



Assessing the Impact of Village Banking Groups on Women's Livelihoods in the Lusaka District

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KITWE - ZAMBIA

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of MSc in Accounting and Finance in the Directorate of Distance Education and Open Learning at the Copperbelt University, Kitwe. It has not been submitted before for any degree, or any other examination in any other University.

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Dr. Javaid Ahmed Dar

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for the giving me strength throughout my studies. To my wife, Angela, I say thank you for the encouragement and moral support during the entire period of study. To my parents who never failed to offer me financial help, I say thank you and may God bless you abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to explore the impact of village banking on women's livelihoods in Lusaka district. A qualitative survey was conducted among 21 women, of which 12 were members of the village banking groups, and 9 were non-members of any village banking group in the district. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The results indicated that participation in village banking had a significant positive impact on women's livelihoods in Lusaka district. Women reported increased income from businesses, improved access to credit, and enhanced social capital through networking with other group members. Additionally, women who participated in village banking reported enhanced self-confidence and decision-making skills, which positively influenced their entrepreneurial activities. On the other hand, women who never participated in village banking activities reported that lack of understanding rules governing village banking, too many stories of thefts, prohibitive interest rates, and high risk of losing investment savings due to dishonest members, are some of the reasons why they don't feel like joining the village banking groups.

The study also found that participation in village banking provided women with a platform to voice out their concerns and challenges, which were then addressed through collective action within their groups. This has led to the development of community-driven solutions that enhanced the well-being and economic security of women and their families.

All in all, this study underscores the importance of village banking as a strategy for empowering women and promoting sustainable livelihoods in Lusaka district. This now calls for policymakers and development practitioners to consider investing in similar initiatives that prioritize the economic integration of women, particularly in settings where poverty and gender disparities are prevalent.

Keywords:- Village banking, women's livelihoods, participation, well-being, economic security, Lusaka district.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Village Banking is a grassroots model of financial assistance that aims to alleviate poverty and improve the livelihoods of rural communities, particularly women. In the Lusaka district, village banking has gained popularity as a means of empowering women economically. This study seeks to assess the impact of village banking on women's livelihoods in the Lusaka district. The research will investigate issues that deal with women empowerment programs financed by village banking initiatives within the townships of the Lusaka district. The assessment will also focus on how village banking has increased women's access to financial resources, improved their income levels, and enhanced their decision-making power within their households and communities. These initiatives are funded by some Microfinance institutions, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and other stakeholders. It is planned that the researcher will provide valuable insights for policymakers and development practitioners seeking to promote gender-inclusive economic growth in rural areas. Under this chapter, the study will highlight the aims and objectives and the research methodology used.

A. Background Information

Many communities in the suburbs and rural Zambia still need access to financial services and have yet to be unbanked even in the 21st Century. The available economic activities in these communities still need to be sustainable such that with income support coming to the aid of the women population in these localities, the living standards of these women stay a nightmare as one would not be sure where to get their next meal.

However, in the recent past, several small groups of low-income entrepreneurs have come together and formed what is known as Village Banking. In these groups, members can share and guarantee one another's loans. *Village Banking groups* are small savings and lending groups outside the formal financial sector. As the term "Village" implies, membership is usually among people familiar with each other and share certain commonalities through their family, friend, and community. Membership is thus by self-selection, and the number of members in the group is limited. Members formulate rules and procedures to guide the governance of the group. The group is self-managed and does not involve the placement of savings/deposits or the arrangement of borrowings by an individual, agent, or company outside the group membership (Bank of Zambia, 2020). Over time these groups have become engines of development in rural and urban areas. Previously, these groups were more pronounced in rural areas but have become common even in Urban areas. In the late 1990s towards the 2000s, the Credit and Savings groups, mainly women-formed, became known as "Chilimba". In the recent past many women in the communities have come together to form village banking groups to access these loans, which are very affordable compared to loans from Commercial Banks where high-interest rates are offered, which are unaffordable to lower-income citizens.

B. Problem Statement

Lack of wealth creation and Poverty in many compounds of Lusaka District have been significant challenges for many women due to lack of capital to do business and better their livelihoods. Therefore, this calls for consented efforts from the Central government and other stakeholders to come on board in the poverty alleviation agenda through village banking through funding. The concept of village banking has been common, primarily among women in rural areas. Many women's groups have been formed whereby individuals have come together to support each other by creating savings groups to support local businesses that guarantee their survival.

Village Banking has been necessitated by the limited access to commercial bank loans, which are unaffordable to the common woman in the community. Many women need help to afford the high transactional fees in maintaining accounts and not being able to afford the collateral that commercial banks demand when issuing loan facilities. Other problems affecting people from saving in banks include a lack of infrastructure in rural parts of the district, traditional banks being far from their homes, high withdrawal charges, and poor banking services. This has since led to the evolution of village banking in many parts of the district for easy financial access among the less privileged women.

C. Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will be unique in that most scholars have concentrated much on village banking that Micro-Financial Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations are funding. In contrast, this study will concentrate on village banking that the members of the Village Banking group are financing. The study will add to the reservoir of other studies that other scholars will embark on regarding this study area. The study will further reveal how women's livelihoods have been impacted because of Village Banking since they joined this venture. It will also allow would-be investors to take an interest in bettering the livelihoods of locals in these communities by sponsoring these women's groups. The study will also provide a foundation for future researchers wanting to conduct similar studies on this subject. Ultimately, this study will provide an opportunity for the Central Government, Bank of Zambia, and other regulatory institutions to develop better regulatory policies that will tighten any loopholes in Village banking so that there is total compliance even as this business is evolving.

D. Research Objectives

- To investigate the extent to which the women's livelihoods, profits, and financial independence have improved due to their involvement in village banking in selected parts of Lusaka District.
- To establish whether women involved in Village Banking are any better economically than their peers not involved in the village banking concept.

E. Research Questions

- What are the economic benefits for women involved in Village Banking in the townships of Lusaka District?
- Are women involved in Village Banking any better economically than those not involved in this concept in Lusaka District?

F. Conceptual Definitions

➤ *Village Banks:*

Were started and promoted by Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh; he is also Grameen Bank's founder and Nobel Peace Prize winner for pioneering the concept in the early 1970s (Sishumba & Mulonda, 2019). Village banking is another form of informal savings mechanism and, in most cases, adopts a revolving fund mechanism utilized by women and youth. In some cases, this is also known as community banks.

➤ *Savings Groups:*

A savings group allows individuals without access to traditional banking services to access some financial security. The members own, manage, and operate savings groups using a simple, transparent method where groups accumulate and convert small amounts of cash into savings (World Vision, 2021). These are informal savings groups run as a social organization formed to help community members save money for specific purposes (either individual or community level), with two most common examples are Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) or Accumulated Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs). ROSCAs function by taking monthly deposits from each group member and then giving the whole monthly sum to one group member (Mabika & Tengeh, 2021).

G. Relevance to the Body of CBU Research Knowledge

This study will ensure the researcher acquires knowledge on conducting future research in the finance and social-economic sciences. This will assist further research in the same area looking at the challenges, findings, and contributions to higher learning. The results also will act as reference information and material for the library of information for lecturers and students at CBU. In addition to the CBU body of knowledge contribution, this study will assist financial institutions, especially on the role of banking agencies and village banking crediting options for economic growth in the Lusaka District. The study also informs policymakers to have a better understanding of the informal financial services extent to which they contribute to economic empowerment among women.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Village banking, also known as microfinance or group lending, has emerged as an essential tool for poverty alleviation and women's economic empowerment in developing countries. This chapter will consider the literature review that other scholars have done before. Many studies of a similar nature done around the world will be critiqued and will draw lessons of importance in their nature that are worthy of learning.

Village banking groups are self-managed as they elect their leaders. They are a microfinance model that operates through the organization of small groups of individuals who come together to lend and borrow money. The model works by the formation of a group, which may consist of about 10-20 individuals from the same local community form a group. When it comes to savings contributions, each member of the group makes a regular savings contribution to a common fund. On loan disbursements, the group decides on the loan amount that each member can receive based on their needs and repayment capacity. Loans are disbursed to members who need them. Their loans usually vary and are linked to the savings that the member has put in. Repayments by members are made in weekly or monthly installments over 3-6 months. The group members themselves agree upon the loan repayment schedule. The group members determine the interest rate charged for the loans and are often lower than commercial bank rates. They also develop their by-laws to manage their funds, like a member can earn a profit based on the amount they contributed or subscribed to when joining the group. Regarding leadership, the group elects an administration on a rotational basis as stipulated in their governing constitution.

This literature review aims to assess the impact of village banking on women's livelihoods in the Lusaka district. In a study by Lungu and Wapaale (2018), it was found that through village banking, women could start and expand their businesses, leading to increased income and improved quality of life. The study also highlighted the positive impact of village banking on social capital and community development, as women could network and support each other in their entrepreneurial ventures.

In their study, Selia et al. (2018) examine whether microfinance in Ghana has unintended consequences that may limit women's empowerment. The study further suggests that microfinance programs have a limited impact on household dynamics and may not necessarily lead to increased decision-making power for women. Moreso, the study points out that microfinance programs may have unintended consequences that might limit women's empowerment, citing that women may become overburdened with debt or face social stigma for engaging in financial activities. The issue of sociocultural and economic context when implementing microfinance programs for women is also emphasized in the study highlighting that programs that need to consider contextual factors may fail to achieve their intended goals. This study, overall, provides vital insights into the potential unintended consequences of microfinance programs for women's empowerment in Ghana. The issues of taking great care of the sociocultural and economic context coupled with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs are vital in ensuring that these programs achieve the intended goals. On the other hand, Tanima et al. (2021) later explored the concept of critical dialogic accountability in microfinance programs for women's empowerment. The study highlighted the importance of understanding power dynamics and contestation in microfinance programs for women's empowerment, with interventions shaped by complex social, economic, and political factors that can influence their effectiveness. Their findings emphasized the importance of engaging with stakeholders, using participatory research methods, promoting reflexivity and self-awareness, and adopting a collaborative approach when running these women's empowerment programs.

The article by Lamichhane (2020) reviewed the best practices in microfinance for women's empowerment with emphasis on the importance of a gender-sensitive approach in microfinance programs. The study also pointed out that this approach should involve understanding women's specific needs and challenges and tailoring microfinance services to address these needs. The study further suggested that financial literacy and education are crucial for promoting women's empowerment through microfinance. Such education can help women better understand financial concepts and develop the skills needed to manage their finances effectively. The study findings generally emphasized the need for a holistic approach that includes gender sensitivity, financial education, group lending, non-financial services, and monitoring and evaluation.

The study by Pakkanna et al. (2020) examines the impact of microfinance institutions (MFIs) on women's empowerment in rural areas of Tangerang, Indonesia. This study sampled 204 women who were members of the MFIs in that region and found out that women who were members of MFIs had higher levels of income and improved financial management skills compared to non-members. This indicated that participation in microfinance programs helped improve women's economic empowerment by increasing their income and financial capability. The study also found that women who are members of MFIs have greater decision-making power within households and participate more in community activities than non-members, thereby indicating that participation in microfinance programs has helped increase women's social empowerment by enhancing their status within their families and communities. Further, the study finds that access to credit and savings services are important factors affecting the impact of MFIs on women's empowerment by pointing out that women with better access to credit and savings are more likely to experience positive empowerment outcomes.

Similar studies by Addai (2017) on the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment in Ghana and by Rahman et al. (2017) on the effects of microfinance on women's empowerment in Bangladesh have similar findings. Both studies find that microfinance participants have higher income and asset levels than non-participants. This indicates that microfinance can help women generate income and accumulate assets, contributing to their economic empowerment. Overall, both study findings highlight the need for continued support and investment in microfinance programs, particularly those that target women as key beneficiaries.

A. *History of the Village Banking Model*

Village banking, also known as microfinance or microcredit, has its roots in the 1970s with the work of Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh. Yunus, an economics professor at Chittagong University, was inspired to lend small amounts of money to impoverished women after a Bangladesh famine in 1974. He found that traditional banks were unwilling to lend to people with low incomes due to a lack of collateral, so he created the Grameen Bank, which focused on lending small amounts of money to groups of women who would collectively guarantee each other's loans. For this milestone, as a Grameen Bank founder, he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering the concept in the early 1970s (Sishumba & Mulonda, 2019). Village banking is another form of informal financial services and, in most cases, adopts a revolving fund mechanism utilized by women and youth.

In some cases, this is also known as community banks. They are governed mainly by women who know each other, reside in the same village or community, and come together to form a micro-leasing group. In most cases, the group members are involved in similar business activities or trade and would want to boost their businesses. This was also further developed by John Hatch, FINCA International (2020) brings out the fact that the concept of village banking is also said to have been developed by him in the year 1984 as a means to help farmers of Bolivia who could not afford to get individual loans from traditional banks because of the high-interest rates, or not having collateral to present to banks in order to access loans. The farmers then could combine their resources to develop the required collateral to access a loan as a group to be the guarantor that the loan would be repaid. This meant that the group assumed the responsibility to ensure that all their members stayed on their payment obligations when they fell due.

This model became known as the group lending model and is still widely used in microfinance today. Village banking has since spread globally, with organizations such as Accion, FINCA, and Opportunity International working to provide financial services to people experiencing poverty in developing countries. The village banking model has also evolved, with some organizations offering individual loans and others expanding their services to include savings accounts and loans being offered to the group members.

Over the years, this concept has evolved in several models. Among these models is the Village Banking model utilized in Zambia. Among the benefits coming out of the village banking model include the following: -

➤ *Savings*

- The village banking model allows members to save their money through the interest received from the village banking savings. This is guaranteed rather than saving money in a Pig Bank where it does not earn any interest and stands a risk of going missing through theft.

➤ *Easy Access*

- Accessing a loan under the village banking model is more accessible than getting it from a bank. Under the village banking model, one needs to be only a member of the group to access a loan, whereby the group acts as collateral. When new, an existing group member can introduce the new member to be eligible for a loan instead of a bank loan arrangement where one has to produce a salary pay slip. Under this model, even unsalaried individuals, like marketers, can access financial services through this model.

➤ *Financial Independence*

- The village banking model can make the borrower financially independent, whereby when money is borrowed or saved, it comes back with interest which can be used to generate more capital injection in the participants' businesses. In the long run, this provides an opportunity for financial independence through the profits generated from these enterprises.

Through village banks, women in Africa can uplift their livelihoods among themselves due to working together with these village banking groups. These models act as empowerment for women who live in underdeveloped communities. These groups have become essential because financial inclusion has been challenging in the informal sector. Financial services have been out of reach for those living in less privileged communities.

In most developing countries, women's activities outside the household- as indicated by participation rates- are lower than those of men but have been rising over the past thirty years in many areas (Afshar H, Dennis C, 1992). With this in mind, women in the formal sector or outside the household are lower than men, proving that most women are in the informal sector and are the most hit with poverty in developing countries. This makes the economic status of most women in the communities very challenging. They must scout for better livelihoods by venturing into income-generating activities such as village banking to boost their finances.

Afshar and Dennis (2016) highlighted that the third world debt crisis, the International Monetary Fund, and World Bank's adjustment policies had compelled many countries to move towards contraction of public sector expenditure in favor of market-oriented development policies. The debt burden in most developing countries like Zambia has caused a lot of financial stress and hardships in many communities. With the bailout packages from the International Monetary Fund, many austerity measures are being imposed on citizens of these countries, leading to unbearable rural hardships amid the high cost of living, whereby financial services like loans are unreachable, as most unemployed women are financially excluded. This leads to forming these savings/village banking groups whereby members can lend and borrow from within the group. The only way out for survival is through engaging in small businesses in markets where the women can save some money from the profits, they make from these business ventures.

In terms of regulation, village banking has faced various regulatory challenges since its inception. Some countries have implemented regulations that help support and protect microfinance institutions and their clients, while others have not. In many cases, the need for clear regulatory frameworks for microfinance has led to high levels of risk for both borrowers and lenders. In some cases, microfinance institutions have been accused of predatory lending practices, charging excessive interest rates or imposing unreasonable repayment terms. However, in recent years, many countries have made progress in developing regulatory frameworks for microfinance institutions. For example, some countries have established licensing requirements, imposed limits on interest rates and fees, and implemented consumer protection measures to prevent predatory lending practices. Overall, the effectiveness of regulation in the microfinance industry varies widely by country and region. While there have been some notable successes in regulating microfinance, ongoing efforts are still needed to ensure that these initiatives are effective and sustainable over the long term.

B. Empirical Review of Other Studies

From the papers reviewed, it is clear that members who form village banking groups have the zeal to better their livelihoods, including their households in the localities that they live in. These individuals sacrifice for their immediate families to undertake different economic activities to make a living and increase their income levels. By joining the village banking groups, the members can access credit from within the group. No collateral is required as opposed to financial institutions, which require collateralized loans with high-interest rates beyond reach for the common woman who makes less than a dollar daily. The below studies show how the issue of poverty was dealt with through engaging in the village banking groups and how the income-generating activities were impacted because of the member's involvement in the village banking model.

Lungu A (2018) researched the assessment of the village banking project on young women's economic status in some selected urban townships of Lusaka, considering whether the project has positively impacted young women 's economic well-being selected urban townships of Lusaka. The findings were that 97% of the respondents had their livelihoods changed as they had ventured into some form of business generating income for them, except for the 3% who did not venture into any business. Additionally, 93% of the respondents indicated they were economically empowered and shared positive testimonies about the project, while 7% did the contrary.

However, the sample size of 30 chosen from this population of 200 women groups must be more significant, making the findings and conclusions unreliable. Although the purposive and presumptive types of sampling were employed in the study, it does not validate much on the results as the sample size needs to be more significant to represent the entire population. The interview questions were closed and open-ended, which was done correctly. However, the only argument on this is on the composition of the age group that was selected for the interview of the age range of 15 to 19 years age at 83%, which invalidates the findings in that this age group may not be very knowledgeable in conducting business, hence putting the results questionable. The findings indicate that other respondents were just not available to provide feedback making the researcher's results appear unreliable. The researcher should have used qualitative and quantitative research, considering that the population involved is of low-income status and low educational level.

Chisenga MK (2018) investigated the effects of the village banking program on household income, which was a case study of Vulamukoko Village in the Katete district of eastern Zambia. The researcher investigated if participation in the village bank program significantly increased rural community household income. This research selected a random sample of 50 (fifty) beneficiaries and another 50 (fifty) non-beneficiaries for interviews. The researcher considered the ethical aspect of handling the respondents' information. On average, the respondents were above fifty-five (55) years of age. From the results, 48% represented 35-45 years of age of respondents with their monthly income falling less than One Thousand kwacha Only (K1,000). Findings showed that the village banking program contributes little to the rural community's household income because the village bank

beneficiaries mainly focus on loan repayment. However, the researcher concluded that the village banking program has changed the lives of poor people in Katete.

Although this evidence supports the view of the researcher, there seems to be a mismatch in the findings as, on the one hand, there is a view that the village banking program did not contribute significantly to the community's household income, and on the other hand, the researcher agrees that the program has changed lives of poor people there. This is because a thin line exists between household income and living a better life. This contradiction makes it challenging to see the correlation between the researcher's findings.

C. Critique of Methods Used in the Previous Research

Kwemboi P (2019) investigated the contribution of WORTH village banking to women's economic empowerment in the Salvation Army in Bungoma County in Kenya. The research employed a simple sampling technique by picking 100 women out of a population size of 300. Out of the sample size of 100, only Eighty-Two (82) women were handed the questionnaires. The research results were doubtful to validate the conclusion given. The researcher's findings in the study revealed that the Salvation Army's WORTH village banking enabled women to become economically independent, thereby financially reducing their dependence on men. The only argument remains that if the required sample was not met in the study, then the conclusion is based on an assumption because 18% is quite a significant number that can impact decision-making.

D. Articles Containing Data Analysis Techniques Likely to be Used

Malawi is another example where among developing countries in Africa, there is an organization that supports women groups called the 'Center for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC).' Kamwi R. K. (2020) reports that this organization encourages women to form groups of between 15 and 25 individuals to contribute an agreed amount of money to buy shares, giving some good returns. Similar stories of women reducing poverty in their lives are reported in Dowa District, in the Central District of Malawi, where women's lives have changed by subscribing to village banks (Masina, 2013).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018), there is an indication that village banks have benefited people experiencing poverty in developing countries, who are initially termed 'unbankable' by the formal microfinance setting. Though this assertion is good, it is still inclined to the formal sector, which is already banked. Through village banks, poor rural women in various parts of Tanzania can save or obtain loans for their businesses, invest in long-term needs, such as health and education, and better manage when emergencies arise (Deelen & Majurin, 2008).

E. Gaps in the Literature Reviewed

Village banking, or community banking, is a microfinance model involving groups of individuals coming together to save money and access credit and insurance services. While there have been many studies on the effectiveness of village banking in improving financial inclusion and overall poverty reduction, there still needs to be more in the literature. The following are the gaps in the literature reviewed:

- Limited research on the long-term sustainability of village banking programs: Most studies on village banking tend to focus on short-term outcomes and need to examine the long-term sustainability of these programs.
- Limited research on the impact of village banking on women: While women are the primary beneficiaries of village banking programs, few studies have examined the specific impact on their lives, especially in terms of their economic empowerment, social status, and well-being.
- Limited research on the impact of technology on village banking: With the rise of digital technologies and mobile banking, there is a need to investigate the impact of these innovations on village banking models.
- Limited research on the role of community participation in village banking: Community participation is an essential aspect when assessing financial inclusion in a population.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

Research methodology is a crucial aspect of any research project. The philosophy or general principle will guide the research and outline the method used to examine the impact of village banking on women's livelihoods in the Lusaka district. This chapter will discuss the research methodology used to study village banking, focusing on a qualitative approach. The study will also highlight some of the challenges and opportunities of conducting research on village banking in the Lusaka district and provide examples of studies that have used different methodologies to explore the impact of village banking on financial inclusion, social capital, and women's empowerment. Through this discussion, the Researcher seeks to provide insights into how researchers can design and implement studies that inform policy and practice in microfinance.

This methodology chapter on village banking describes the research methods used to study this village banking model. This chapter further outlines the steps to collect and analyze data and the rationale for choosing specific research methods. By explaining the methodology, researchers can demonstrate the trustworthiness and rigor of their findings and allow others to replicate their study or build on their results. Additionally, the methodology chapter can help researchers identify limitations and opportunities for future research, which can contribute to advancing knowledge in microfinance and rural development. In general, the methodology chapter serves as a roadmap for readers to understand how the study was conducted and how the findings were generated.

Therefore, this methodology approach will aim to ascertain or contrast the two women categories, i.e., the participants in village banking and the non-participants. The main objective of this study is to understand how village banking programs have affected the economic empowerment and well-being of women in Lusaka district. The economic benefits will be assessed on the village banking members, concentrating on the benefits they get from this venture. Another objective will be to contrast the two categories of these women so that a well-thought-out result will be arrived at regarding whether the advent of village banking has changed women's livelihoods in Lusaka district.

B. Research design

According to Merriam (2015), an in-depth study of the phenomena in their natural setting is required to conduct qualitative research. Qualitative research produces a rich and holistic understanding of participants within their natural settings, commonly in non-numeric and unstructured data (Mason, 2002). Creswell (1996) further agrees that new theories and concepts can be developed from participants' stories and perceptions.

C. Area of Study, Sampling Frame, and Sample Size Determination

The study will be undertaken in the Lusaka district, where several village banking programs are being embarked on. In this research, a survey targeting twelve (12) women involved in different village banking groups will be targeted for information and another nine (9) women who are not members of any village banking group.

The research will employ a qualitative analysis inquiry. This approach involves using non-numerical data to explain the meanings and experiences of village bankers. The study used qualitative data collection techniques, which included interviews, focus groups, and ethnography, to explore the social, cultural, and political contents of village banking. The research tools used were content analysis and grounded theory to analyze the data and generate themes and categories that illustrate the impact of village banking on social capital, community development, and gender relations. This is because of the social class of the members that venture into village banking, as they are primarily of low educational backgrounds.

Data will be gathered through convenient and purposive sampling techniques, where the primary data will not be available. Purposive sampling is crucial as it assists in identifying the leads and key processes ascribed to the phenomena under study (Suri, 2011).

D. Research Time Frame

The research will take two weeks to conclude, from data collection to the data analysis and conclusion stages. This will allow the researcher time to gather all the questionnaires and present the findings in the study discussion.

E. Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire interview instrumentation will be used for data collection with village banking groups. The questionnaire interviews used include Kallio et al. (2016), semi-structured interview model questions, and open-ended questions that looked at questions with two categories of areas of the leading research questions.

The first question is centered around economic benefits that are being derived from Village banking among the members. This will show whether the members can generate profits and better their livelihoods from the village banking facilities they get. The second question looks at the comparisons of two categories of women, i.e., both the beneficiaries of the village banking project and non-beneficiaries of the project. The economic benefits that flow from businesses of both categories of people will be measured and analyzed for a conclusion.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

When data collection is accomplished, all the questionnaires will go through a thorough check to ensure that data quality, organization, consistency, analysis, and editing are achieved fully. The Statistical Package for the Social sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel will be employed when analyzing closed-ended questions, and data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics. The frequency tables will also be employed, while some results will be presented using pie charts and bar graphs. On the other hand, the Researcher will analyze the open-ended questions through content analysis by quantifying developing concepts and characteristics.

G. Ethical Consideration

The Researcher will ensure that participants or respondents are fully aware of the study's purpose and methods. This means that voluntary consent will be sought from all participants before beginning the study. The Researcher will ensure confidentiality and anonymity at all stages of the study by using codes to protect the participants' identities.

Additionally, the Researcher will take appropriate measures to store and protect the collected data during the study. The Researcher further affirms that participants will be treated with respect and sensitivity and will be mindful of cultural practices and customs so that participants are not exposed to any harm or discomfort during the study. Lastly, the Researcher will strive to promote the beneficence of the study by ensuring that study findings will be used to improve the lives of the participants and the community at large.

CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FROM THE STUDY

A. Annex 1: Findings From Village Banking Participants

Table 1 Age of Respondent

AGE OF RESPONDENT		Count	Column N %
State of Age	Less than 20 years old	0	0.0%
	21 - 30 years old	0	0.0%
	31 - 40 years old	6	50.0%
	41 - 50 years old	4	33.3%
	more than 50 years old	2	16.7%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the age distribution of respondents. Of the interviewed respondents 50% were in the age distribution of between 31-40 years, while 33.3% were in the age distribution of between 41-50 years. The age distribution of respondents of more than 50 years old was at 16.7%.

Table 2 Marital Status of Respondent

Marital Status of Respondent		Count	Column N %
Marital Status	Married	10	83.3%
	Single	0	0.0%
	Divorced	0	0.0%
	Widowed	2	16.7%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the marital status of respondents that were interviewed. The results show that from the sampled population, 83.3% of respondents were married, while 16.7% were widowed. The results further indicate that there were no singles and divorced respondents.

Table 3 Highest Level of Education of Respondent

Highest Level of Education		Count	Column N %
Highest Level of education	Secondary School and above	12	100.0%
	Secondary level	0	0.0%
	Primary level	0	0.0%
	No education	0	0.0%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The above table shows the highest level of education attainment for each respondent. From the sampled interviewed population, all the respondents managed to acquire secondary education and above.

Table 4 State the Period that the Respondent has been a Member of the Village Banking Group

State The Period That the Respondent		Count	Column N %
State the period as the Respondent has been a member of the village banking group	Less than six months	0	0.0%
	Less than one year	1	8.3%
	1 - 2 years	2	16.7%
	Above 3 years	9	75.0%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The above table shows the duration of membership that each respondent has been a member of the village banking group. Of the sampled population, 8.3% of the sampled population were less than a year of them participating in the village banking group, 16.7% were between 1 – 2 years of participating in the village banking group, and 75% of the respondents had been participating in the village banking group for over 3 years.

Table 5 Did the Respondent Get Any Loans before Joining the Village Banking Program?

Did The Respondent Get Any Loans		Count	Column N %
Did the Respondent get any loans before joining the Village banking program?	Yes	6	50.0%
	No	6	50.0%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the number of respondents that could have gotten loans or not before joining the village banking groups. Of the sampled population, 50% of the respondents had gotten loans before joining the village banking group, while 50% of the respondents did not get loans before joining the village banking group.

Table 6 If Yes to Question 7, How Often Did the Respondent Access a Loan?

How Often Did the Respondent Access a Loan?		Count	Column N %
If yes to question 7, how often did the Respondent access a loan?	Once	3	50.0%
	Twice	3	50.0%
	Total	6	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the percentage of respondents who agreed that they accessed a loan before joining the village banking group. From those that answered in the affirmative, 50% of the respondents had accessed a loan once before joining the village banking group, while another 50% had accessed a loan twice before joining the village banking program.

Table 7 How has the Respondent's Life Changed Since Joining the Village Banking Group?

How Has the Respondent's Life Changed		Count	Column N %
How has the Respondent's life changed since joining the village banking group?	No change at all	2	16.7%
	Significantly changed	9	75.0%
	Not sure	1	8.3%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows whether there has been any change in the respondent's life from the time that they joined the village banking group. From the table above, 75% of the respondents indicated that their lives had significantly changed since they joined the village banking group, 2% indicated that that their lives had not changed at all, since they joined the village banking group, and 1% indicated that they were not sure whether their lives had changed or not since joining the village banking group.

Table 8 What Other Family Income Sources Does the Respondent Have Besides Village Banking?

What Other Family Income Sources		Count	Column N %
What other family income sources does the Respondent have besides village banking?	Income from husband	0	0.0%
	Income from civil service	9	75.0%
	income from private sector job	2	16.7%
	Pension	0	0.0%
	Other	1	8.3%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The above table shows whether respondents had other sources of income apart from the village banking group program. The table shows that 75% of respondents received income from the civil service other than village banking, 16.7% of respondents indicated that they had other income from the private sector other than village banking, and 8.3% of respondents indicated that that they had other income from other sources.

Table 9 Is the Respondent the Breadwinner of the Household?

The Respondent the Breadwinner of The Household		Count	Column N %
Is the Respondent the breadwinner of the household?	Yes	8	66.7%
	No	4	33.3%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The above table shows whether the respondent happens to be the breadwinner of the household or not. From the sampled population, 66.7% of the respondents indicated that they were the breadwinners, while 33.3% of respondents indicated that they are not the breadwinners.

Table 10 Number of People in the Respondent's Household Benefiting Financially

Number Of People In The Respondent's Household		Count	Column N %
Number of people in the Respondent's household benefiting financially	0	0	0.0%
	1	0	0.0%
	2	1	8.3%
	3	1	8.3%
	4 or more	10	83.3%
Total		12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the number of people in the respondent's household that are benefiting from village banking financially. From the table, results show that 83.3% of the respondents had more than 4 people in their households that were benefiting from the village banking program, 8.3% of the respondents had 2 people in their households that were benefiting from the village banking program, which is the same share of respondents that had 1 as the number of people in their households.

Table 11 Has The Respondent Observed Any Change in Household Income Since Joining the Village Banking Program?

Has The Respondent Observed Any Change		Count	Column N %
Has the Respondent observed any change in household income since joining the Village banking program?	Improved	12	100.0%
	No change	0	0.0%
	Worsened	0	0.0%
	Not sure	0	0.0%
Total		12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The above table shows the number of respondents that had observed some positive changes in their household income. The results show that all the interviewed respondents saw an increase in household income since joining the village banking group.

Table 12 Are the Respondents Able to Send All Children to School?

Are The Respondents Able to Send All Children to School		Count	Column N %
Are the Respondents able to send all children to School?	Yes	12	100.0%
	No	0	0.0%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

The table above shows the percentage of respondents that can send their children to school. From the obtained results, there is an indication that all the respondents answered in the affirmative. Of the interviewed respondents, none had seen a sign of failure in sending children to school.

Table 13 Do Respondents Meet these Educational Expenses Using Loans or Payouts from the Village Banking Program?

Do Respondents Meet These Educational Expenses		Count	Column N %
Do respondents meet these educational expenses using loans or payouts from the village banking program?	Yes	5	41.7%
	No	7	58.3%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

From the above table, 41.7% of the respondents, agreed that they met the educational expenses using loans or payouts from the village banking group, while 58.3% of the respondents disagreed that they do not meet the educational expenses using loans or payouts from the village banking program.

Table 14 Do Respondents have Children that have Fallen Out of School Due to A Lack of Financial Support?

Do Respondents Have Children That Have Fallen Out of School		Count	Column N %
Do respondents have children that have fallen out of School due to a lack of financial support?	Yes	1	8.3%
	No	11	91.7%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

From the table above, 91.7% of the interviewed respondents indicated that they do not have any children that have fallen out of school due to lack of financial support, while 8.3% of the respondents indicated that they have children that have fallen out of school due to lack of financial support.

Table 15 How Many Meals Does the Respondent have in a Day?

How Many Meals Does the Respondent Have In A Day		Count	Column N %
How many meals does the Respondent have in a day?	1	0	0.0%
	2	0	0.0%
	3	7	58.3%
	Varies from day to day	5	41.7%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

From the table above, 58.3% of the respondents indicated that they managed to have 3 meals in a day, while 41.7% of respondents indicated that there is a variation on the number of meals that they have in a day.

Table 16 Has the Respondent Experienced Any Food Shortages in the Household in the Past Year?

Has The Respondent Experienced Any Food Shortages		Count	Column N %
Has the Respondent experienced any food shortages in the household in the past year?	Sometimes	1	8.3%
	Never	11	91.7%
	Quite often	0	0.0%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

From the table above, 91.7% of the respondents indicated that they had never experienced any food shortages in their household in the past one year, while 8.3% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes experienced food shortages in their household.

Table 17 Challenges Faced by Respondent in the Group

Challenges faced by village banking respondents		Count	Column N %
State any challenges the Respondent faces in the village banking group	Delayed and reduced interest earnings due to defaults and delays in loan repayments	6	50.0%
	Exorbitant penalties when member delays to repay loan	1	8.3%
	Compounded interest rates	1	8.3%
	Inadequate money to borrow from in certain months	2	16.7%
	No challenges	2	16.7%
	Total	12	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of the sampled respondents, 50% of respondents indicated that in their village banking groups the challenge that they face has to do with delayed and reduced interest earnings due to defaults and delays in loan repayments. Those who indicated that they face challenges to do with exorbitant penalties when a member delays repaying the loan, and those who indicated that they suffer compounded interest rates, were 8.3% of the sampled population respectively. Those who indicated that they face challenges to do with inadequate money to borrow from the village banking group in certain months were 16.7%, while those who indicated that they faced no challenges were also 16.7% of the sampled population.

B. Annex 2 : Findings From Non-Village Banking Participants

Table 18 Age of Respondent

Age of Respondents		Count	Column N %
State your age	21 - 30 years old	3	37.5%
	31 - 40 years old	2	25.0%
	41 - 50 years old	3	37.5%
	Total	8	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of the interviewed non-village banking participants from the table above, those between 21-30 years and those between 41-50 years shared equal weighting at 37.5% each respectively, while those between 31-40 years were 25% of the sampled population.

Table 19 Marital Status of Respondent

Marital status of Respondents		Count	Column N %
Marital Status	Married	3	33.3%
	Single	6	66.7%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of the sampled population of non-village banking participants from the table above, 66.7% of the respondents were single while 33.3% were married.

Table 20 Highest Level of Education of Respondent

Level of Education		Count	Column N %
Highest Level of education	Secondary School and above	7	77.8%
	Secondary level	1	11.1%
	No education	1	11.1%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of the sampled population of non-village banking participants from the table above, 77.8% of the respondents had attained secondary school education and above, while those who had attained secondary school education and no education at all shared equal weighting at 11.1% each respectively.

Table 21 Number of People in Respondent's Household

Population per Household		Count	Column N %
Number of people in respondent's household	1.00	2	22.2%
	2.00	1	11.1%
	5.00	1	11.1%
	6.00	1	11.1%
	7.00	2	22.2%
	8.00	1	11.1%
	9.00	1	11.1%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the interviewed respondents from the table above, only respondents 1 and respondent 7 had two people in their households respectively, while respondents 2,5,6, 8 and 9 had only one person in their households respectively.

Table 22 How Respondent Manages Finances and Savings Currently

Financial Management employed by respondents		Count	Column N %
How does the respondent currently manage finances and savings?	Have bank savings account for purposes of saving money	4	44.4%
	Saving using mobile money account	1	11.1%
	Using the money in business and making profit	1	11.1%
	Through proper budgeting and avoiding unnecessary expenditures	2	22.2%
	Keeping in the house	1	11.1%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the interviewed respondents from the table above, 44.4% of the respondents had savings accounts with banks. Those who saved using mobile money, not saving but use the money in business and profit making, and those who keep money in the house were 11.1% respectively. Those who believed that finances can be managed through proper budgeting and avoiding unnecessary expenditures were 22.2% of the sampled population.

Table 23 Has Respondent Ever Considered Joining Village Banking before

Considerations of Joining Village banking before		Count	Column N %
Has the respondent ever considered joining a village banking group before?	Yes	4	44.4%
	No	5	55.6%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the sampled population from the above table, 55.6% had never considered joining a village banking group before, while 44.4% had considered joining a village banking group before.

Table 24 Reasons Given by Respondent for Deciding Against Village Banking

Reasons for Not Joining Village Banking		Count	Column N %
If so, what made the respondent decide against it at the time?	Lack of understanding of rules governing village banking schemes	3	75.0%
	Too many stories of thefts within the village banking groups	1	25.0%
	Total	4	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the sampled population from the table above, 75% of the respondents believe that the reason why people opt not to join the village banking groups is lack of understanding of rules governing village banking schemes. Another 25% of the respondents disliked village banking schemes because of too many stories of thefts within the village banking groups.

Table 25 Biggest Challenges Faced by People in Managing their Finances Effectively

Thoughts on Challenges faced by People on Managing Finances		Count	Column N %
What do respondents believe are the biggest challenges people face when managing their finances effectively?	Misuse and lack of accountability	5	71.4%
	Too much debt and poor saving culture	1	14.3%
	Poor budgeting	1	14.3%
	Total	7	100.0%

Of the sampled population as per table above, 71.4% of the respondents believe that the biggest challenges that people face in managing their finances effectively is due misusing and lack of accountability, 14.3% of respondents believe that it is due to too much debt and poor saving culture, and another 14.3% believe that it is due to poor budgeting.

Table 26 Comparisons Between Village Banking Participants and Non-Participants

Comparisons between Participants and Non-participants of Village banking		Count	Column N %
How do Respondents compare themselves financially to those in village banking groups?	Same level	3	33.3%
	Those in village banking doing better	5	55.6%
	Better than those in village banking groups	1	11.1%
	Total	9	100.0%

Of the sampled population from the table above, 55.6% of the respondents believed that those in village banking groups are doing much better than those not in any village banking group, 33.3% believed that that those in village banking groups are at the same level with non-village banking groups participants, while 11.1% believed that those not in any village banking group are doing better than those in village banking groups.

Table 27 Whether All Children in Respondent’s Household Go to School

Whether all of Respondent’s Children go to school		Count	Column N %
Do all children in respondents' households go to School?	Yes	7	77.8%
	No	2	22.2%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of those interviewed respondents as per above table, 77.8% confirmed that they have all the children in school in their households, 22.2% confirmed that they were unable to send their children to school.

Table 28 Benefits from Village Banking as Stated by Non-Participants

Benefits from Village banking		Count	Column N %
What are some of the benefits respondents foresee from becoming a member of a village banking group?	Gaining Financial literacy	3	37.5%
	Gain extra income through interest earnings	3	37.5%
	No benefits as most groups are full of crocks	1	12.5%
	Cheap source of capital for business	1	12.5%
	Total	8	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the sampled population from the table above, 37.5% of the respondents foresee benefits from becoming a village banking member as gaining financial literacy, another 37.5% foresee gaining extra income through interest earnings, while those who don’t foresee benefits as most groups are full of crocks, and cheap source of capital for business were 12.5% of the respondents respectively.

Table 29 Concerns by Non- Village Banking Participants

Concerns by Non-Participating Respondents		Count	Column N %
Do respondents have any concerns or reservations about joining such a group?	Yes	8	88.9%
	No	1	11.1%
	Total	9	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023

Of the sampled population as per above table, 88.9% of the respondents still have reservations or concerns on joining village banking schemes, while 11.1% of respondents have no reservations or concerns.

Table 30 Reservations by Non-Participants for Not Joining Village Banking

Reservations by Respondents for not Joining Village banking		Count	Column N %
What are the reservations	High risk of losing investment savings due to some members not being honest	4	50.0%
	Prohibitive interest rates and not clear terms of engagement	2	25.0%
	No reservations	2	25.0%
	Total	8	100.0%

Source: Village banking survey May/June 2023.

Of the interviewed respondents of those with concerns or reservations on joining village banking groups, 50% of the respondents are afraid of village banking as there is a high risk of losing investment savings due to some members not being honest. Another 25% of the respondents are concerned about prohibitive interest rates and not clear terms of engagement, while another 25% had no reservations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Village banking is a microfinance model that has gained immense popularity in the recent past. It, being a savings-led financial system where members come together to form a group and contribute savings to a common fund. The savings are then used to give loans to members of the group to start or expand their businesses. The study focused on village banking and its impact which is an important research topic, and was conducted in Lusaka district, which is an area where village banking has been implemented and is now popular. It used a sample size of 12 women who participate in village banking, which is a sample size that is large enough to be a representative of the population under study.

To get a deeper understanding of the impact of village banking on women's livelihoods, the study used the qualitative approach to collect the data. The study further rides on another strength of employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyze the data, which increased the accuracy of the findings.

In the matter of Lusaka district, village banking has become a popular method of accessing finance for women entrepreneurs. In this locality, women face various challenges ranging from limited access to finance, low education levels, and cultural beliefs that limit their participation in economic activities. However, the study has discovered that even women with higher education have now ventured into the village banking model to have supplementary income aimed at fighting the high cost of living in Lusaka district.

The study has indicated that village banking has a significant impact on the livelihoods of women in Lusaka district. Specifically, it has helped to increase their income and poverty levels. By providing access to finance, women are now able to buy plots and construct houses, start or expand their businesses, leading to increased sales and profits. Others are also able to support their children in schools and feed their households with three meals a day.

Village banking has also empowered women by enhancing their decision-making power and improving their social standing. With access to finance, women can make independent decisions about their businesses' direction, which leads to increased self-esteem and confidence.

However, the researcher would like to highlight the following weaknesses of the study on the impact of village banking in Lusaka district as follows:

- The study did not explore the perspectives of men in the community, which may have provided a more complete picture of the impact of village banking on the community.
- The study was conducted in one district in Zambia, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts in the region or beyond.
- The study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. More so, women may be inclined to overstate the possible impacts of village banking on their livelihoods to please the researchers or the village banking managers, leading to an overestimation of the intervention's effectiveness.
- The study did not have a control group which makes it difficult to determine the causal relationship between village banking and women's livelihoods.
- There may be external factors that may be at play that could have influenced the women's livelihoods, such as changes in the local economy, or government policies like the popular National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) 20% partial withdrawal.

In a study that was conducted by Lweendo E.M, (2020), found that village banking has had a significant impact on economic development in many communities such that participants are able to enjoy increased financial inclusion, improved livelihoods, and enhanced social cohesion among female marketeers of Masala market in Ndola, Zambia. It further reported that the programme's beneficiaries experienced an increased sense of purpose, self-confidence, and social status. It further reported that the programme's beneficiaries experienced an increased sense of purpose, self-confidence, and social status.

A. *Direction for Future Research*

Several possible directions for future research on village banking include the following:

- On women's empowerment, future research can explore how village banking programs can be designed to enhance women's empowerment and decision-making power within their households and communities. This could involve examining the factors that facilitate or hinder women's participation in village banking programs and the consequences of their participation on their well-being and agency.
- On financial inclusion, future research can examine the role of village banking in promoting financial inclusion for marginalized populations. This could include exploring the extent to which village banking enables access to financial services and the factors that impact the effectiveness of village banking in promoting financial inclusion.

- On sustainability, future research can examine how sustainable village banking programs can be over time, and the factors that contribute to successful and unsuccessful outcomes. This could include examining the challenges associated with scaling up village banking programs and strategies for ensuring their long-term viability.
- On technology and innovation, future research can explore how these two can be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of village banking programs. This could include examining the potential of mobile money and other digital platforms to support village banking operations and expand reach to the remote and underserved areas like Shangombo district of Western Zambia.

In summary, village banking is a powerful tool for women's economic empowerment in Lusaka district. The approach should, therefore, be encouraged and supported to ensure that more women can benefit from this life changing opportunity.

B. Recommendations on Village Banking

Based on the available evidence, the following recommendations can be made to maximize the positive impact of village banking on women's livelihoods:

- Encourage more women to join village banking groups – Women who participate in village banking groups have access to credit facilities, training, and other financial services that can improve their businesses and livelihoods.
- Provide financial literacy training – Many women in Lusaka district may not have sufficient knowledge of financial management and business skills. Providing financial literacy training can help improve their understanding of financial matters and help them make better decisions when managing their businesses.
- Improve accessibility to credit facilities – Access to credit is essential for women to start or expand their small businesses. Therefore, it is important to ensure that women have access to credit facilities in their communities like the Constituency Development Fund (CDF-) that the Government of the Republic of Zambia is offering to already formed cooperatives or groups.
- Monitor loan sizes and repayment pressures – Village banking programs should monitor loan sizes and repayment pressures to ensure that they are manageable for participants. Overburdening participants with debt can lead to negative impacts on their livelihoods and well-being.
- Monitor and evaluate outcomes – Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of village banking programs is crucial to determine their effectiveness and identify areas where improvements can be made. Regular monitoring and evaluation will help ensure that women in Lusaka district are benefiting from these programs.

By implementing these recommendations, village banking programs can ensure that they are achieving their goal of supporting women's livelihoods in Lusaka district in a way that is sustainable, empowering, and responsive to their needs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

From the data collected, it can be concluded that village banking has had a positive impact, offering access to credit and financial stability that can contribute to increased income and improved economic opportunities on women's livelihoods in Lusaka district. Women who participate in village banking often report increased autonomy and decision-making power within their households and communities, as well as strengthened social networks and support systems. The access to credit and financial services provided by village banking groups has helped women to start and expand small businesses, increase their income, and improve their living standards.

Women have also been able to build social networks and support systems through participation in village banking groups, which have helped to boost their confidence and knowledge of business practices. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed such as limited access to education and training, group dynamics, repayment pressures, exorbitant penalties for those who delay to payback, inadequate information on market opportunities, lack of standardized regulatory framework, limited loan sizes and lack of collateral on loans.

From the qualitative responses from non-village banking participants, those in village banking schemes have better livelihoods as compared to non-participants. The non-participants too, have at least some informed knowledge about the operations of the village banking groups.

All in all, the evidence from the study has demonstrated that village banking can be a valuable tool for supporting women's livelihoods and empowerment to improve their economic situation in Lusaka district. Further research and interventions are needed to ensure its sustained success and impact on women's livelihoods with maximized benefits and minimized risks.

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APPENDIX

ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADMINISTER TO VILLAGE BANKING PARTICIPANTS.

INTERVIEW DATE

TOPIC: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF VILLAGE BANKING ON WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT

Dear Respondent,

The Researcher is a student of Copperbelt University pursuing an MSc in Accounting and Finance. As a partial fulfillment for the award of the Masters’ degree, The Researcher is conducting a study on "Assessing the impact of village banking on Women's livelihoods in Lusaka District."

For this reason, the respondents have been purposefully sampled to provide information on the above topic. It must be noted that the information being collected is purely for academic purposes only and will be used as such. The information being collected will be treated with maximum confidentiality, and you are, therefore, not required to indicate your name or any personal information that can lead to exposing your identity.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (PLEASE "TICK OR CIRCLE")

- 1. State your age.....
- 2. Marital Status
(a) Married (b) Single (c) Divorced (d) Widowed
- 3. Highest Level of education
(a) Secondary and above (b) Secondary level (c) Primary Level (d) No education
- 4. Number of people in the respondent’s household.....

PART 2: VILLAGE BANKING MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- 5. State the period as the Respondent has been a member of the village banking group.
(a) Less than six months (b) Less than 1 Year (c) 1 – 2 Years (d) Above 3 Years
- 6. Did the Respondent get any loans before joining the Village banking program?
(a) Yes (b) No
- 7. If yes to question 6, how often did the Respondent access a loan?
(a) Once (b) Twice (c) Three times (d) Four times and more
- 8. What reasons made the Respondent get a loan?
(a) School fees (b) Business expansion (c) Debt repayment (d) Medical expenses (e) Buying food (f) Start-up a Business (g) Household asset purchase (h) Others, please specify.....
- 9. How did the Respondent become interested in joining a village banking group?
(a) Through a friend (b) Through reading books (c) Through a cooperative talk (d) Through a TV show presentation

PART 3: ECONOMIC IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

- 10. How has the Respondent's life changed since joining the village banking group?
(a) No change at all (b) Significantly changed (c) Not sure
- 11. How do respondents think being a member of a village banking group can help achieve financial goals?
.....
.....
- 12. What are the most significant benefits of being a part of this village banking group?
.....
.....

13. How do respondents plan to contribute to the group's success?

.....
.....
.....

14. What other family income sources does the Respondent have besides village banking?

(a) Income from Husband (b) Income from Civil Service (c) Income from Private Sector job (d) Pension (e) Others, please specify.....

15. What critical characteristics are essential for a successful village banking group member?.....

.....

16. Do you have any questions or concerns about being a member of this village banking group?

.....
.....
.....

PART 4: VILLAGE BANKING IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS

17. Is the Respondent the breadwinner of the household?

(a) Yes (b) No

18. Number of people in the Respondent's household benefiting financially.

(a) 0 (b) 1
(c) 2 (d) 3 (e) 4 or More

19. Has the Respondent observed any change in household income since joining the Village banking program?

(a) Improved (b) No change
(c) Worsened (d) Not sure

20. Are the Respondents able to send all children to School?

(a) Yes (b) No

21. Do respondents meet these educational expenses using loans or payouts from the village banking program?

(a) Yes (b) No

22. Do respondents have children that have fallen out of School due to a lack of financial support?

(a) Yes (b) No

23. How many meals does the Respondent have in a day?

(a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) varies from day to day

24. Has the Respondent experienced any food shortages in the household in the past year?

(a) Sometimes (b) Never (c) Quite often

25. State any challenges the Respondent faces in the village banking group.

.....
.....

END OF INTERVIEW

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADMINISTER TO NON-VILLAGE BANKING PARTICIPANTS.

INTERVIEW DATE

TOPIC: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF VILLAGE BANKING ON WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT

Dear Respondent,

The Researcher is a student of Copperbelt University pursuing an MSc in Accounting and Finance. As a partial fulfillment for the award of the Masters’ degree, the Researcher is conducting a study on "Assessing the impact of village banking on Women's livelihoods in Lusaka District."

For this reason, respondents have been purposefully sampled to provide information on the above topic. It must be noted that the information being collected is purely for academic purposes only and will be used as such. The information being collected will be treated with maximum confidentiality, and you are, therefore, not required to indicate your name or any personal information that can lead to exposing your identity.

1. State your age.....

2. Marital Status

(b) Married (b) Single (c) Divorced (d) Widowed

3. Highest Level of education

(b) Secondary and above (b) Secondary level (c) Primary Level (d) No education

4. Number of people in respondent’s household.....

5. How does the respondent currently manage finances and savings?

.....
.....

6. Has the respondent ever considered joining a village banking group before? If so, what made the respondent decide against it at the time?

.....
.....

7. What do respondents believe are the biggest challenges people face when managing their finances effectively?

.....
.....

8. How do Respondents compare themselves financially to those in village banking groups?

.....
.....

9. How can being a part of a village banking group help address some of these challenges?

.....
.....

10. What are some of the benefits respondents foresee from becoming a member of a village banking group?

.....
.....

11. Do respondents have any concerns or reservations about joining such a group?

.....
.....

12. How does the respondent believe participating in a village banking group could impact the community and surroundings?

.....
.....

13. Do respondents have any questions about how village banking groups operate or how they could benefit personally?

.....
.....
.....

14. Do all children in respondents' households go to School?

(a) Yes (b) No

15. Are children in respondents' households able to access education?

(a) Yes (b) No

16. In the Respondent's opinion, do households have enough information before getting a loan from the village banking program?

.....
.....
.....

END OF INTERVIEW