed that their parents in law had no say with regard to the choice of residential place.

All the respondents concurred that they did not have a say with regard to which animals can be procured and kept. According to 100% of the respondents reflected that their spouses had an exclusive prerogative on deciding which animals could be procured and kept. Therefore, 0% of the respondents indicated that procuring and rearing animals was never a joint decision. All the respondents revealed that their parent's in-law had no say with regard to the choice of animals that can be reared. Eighty five percent of the respondents showed that they were the sole deciders with regard to the family diet and food handling. The respondents (15%) showed that their spouses were directly involved in decisions food preparation and nutrition.

All the respondents indicated that there were no instances where there was a joint decision on what should be on the menu. In the same vein, parent's in-law were never involved with regard to the dietary matters. Regarding the use of contraceptives, 40% of

the respondents agreed that they determined their preferred choice of contraception. 100% of the respondents indicated that their spouses had no say pertaining to issues relating to the use of contraceptives. Out of all the respondents, (60%) of them showed that the decision on contraception was done jointly with their spouses. All the respondents (100%) concurred that their parent's in-law had no say regarding their use of contraceptives.

Table 11: Cross tabulation of the respondents' age at marriage and power dynamics

Power dynamics	Age at marriage					Total
	13	14	15	16	17	
Land procurement and location						
Respondent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spouse	0	3	1	1	4	9
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	1	1	6	2	10
Parents	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20
How family spends excess income						
Respondent	0	1	1	2	3	7
Spouse	1	1	0	1	1	4
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	2	1	4	2	9
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20
Choice of place of residence						

Respondent	0	0	1	2	3	6
Spouse	0	4	1	4	1	10
Both [Respondent and spouse]	1	0	0	1	2	4
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20
Choice of animals to be reared or procured						
Respondent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spouse	1	4	2	7	6	20
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20
Choice of family diet						
Respondent	1	3	0	7	6	17
Spouse	0	1	2	0	0	3
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20
Contraception use						
Respondent	0	0	0	3	5	8
Spouse	0	0	0	0	0	0

Both [Respondent and spouse]	1	4	2	4	1	12
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	4	2	7	6	20

Table 10: cross tabulation of respondents' age at study and power dynamics

Unlike at the time the respondents got married, their decisions were different at a later stage in marriage. Table 10 below presents how the respondents partook in land procurement and location, expenditure of excess income, choice of place of residence, choice of animals to be reared or procured, choice of family diet, and contraception use. Thirty-five percent of the respondents had a say regarding the procurement of land and location. According to 25% of the respondents, the spouses had input pertaining to land procurement and location. A minority of 40% of the respondents indicated that there was joint cooperation when deciding about location and procurement thereof. All the respondents' parents' in-law had no say on land procurement and location. Half of the respondents admitted to having an input on how the family budget is spent.

The respondents highlighted that 20% of the spouses contributed on how the family budget is expended. A minority of 30% highlighted that there was a joint decision with regard to expenditure. None of the parents were involved in issues pertaining to family expenditure. When deciding on the place of residence, 40% of the respondents had a significant contribution. According to 15% of the respondents, their spouses were the sole deciders on the choice of place of residence while 45% of the respondents admitted to having a joint decision on the choice of place of residence. Hundred percent of the respondents concurred that their parent's in-law were not involved in determining their place of residence. Only 5% of the respondents alluded to having a say in which choice of animals could be procured and reared. According to 95% of the respondents, the spouses decided on which animals could be procured and reared.

None of the respondents jointly agreed with their spouses concerning animal keeping. In the same vein, parents-in-law were not involved pertaining to animals that could be reared. Concerning the issue of diet and food preparation, 70% of the respondents stated that they are the sole deciders of what constitutes the menu. Ten percent of the respondents postulated that their spouses directly partook in what should constitute the menu including food preparation while 20% of the respondents revealed that they never jointly decided on what should go into the family menu. All the respondents alluded to the fact that their parents-in-law had no involvement in the dietary requirements of their families.

Table 12: Cross-tabulation of the respondents' age at study and power dynamics

Power dynamics	Age at study (respondents' age at study)							Total
	18	19	20	21	22	24	29	
Land procurement and location								
Respondent	0	1	3	1	0	1	1	7
Spouse	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Both [Respondent and spouse]	5	1	2	0	1	0	1	8
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
How family spends excess income								
Respondent	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	10
Spouse	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Choice of place of residence								
Respondent	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	8
Spouse	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Both [Respondent and spouse]	5	0	3	0	1	0	0	9
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Choice of animals to be reared or procured								
Respondent	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Spouse	8	2	5	1	1	0	2	19
Both [Respondent and spouse]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Choice of family diet								
Respondent	4	2	4	1	1	0	2	14
Spouse	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Both [Respondent and spouse]	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20
Contraception use								
Respondent	6	2	4	1	1	0	2	17
Spouse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Both [Respondent and spouse]	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	20

Figure 10 below reflects that, as people married as children get older, there's a visible shift in power dynamics that affords women married as children more power in decision making in different power dynamics (how families spend excess income, choice of residence, and, contraception use) while at the same time their psychological characteristics (tiredness, social isolation, irrational fear, irritability and insomnia) increased as they grew older because of the increased responsibilities.

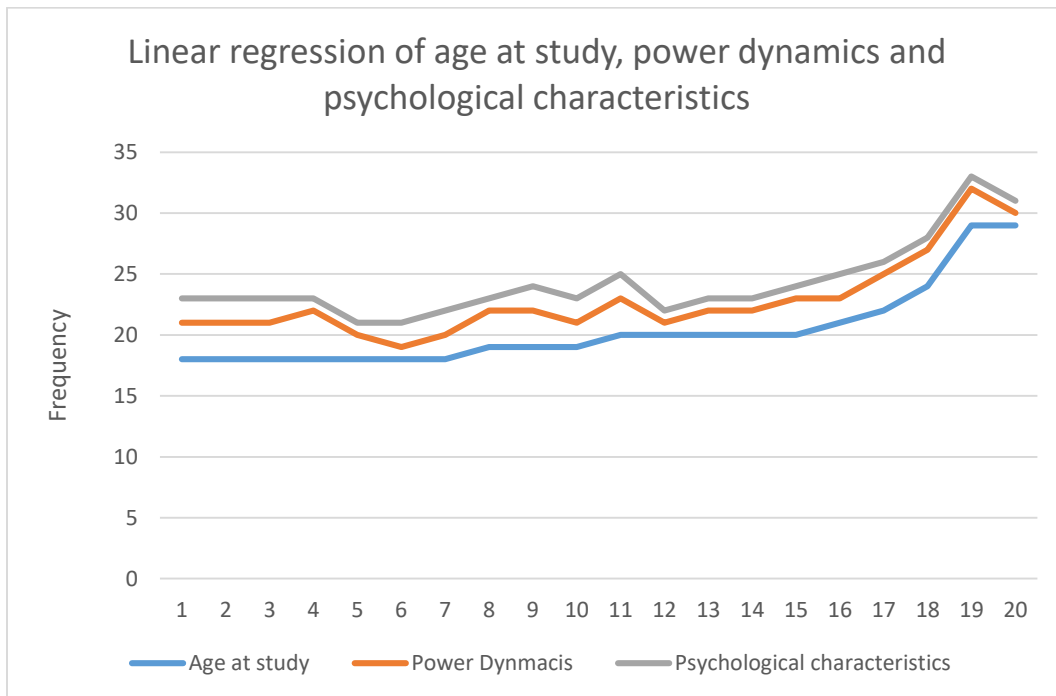


Figure 11: Linear regression of age at study, power dynamics, and psychological characteristics

4.4 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter dealt with the presentation of the results of the study. The information resulting from the interviews was presented qualitatively and quantitatively. The presentation of results was done based on the four objectives of the study subsequently resulting in four thematic areas namely; the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng Mokhotlong Lesotho; assessment of the psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho; the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng Mokhotlong Lesotho and finally an assessment of power dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho. The chapter first presented the demographic information of the respondents based on; the respondents' sex, age, age at marriage, age difference with their spouses, payment of bohali, the highest level of education, the highest level of education of their spouses, the number of children they had, the age they conceived their children, contraception use, property ownership and power dynamics and their families. The information was demonstrated in figures, tables, bar charts and pie charts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the discussions of the findings of the study which was investigating the economic and psychological characteristics of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho. The chapter begins by presenting the discussions, challenges encountered while conducting the study, the recommendations resulting from the findings obtained, and lastly the chapter conclusion. The study findings are presented in connection with the research problem, the literature, and the theoretical framework which guided this research. The attention during the discussion was mainly focused on the four main objectives namely; to find out the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho, to assess the psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho, to find out the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho and to assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

5.2 Discussions and interpretation of findings

This section provides the discussions and interpretation of the objectives of the study as indicated in the introduction. The presentation of discussions follows a similar sequence as that in chapter four. Information resulting from the findings under each objective is thoroughly discussed allowing for the researcher to make inferences from the findings obtained.

5.2.1 Objective One: To find out the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

This objective resulted in the following sub-topics; factors that led to the attainment of the respondent's highest level of education, the means of livelihood, property ownership, and the economic struggles related to child Marriage. The input of Chiefs was also solicited with regard to the types of jobs people married as children engage in; the economic status of the respondents before marriage, the economic status of respondents after marriage, and the reintegration of people married as children back into school.

5.2.2. Means of livelihood

The data obtained from the study centred on the following; means of livelihood of the respondents, means of livelihood of the respondents' spouses, the types of jobs people married as children have according to Chiefs, the economic status of the respondents before marriage according to chiefs, and the economic status of the respondents after marriage according to chiefs.

5.2.3. Means of livelihood of the respondents

The study found that people married as children could not find well-paying jobs and had to settle for low-paying jobs for sustenance. Most of them were self-employed and engaged in wood fetching, herding, and village savings and loan associations. Some people married as children were denied the opportunity to seek out jobs by their spouses as they were reliant on their parents who worked in South Africa while some relied on the old age pension. The demographic information in chapter four showed that the majority of people married as children had attained low levels of education and could not easily find formal employment. As stated under the study background in chapter one, the findings also revealed that people in the Menoaneng community relied on subsistence crop farming. Among the factors that affected their means of livelihood were the responsibilities that were brought about by a sudden transition into parenthood. According to Savadago and Woodon (2017b), those married as children were adversely affected. This also hindered their opportunities to get well-paying jobs as they had to drop out of school at a young age.

5.2.4. Means of livelihood of the respondents' spouses

The study discovered that majority of the respondents' spouses were not formally employed but instead were self-employed while some laboured in low-paying jobs. Most of the spouses were either working seasonally in their field crops or herding animals in the animal posts. Some did part-time jobs in South Africa in timber logging companies.

For those who were engaged in subsistence farming, there were a lot of challenges they encountered such as climate change and harsh weather conditions. Additionally, they used unscientific methods of farming, and as a result, did not get good yield. Hence they were still poverty-stricken and had to face lifelong negating implications. The findings are suggestive of the harsh economic situation faced by people married as children in the Menoaneng community and the perpetual cycle of poverty that extends to the future generation. Klasen and Pieters (2012) support this assertion by indicating that being married as children can have an influence on child labour. The proceeds accumulated from child labour also trigger the urge to get married at a young age.

5.2.5. The types of jobs people married as children had according to chiefs

The study found out that people married as children do not have well-paying jobs because they married young and had not attained higher education. They depend on their parents for survival or acquire low-paying jobs, such as herding, and domestic work while some were self-employed. However, Edin and Nelson (2013) contend that parents from poor households value their families and parenthood more than those with high socioeconomic status although parents from poor or low socioeconomic status faced a lot of challenges along with the parenthood responsibilities.

Additionally, Cooper (2014) stated that their low-paying jobs could not cover all the basic household needs. In spite of the challenges survivors of child marriage faced, they tended to value their marriages and tried by all means to make ends meet. They seemed to psychologically endure the hardships brought by marriage at a young age. They were therefore forced to adapt to the unfavourable economic situation including cultural norms and practices.

5.2.6. The economic status of the respondents before marriage according to Chiefs

The study found out that people who married as children were from the margins of the economy and were generally from child-headed households and single parent

households. The community gatekeepers highlighted that child marriages are regarded as a ticket out of poverty. Parents allowed their children to get married at a young age for financial rewards in the form of bride price. Parents also marry their children at a young age to offload the burden of feeding, clothing and paying school fees. At least 75% population of Basotho were referred to as poor because of living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2019; UNICEF, 2022). It thus suffices to conclude that poverty was the main trigger to get children married with the hope that the financial situation of the bride's family would improve upon receiving the bridal price.

5.2.7. Economic status of the respondents after marriage according to Chiefs

The study uncovered that the economic status of people who married as children mostly stayed the same even after marriage. For those who witnessed change, it was often a slight one. The community gatekeepers gave an account that people married as children still face challenges to fend for themselves. They still experienced economic struggles as most of them were still dependent on their in-laws. Their struggles were also exacerbated by the fact that they had born children which meant their responsibilities in terms of spending had also increased.

The community gatekeepers further disclosed that attending to their children's health was also a challenge. Most of them could not afford to take their children to the clinic and would resort to the use of traditional herbs. Health is an integral component of a child's development that cannot be overlooked. Chapter one of the study highlighted the adverse effects of inadequate health care and the risk it posed to people married as children which included among others; maternal mortality, fistula, and delivery complications (Turkur, 2015).

5.2.8 Property ownership

The study found out that of the majority people married as children did not own property and lived with the in laws. It was just a few respondents who owned housing units. A small fraction of the people who married as children had animals they had attained

through their spouses working as herd men. The study, therefore reflects that people who married at a young age were not in a position to accumulate wealth owing to the fact that they did not acquire further education as stated under the demographic information of the study.

5.2.9 Economic struggles related to child marriage

The study discovered that people married as children were financially disadvantaged. World Bank (2012) supports that the spouses of people married as children notice that their female counterparts lack financial literacy and are unable to make proper financial decisions for their households. Even those whose spouses were working in South Africa were still experiencing financial difficulties as their spouses were paid less. This has led to tension in most of the families as there was a suspicion that the spouses in South Africa were spending money on their mistresses.

The spouses rarely visited home which led to the deprivation of conjugal rights and in turn triggered infidelity was regarded as a form of transactional sex by the female respondents. The financial strain in marriage was found to have an unfavourable impact on children as the delay in school payments led to the expulsion of children from school. The economic situation in marriages also led to poor nutrition which had a negative impact on good health. This is in line with the literature by Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni, Sexton, and Woodon (2015) who stated that poverty within the households led to compromised nutrition which is reflective of the social position young brides occupied in the households. The economic impact resulting from costs associated with child marriage such as household expenditure, medical costs, and obstetric care perpetuated the cycle of poverty.

5.2.10 Relationship between educational level and economic status

The study discovered that there is a relationship between the education level of the respondents and their spouses and their economic situation. The demographic information pointed out that all the respondents and their spouses did not attain high school level education. As a result, they could not secure formal employment and had to

settle for less-paying jobs. In line with Parsons et al. (2015), lack of education had intergenerational effects that impacted children's educational attainment, nutritional status, physical health, psychological wellbeing, and decreased potential earning in long term.

5.2.11. Relationship between the educational level of the respondents and their economic status

The study discovered that most of the respondents had acquired only primary education while only a few had ascended into secondary education. The majority of the respondents were economically marginalized as they could be employed in the formal sector. The majority of the respondents under investigation were women who were married as young girls and were the most who were greatly affected by harsh economic realities. When young girls dropped out of school because of child marriage, they got removed from the support structure that schools provided and that decreased their potential as productive members of their communities. The study was, therefore, able to draw an inference that the educational level of the respondents affected their economic status adversely.

5.2.12. Relationship between the educational level of the respondents' spouses and their economic status

Similar to the respondents, their spouses have not acquired high school level education. This therefore impacted on their chances of securing formal employment. Contrary to the experiences of their female counterparts the spouses were afforded liberty by the patriarchal system to go and search for jobs even beyond the country's borders. Women in the Menoaneng community council were guided by the traditional belief system that a woman should stay within the confines of the home to look after children and do roles assigned to women. The study, therefore, concluded that the respondents' spouses were also negatively affected by low educational levels and were economically disadvantaged.

5.2.13. Reintegration of people married as children back into school

The study revealed that most of the respondents did not get the opportunity to continue with school after marriage because of their new roles and identity. Some were discouraged to go back to school by their partners and their in-laws. Onagoruwa and Wodon (2017e) assert that traditional gender roles and expectations influence education prospects. The study discovered that there were cases of people married as children who had no interest to continue with their studies despite being granted such an opportunity. The researcher thus made an inference that children may be willing to get married as children as a way of escaping school; alternatively, parents may take advantage of their lack of interest in school and marry them off as children. Despite the efforts made by government authorities to sensitize the community about child marriage, the practice still persisted. There was also a lack of support from the partners on reintegrating people married as children back into school. Fear of stigmatization was another factor that led to young mothers being hesitant to go back to school.

5.3. Objective Two: To assess the psychological wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho

Under this objective, the following sub-topics emerged; the psychological characteristics of people married as children, interpersonal relationships, community gatekeepers' views regarding the psychological wellbeing of people married as children, and finally their views concerning the family stability of people married as children.

5.3.1 The psychological characteristics of people married as children

The study exposed that people married as children exhibited worrisome psychological conditions. Psychological scales adapted from DSM-V and Likert scales were used to determine the respondents' general psychological wellbeing. Almost half of the respondents had the signs of moderate depression as they were tired, had insomnia,

and were irritable and hopeless. All of the respondents did not have suicidal thoughts or ideations which was a hopeful sign that they were not severely depressed.

However, the findings of the study contradict the literature in that the suicide rate and self-harm were reported to be high among people married as children as a result of having psychological distress (John, Edmeades, and Murithi, 2019; Gage 2013). The suicide was mainly fuelled by depression resulting from partner violence and lack of family support (Bacchus et al., 2018).

Additionally, the literature also shows that child marriage survivors got into marriage before they were psychologically prepared to take the roles of being fathers and mothers. The abrupt transitioning into adult responsibilities as well as moving to a new place to settle for marriage was overwhelming for them aggravating their risk of psychological distress (John, Edmeades, and Murithi, 2019).

5.3.2 The choice to get married if time could be reversed

The study unveiled that the majority of the respondents regretted being married at a young age. Given a chance to start all over again, they indicated that they would not have settled for child marriage. This further reflects that people married as children were married at the time they had no capacity to make sound decisions. They were further aware of the negative consequences of child marriage at a later stage.

5.3.3 Divorce rate

The study found that divorce was not prevalent among people married as children and this can be attributed to the fact that many could not settle for divorce for fear of public shaming associated with divorce. Despite the fact that many of them regretted being married young, they did not have the audacity to leave their spouses. This discovery was least expected as the respondent's regret ever being married at a young age. The findings are thus reflective of the respondents' fears over objectivity. They have their fear rooted in societal stigmatization which overrides their true intentions.

5.3.4. Interpersonal relationships

The interpersonal relationships that were discussed in this section included relations with the spouse, their children, and their in-laws as well as the community gatekeepers' views about the psychological characteristics of people married as children

5.3.5. Interpersonal relations with spouse

The study found that majority of the respondents had good interpersonal relations with their spouses. On the contrary, some respondents stated they did not have good relations with their spouses. The reasons for not getting along very well were the age gap between them and their spouses and the patriarchal culture which led to their spouses undermining them. For those whose husbands were working in South Africa, they complained that their husbands had extramarital affairs which affected their good relations with them. The patriarchal culture which is characterized by male dominance is seen as not healthy for good relations as women are equally important and can have meaningful contributions not only in their families but in the community and national level as well. The tendency embedded in patriarchy to silence women should therefore be dismantled as women have proved their abilities in many spheres of life including leadership positions.

5.3.6. Interpersonal relations with the children

According to the study, the majority of the respondents had good interpersonal relationships with their children. They loved their children dearly. They enjoyed spending time with their children and reported feeling happier when they are with their children (Musick, Meier, and Flood, 2016).

Conversely, the study found out that one of the respondents who was a second wife (step-wife) to her spouse faced a lot of challenges in how she related with her step-children. The conflicts that erupted were due to the age gap. It was challenging to demand respect from the stepchildren as they were older than their stepmother. Luthar and Ciciolla (2016) added that parenting may exceed the individual's capacity and may

affect parents' mental health negatively. This, therefore, implied that people married as children could not handle other roles and responsibilities of parenthood as they were young. Their ability to comprehend and even relate to those entrusted to their care was overwhelmed.

5.3.7. Relations with the in-laws

The study discovered that most people who married as children did not have good interpersonal relations with their in-laws. Such was the case as some in-laws worked in South Africa and had rarely met to cultivate warm relations. Marphatia, Ambale, and Reid (2017) stated that girls and boys who married earlier were less likely to have healthy relations with immediate family members. They struggled with a sense of belonging because they were no longer expected to mingle with their age mates. Similarly, building relations with older people was also difficult due to the age gap. Lack of good relations was also attributed to the hate people married as children suffered from their in-laws. The adversarial relations were attributed to the fact that the husbands had to send funds to their wives and not their biological mothers after marriage. In addition, some, mother's in-laws exercised excessive control over their daughters-in-law; such control included restricting the movements of their daughter in-laws including participation in community activities. The absence of good relations has led to incongruent attachment styles which resulted in children developing attachment disorders.

5.3.8 Community gatekeepers' observations on the psychological wellbeing of people married as children

Under this objective, the following sub-topics emerged: the community gatekeeper's view regarding the happiness of people married as children, care for their children, and the support they gave each other as couples.

5.3.9 The community gatekeepers' view regarding the happiness of people married as children

The study found out that people who married as children were mostly not happy or when they did experience happiness, it was short-lived. Taking adult responsibilities at a

young age robbed people married as children of childhood joy and experiences. This sudden change of responsibilities created a void that manifested in unhappiness later in their marriage. The study further revealed that there was a lack of tolerance when challenges arose later in the marriage and this resulted in their inability to solve problems amicably. The build-up of tension in their families resulted in a lack of respect between spouses.

5.3.10 The community gatekeepers' view on whether people married as children cared for their children

The community gatekeepers attested to the fact that people married as children loved and cared for their children. Although they were financially disadvantaged to fully support their children, there was a natural bond between a mother and a child. Only a few were reported as negligent toward caring for their children. The negligent ones were reported to be overwhelmed by the responsibilities of parenthood and did not take good care of their children.

5.3.11 The community gatekeeper's views regarding family stability

Intimate partner violence emerged as a sub-topic under the psychological wellbeing of people married as children.

5.3.12. Intimate partner violence

The study found that there were a few incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV) among people married as children. The majority of the respondents had not experienced IPV. Those who had not experienced IPV were mostly living with their in-laws who were able to mediate whenever IPV incidents erupted. Another reason attributed to such stability was the fact that the majority of the women married as children had succumbed to being subservient to avoid violence from their husbands. Families where IPV was prevalent lacked stability and this was aggravated by the role

strain experienced in such families. The literature by Duvvury, Callan, Carney, & Raghavendra (2013) sheds light that intimate partner violence impacted negatively on both the male and the female partners who experienced it directly; the effects of exposure to violence on children were immediate and long-term. Violence in the home affected a child's school attendance and performance, as well as physical health. Children who witness abuse were more likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence in their own homes, with boys twice as likely to later perpetrate IPV and girls more than twice as likely to later experience it (Stiller, Neubert, & Krieg 2021).

5.4 Objective Three: To find out the social wellbeing of people married as children

This objective aligned itself with the social wellbeing of people married as children in terms of their involvement in the community as active members.

5.4.1 The involvement of people married as children in the community

The study found out that a few people married as children were not actively participating in community activities such as development initiatives and social festivities. Among the reasons mentioned, the respondents indicated fatigue resulting from role strain. Others were restricted by their parents-in-law to partake in community activities as part of cultural initiation after marriage; they had to be orientated for at least three months with the family before they could meet or interact with mainstream society. The orientation was meant to help the new member of the family to adjust to their new identity, roles, and, responsibilities.

This research found that people who married as children pointed out that a lot of things were imposed on them. They did not have freedom of association as they were not even allowed to interact with their friends. In line with the study by Glass, Simon, and Andersson, (2016), it was mentioned that stressors more often emanated from social roles and responsibilities or the role strains and work strain.

More than half of the respondents were actively engaged in community activities. These were mainly those who did not live with their in-laws such as those who moved out and those whose in-laws worked in South Africa. They survived on part-time jobs and village loan associations. One of the respondents pointed out that she was unable to neither work nor participate in community activities because of her disabled child. Miller, Nugent, and Russell, (2015) added that taking care of children becomes more strenuous when one has to parent a child with disabilities. It affected them in multiple ways, for example, they had challenges of leaving them for work. Another daunting challenge was that their health care needs financial costs and also imposes time burdens more than parents raising children without disabilities.

Stabile and Allin (2012) further stated that families caring for children with disabilities tend to face lifelong financial constraints as opposed to families raising healthy children. Houle and Berger (2017) discovered that parents raising children with disability, especially those whose children had a disabling condition by age four, were more likely than those whose children did not have a disability to have unsecured debts. They were found to have no capacity to repay those debts.

5.4.2 Objective four: To assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children

Under this objective, the study found that the most important decisions were made by the in-laws followed by the spouses. Major decisions included among others; land procurement and location, how the family spends excess income, choice of place of residence, choice of animals to be reared or procured, choice of family diet, and contraception use. The people married as children were actively involved in minor decisions such as the choice of diet. The study that was conducted in Mali by Onagoruwa, and Wodon (2017e) affirms that people married as children's capacity for decision-making was low because they were young and had not achieved a higher level of education. Their capacity for decision-making was limited because of low self-esteem as most did not meet the standards of Erikson's developmental stages as depicted in section 5.2.4.1.

5.4.3 Respondents' age at marriage and power dynamics

The study found out that people married as children had no say with regard to the acquisition of assets such as land. The spouses had a monopoly of power in deciding on the procurement of land and the residential location. In some instances, however, the wives were consulted before a decision to procure land could be reached. In extreme instances, parents-in-law were the sole deciders with regard to the acquisition of land for the newly married family.

With regard to family expenditure, most people married as children showed that they had joint decisions with their spouses. A small fraction however indicated that their spouses were the sole deciders when it came to spending. The study found out that the parents-in-law were not involved in matters relating to the expenditure of people married as children.

The study also discovered that people married as children had no input with regard to which animals could be procured and kept. There was neither a joint decision nor consultation of people married as children with regard to animal rearing. Likewise, the parents-in-law were not part of the decisions concerning animal rearing. This further reflects the patriarchal dominance when it came to certain decisions. Women were expected to be docile and do the house chores hence the reason they had no input regarding animal rearing as that was considered a manly duty.

The study also uncovered that people married as children were given a monopoly of power regarding food preparation and what constituted the family diet. Only a few husbands had input regarding the family menu. In the same vein, parents-in-law were never consulted on what should constitute the menu. The issue regarding the family diet further reflects the gaps in gender roles as women are associated with duties centred in the kitchen.

The study also unveiled that the spouses of people married as children had no say with regard to the use of contraceptives by their wives. People married as children were, therefore, able to exercise their free will regarding the preferred method of

contraception. There were some however who indicated that their spouses did have a say regarding the use of contraception. Parents-in-law had no input regarding the use of contraception by people married as children. There is an evident gap in communication because a mother-in-law would be expected to give guidance to a newlywed who is clueless regarding certain aspects of life.

5.4.4 Respondents' age at study and power dynamics

This section of the study was aimed at finding out how the power dynamics unfolded at a later stage in marriage as opposed to when people married young first got into marriage. There was a slight shift in the power dynamics at a later stage in marriage which afforded people married as children input in the decision-making process. At the time of conducting the study, some people married as children stated that they had a say regarding the procurement of land and a choice of residential location. There was also an evident shift with regard to family expenditure; half of the respondents admitted that they had input on how the family budget was spent. With regard to animal rearing there was stagnation as only the minority of people married as children were involved regarding which animals could be procured and kept. The people married as children still maintained the monopoly to decide what goes into the family menu at the later stage in marriage. However, few of their spouses had adapted and could contribute on what should constitute the menu.

The above findings, therefore, reflect that at a later stage in marriage people married as children had input regarding decisions in their families. However, their spouses were still dominant in decision-making. The findings also reveal that age plays an important role in decision-making, especially in a family setup. At the age of marriage, people married as children were at the receiving end of the power dichotomy as they were young and often had decisions imposed. The act of being married young itself is indicative of an imbalance of power between men and women in patriarchal societies. Merve, (2020) supports this by mentioning that male dominance also manifests in the worst forms of abuse over women, especially young women.

5.5 Application of the theory to the study

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age	Components of the theory
1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0-1	They do not have adequate skills for raising children.
2	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	1-3	Children are not given chance to make simple decisions
3	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	3-5	At this point, children are more interactive and assert this power through playing with other children
4	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	5-12	They are not allowed to interact with other children
5	Identity vs. Role confusion	Fidelity	12-18	They are married at this stage and cannot explore other options
6	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	18-40	Their relationships were not fully based on consent because of their age.
7	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	40-65	There is no need for longevity

8	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	65+	The focus is mainly on their regrets
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Participants in this study got married at crucial stage of “identity and role confusion, (ages 12–18)”, this is where they faced the endeavour of identity versus role confusion. The participants seemed confused because they identified themselves as adults especially those below 18 years old. At this stage according to Erikson, they were supposed to appropriately develop sense of self according to their age. They were supposed to be curious as adolescents about what is in store for their future, however, they were already living their adult lives that they did not anticipate. They were the worst decision makers, for example, most of them were planning to leave their children behind with their in-laws to go to the Republic of South Africa to job hunt. Not noticing that leaving children behinds impacted negatively on them (Darling-Fisher, 2019).

Stunting and malnutrition remain high in this district because of this malicious practice (UNICEF 2016). They were denied chances of exploring various roles and ideas, to set their future goals and to try to discovering their adult selves as they were already serving them. Hence some of them resorted to alcohol abuse. Had they been successful in this crucial stage, they would have had an extremely strong sense of identity and would have remained true to their value and beliefs in the mist of all the external forces facing them. Moreover, marriage would have not been their worst enemy. People married as children were struggling with making ends meet and had low self-esteem. They were also pressured to conform to their husbands and or parents’ ideas for the future. Hence they experienced role confusion. They are likely to struggle to find themselves in the later stages of life (Darling-Fisher, 2019).

5.6 Challenges encountered

The challenges that were encountered when conducting this study were that some of the respondents were married at a very young age and were shy to give out information

though a good rapport was built with them. They gave out very short answers even when the researcher was probing.

Menoaneng community council is a very rural area with harsh weather conditions. The Primary data was collected in the winter season and therefore, some of the respondents were interviewed on top of the mountains where they were fetching firewood. Some of them complained about the cold and the researcher did not budget and had not anticipated such challenges.

The other challenge was that the respondents were available at their homes very early in the morning or very late in the evening because winter is the harvesting season. Therefore, they spent most of their time out in the fields.

It was also very hard to get hold of the male respondents because they were herding at posts very far from their homes.

5.7 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made as per the economic and psychosocial characteristics of people married as children. Social workers have to be proactive about issues affecting communities in order to lessen chances of the social problems. This could greatly be achieved through a collaborative effort of various stakeholders such as government ministries and non-governmental organizations. Further research with regard to child marriages can also help to bring the desired change.

5.7.1 Economic liberation through education

The study found out that efforts to reintegrate people married as children back into schools were challenging as most families were poverty stricken while in some cases those affected had lost interest. The study, therefore, recommends vigorous efforts backed up by legislation to ensure that reintegration back to school becomes successful. Successful reintegration back into school after early marriage could have a positive impact on the economic status of people married as children as well as local

economies where relevant. This will not only improve employability but will promote financial literacy and ensure that the entire community lives industrious lives. Fee exemption in high school education should be recommended for children from poor households from grade 1 to 12, which is the final year of Lesotho's high school education.

5.7.2 Improved agriculture and agricultural subsidies

The study found that agriculture was one of the means of livelihood of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong. There were challenges discovered that hindered maximum productivity in agriculture such as the harsh climatic conditions and lack of knowledge regarding improved and scientific methods of production. The study, therefore, recommends joint ventures with the Ministry of agriculture through the village extension workers to help boost agriculture which in turn will improve the economic situation of not only people married as children but the economic situation of the entire country. The research has taken cognizance of the fact that climate change has called for mitigation strategies that require a completely new approach to farming which includes among others; greenhouse farming. In addition, it is suggested that of block farming alongside share cropping should be established so that all the community members can have access to the means of production.

5.7.3 Vocational training as a means to improve the economic situation

The findings of the study exposed that parents or guardians contributed to child marriage for economic gains through bridal wealth. The root cause of this is poverty. Addressing poverty through economic empowerment would help reduce child marriage as communities will be equipped with the proper means of earning a living. The study, therefore, recommends various vocational pieces of training as means through which communities such as Menoaneng can improve their livelihoods. The importance of vocational training is that they do not require a higher level of education but is rather practical oriented. They offer an opportunity to those who cannot succeed in formal education. The communities could use the already existing resources to add on farming

inputs such as tree planting in order to venture into small to medium manufacturing wood products.

5.7.4 Economic emancipation through property ownership

The study discovered that people who married as children had no property while only a few people owned property under their names. This presents a huge gap in the economic situation which needs to be rectified. Ownership of land, especially agricultural land is the core foundation to attaining economic liberation as indicated under Menoaneng economic activities in chapter one. The land is also important as it is vital for establishing housing units. The researcher, however, noted that most respondents did not own land. Through local partnerships and partners with the Non-governmental organizations people with no property such as livestock can be assisted. For instance, Send-a-Cow is an organization aimed at distributing cattle to specified community members and upon reproduction, one is obliged to pass calve to the next person. Eventually, all the members of the community will own their own herd.

5.7.5 Information about child marriage in school's curriculum

Teachers and instructors should be sensitized about child marriage and information about child marriage should be included in the school curriculum; this will equip children with the knowledge and the confidence to report abuse and harmful cultural practices to teachers and other school authorities who can then refer these to law enforcement agencies. Most teachers have the requisite training to identify trauma in children and they can quickly identify absent children, including those who fall victim to child marriage and make the necessary interventions. Without these school-based interventions, child marriages can proliferate and go undetected by law enforcement authorities. Incorporating education on child marriage will afford children an opportunity to deal with the psychological effects brought child marriage as nurturing resilience to the survivors of child marriage.

5.7.6 Counselling sessions for those married and those intending to get married

Counselling sessions should be provided to people married as children as well as those intending to get married. This could be practiced either in structured or unstructured counselling sessions. The counsellor should take note of grouping them appropriately as per their problems, sex, duration of the marriage, and personality traits. They should also sensitize people who are intending to get married and those who are already married on the essence of adopting effective conflict resolution mechanisms in their marital relationships for their healthy psychological wellbeing.

5.7.7 Promotion of recreational therapy for improved psychological wellbeing

The study discovered that there were negative psychological effects brought by child marriage. Those married as children were overwhelmed by the responsibilities tied to parenthood and struggled to provide for their families. These had a negative impact on their psychological wellbeing which manifested in tiredness, insomnia, social isolation, irritability, hopelessness, and irrational fear. There were no mitigation strategies in place to help those affected. Although there are no suicidal intentions among those affected, the long-term effects may trigger the urge to commit suicide. The research, therefore, found it befitting to put in place recreational therapy to help lessen the burden of those affected. This can be in the form of various sporting codes. The Ministry of gender, sports, and recreation can be instrumental in the implementation of recreation therapy. Since therapy is multi-dimensional people cannot actively participate in sports and can be engaged through other means of recreation such as board games.

5.7.8 Research on the psychological wellbeing of people married as children

Further research on the psychological wellbeing of people married as children is recommended. The current study focused on child marriage and discovered that people married as children suffered from psychological distress; more rigorous studies specifically focused on psychological wellbeing can be fruitful in the betterment of

survivors of child marriage. Such studies should encompass the clinical aspect in order to come up with a sound plan for the clinical care of those affected.

5.7.9 Placement of school social workers

Schools should have social workers so that they may work hand in hand with all the school staff, parents or guardians, and students. School social workers are trusted to render appropriate social services. They are trained to assist with social and emotional needs. Child marriage is an issue of concern as it affects children socially as well as emotionally and should be addressed through sensitization, assessment, and observation so that a plan of intervention may be drawn for suitable assistance. Like teachers, social workers have the capacity to identify social problems and the ability to solve them.

5.7.10 Improved coordination of multidisciplinary efforts of child marriage prohibition

The government ministries and their development partners should plan collaboratively as far as child marriage is concerned. For this study, the ministry of education and training, the ministry of social development, and the ministry of tourism, environment, and culture should plan and work together in order to tackle child carriage. These three ministries should work towards establishing and strengthening the already existing community-based coordination and human rights advocacy structures such as the Community Council Child Protection Team (CCCPT), which is comprised of all child-focused cadres, and community gatekeepers such as social workers, teachers, nurses, church leaders, chiefs and others. This team is mandated to protect and uphold children's rights.

The Ministry of education and training has already enacted the law which allows and encourages students to continue with school when pregnant or married while the Ministry of Social Development through Child Protection and Welfare Act 2011 advocates for the protection of the right to education as one of the basic human rights.

However, the ministry of tourism, environment, and culture seemed to be winning against these two ministries because children drop out of school for the traditional initiation schools, hence the need to plan and work together toward the eradication of child marriage.

5.7.11. Recommendation for girls and women to have social clubs

Social clubs are strongly recommended for girls and women alike as they afford them a chance to discuss issues that directly affect them. Such platforms are also critical for sharing issues relating to women's empowerment and how they can overcome the challenges they face. More specific to this research, women can use such platforms to discuss challenges relating to child marriage, and survivors of child marriage can share their experiences so that young girls who are not yet married can learn from them. Getting married at a young age affect people married as children psychologically and may also affect their children from a young age. The social clubs can help young girls to cut the cyclical chain of being forced into marriage at a young age while at the same time can help those who are already in marriage to cope with day-to-day challenges. The social clubs can therefore serve as decision-making empowerment platforms.

5.7.12 Recommendations to curb social stigma and parenting strain of children with disability

People married as children who are raising children with disability are faced with adverse challenges of social stigma. In the same vein, those who wished to divorce could not as they feared being stigmatized. This may affect them psychosocially as they have to interact with mainstream society, medical professionals, and other social service providers.

Through government ministries' interventions and other empowerment platforms, the shame of stigmatization can be addressed including mitigation strategies. With regard to parents who are raising children with special needs, referrals regarding professional care aimed at empowering them can be given. Frequent interactions with professionals,

neighbours, friends, and strangers may impact positively on their psychosocial wellbeing.

5.7.13 Empowerment of women as equal partners in decision making

The study found out that women were secluded in decision-making and could not improve their means of livelihood where possible. The distribution of power amongst couples should be communicated in such a manner that women will feel empowered to take bold decisions in all spheres of life. The government through the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation and the legislative arm of the government should work cooperatively to ensure that women are afforded the same power in family unions. The key to maintaining equal power distribution in families is the successful legislative backing to guard against deviations.

5.7.14 Community sensitization of gender roles and power dynamics

The study found that the disparities in power dynamics were chiefly rooted in the perceptions regarding gender roles. Men committed many atrocities against women because of the gender roles assigned by society. This was demonstrated in how the decisions regarding the acquisition of family property were made. There were designated areas where women were not allowed to have input such as decisions concerning the procurement of livestock. There need to be frequent sensitizations aimed at shedding knowledge and understanding with regard to power dynamics in families including gender roles and the stereotypes attached to gender roles. At the forefront of such sensitizations should be skilled people who are tactful to ensure that the desired outcome is achieved. Topics relating to a shift in power dynamics are sensitive among rural people and should be handled strategically.

5.7.15 Implementation of policies aimed at balancing patriarchal monopoly

The study discovered that women in patriarchal societies were at the receiving end of the power dichotomy that continues to undermine their capabilities in many areas of life.

If the patriarchal dominance is not addressed, women will for a long time live as suppressed members of the community instead of being recognized as members who can have a meaningful contribution for the betterment of their lives and the lives of those around them. The study recommends the closing of this gap through the implementation of policies aimed at elevating the voices of women.

5.7.16 Engaging faith based organizations in the power dichotomy of family relations

Basotho people have their roots deepened in church and other faith based institutions which shape their perceptions regarding daily decisions. For any change to be effected regarding a shift in the power dynamic, the importance played by faith based organizations cannot be overlooked. The role of theologians and other spiritual gurus can be instrumental in helping achieve stability within family relations by focusing on the balance of power between a husband and a wife. The key focus should be on eliminating the toxic power associated with masculinity in communities. Such organizations are important in highlighting the role of men as protectors and not perpetrators.

5.7.17 Comparative studies of people married as children

It is imperative to further advance research to allow for comparative analysis regarding child marriage. Finding more comparative studies of people married as children versus those who married at 25 years of age or after attaining the desired level of education, would shed more light and in-depth knowledge on studies relating to child marriage. Further research based on the comparison of different studies will facilitate change for the better in affected communities.

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APPENDICES

Letter of Approval



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February 2022

Ms. Lijalo Halahala

(NUL Student Number: 200602092)

Acceptance of Proposal for Master of Social Work Dissertation Research

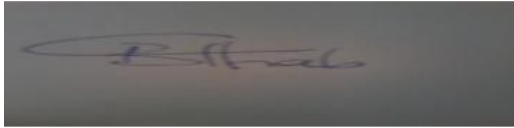
This serves to inform you that the Department of Sociology and Social Work accepts your proposal to conduct Dissertation Research on a study titled **“Investigation of economic and psychosocial wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho”**.

The Department notes your undertaking to access a sample of adults of either sex married as children at the mentioned Research Site with the help of relevant Gatekeepers. You also undertook to, and are duly expected to, uphold all known Basotho norms and customs relevant to entering family homes; any stated Gate Keeper

conditions for entry into such homes and communities as well as the Research Ethics specified in your proposal.

On behalf of the Department of Sociology and Social Work,

I am,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'S. Thabane'.

Sophia Thabane (Ph.D)

Lecturer – Social Work

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DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Questioner for People married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong

Demographic information of Respondents

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Age at marriage
4. Did the respondent agree to be married as a child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. If it was 2000 today, would you agree to be married as a child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Explain your response (Researcher: Probe to get a descriptive response).
7. Are you still married to the same person with whom you got married as a child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What is the age difference between yourself and the person you got married to as a child?
9. Was bohali paid in your marriage?
10. If yes, who paid your bohali?
11. What is your highest level of education?
12. What is the highest level of education of the person you got married to as a child?
13. How many children do you have with the person you got married to as a child?
14. Age when you had all your children with the person with whom you got married as a child?

	Age of respondent when they had children
1 st Child	
2 nd Child	
3 rd Child	
4 th Child	

15. If you are a woman, do you use contraceptives?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. If you are a woman, who has or had the power to decide whether or not you used contraceptives?

- a. Myself
- b. Husband
- c. Mother-law
- d. Other specify

17. Employment

Objective One: To find out the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1. Explain factors which led to the attainment of your highest educational level.
2. Explain your employment or means of livelihood. Explain the employment of means of livelihood of the person with whom you got married as a child.
3. Do you own the following property?

Property Item	YES/NO (include the number owned for each item)
House	

Cattle	
Sheep	
Crop Fields	
Chicken	
Other	

4. What are some of the economic struggles that you face that emanate from being married as a child?

Objective Two: To assess the psychological well-being of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 how happy are you **or** were you in the marriage that you entered as a child?
2. Have you felt tired for four days in a row even though you slept more than 6 hours at night?
3. Have you had challenges falling asleep at night?
4. Have you ever felt like you did not want to talk to anyone at all?
5. Have you ever felt like you wanted to cry even though you did not have a good reason to cry?
6. Have you ever felt like you cannot continue with life at all?
7. Have you ever wanted to take your life?
8. Have you ever felt scared or worried that something was going to happen even though you did not have a good reason for being scared or worried?
9. Describe the relationship between yourself between yourself and the married with whom you got married as child. Describe the relationship between yourself and your children
10. What is the relationship between yourself and the family in-law where you married as a child?

Objective Three: To find out the social wellbeing of people married as children in Menoaneng Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1. What is the relationship between yourself and your community?
2. Do you attend community activities like weddings in your community?

Objective Four: To assess the power dynamics in families of people married as children

1. In your family, who makes decisions on where your family should buy land?
 - a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together
 - d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify
2. In your family, who makes decisions on how the family spends excess income?
 - a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together
 - d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify
3. In your family, who makes decisions on where your family should reside?
 - a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together
 - d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify
4. In your family, who makes decisions on which animals your family should buy?
 - a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together

- d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify
5. In your family, who makes decisions on what your family should eat?
- a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together
 - d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify
6. In your family, who makes decisions on where your family should spend holidays.
- a. Myself
 - b. Spouse
 - c. My spouse & I together
 - d. Mother-in-law
 - e. Other specify

INTERVIEW GUIDE for COMMUNITY GATEKEEPERS, Menoaneng, Mokhotlong.

Background Questions

1. How prevalent/common is child marriage in Menoaneng?
2. What are some of the factors which cause child marriage in Menoaneng?
3. What is the role of chiefs/community councillors in preventing child marriage?
4. What are some of the barriers which prevent chiefs/community councillors from preventing child marriage in Menoaneng?
5. Explain the response from the Police when confronted with a report of child marriage.
6. What is the role played by parents in preventing child marriage in Menoaneng?
7. What is the role played by parents in promoting child marriage in Menoaneng?
8. Explain the response from parents when they receive reports that children were abducted?

OBJECTIVE ONE: To find out the economic status of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho.

1. In your view, what is the economic situation of families of the people who get married as children in Menoaneng?
 - a. **PROBES**
 - i. What types of property do families married as children own? E.g. land, animals, houses?
 - ii. What types of jobs of people do the people married as children have?
2. What is the economic status of children who marry as children in Menoaneng?
 - a. Economic Status before marriage
 - b. Economic Status after marriage
3. DO the people and children who get married as children receive the opportunity to continue attending school after marriage?

OBJECTIVE TWO: To assess the psychological well-being of people married as children in Menoaneng, Mokhotlong Lesotho

4. What are your observations regarding the psychological wellbeing of people who get married as children?
5. **PROBES:** are they happily married? DO they respect each other in marriage? Do they take proper care for their children? Are they supportive of each other?
6. What are your observations regarding family stability of people who get married as children in Menoaneng?
 - a. **PROBES:** Are there incidences of Intimate Partner Violence? What is their divorce rate?