The African Ant Leadership Paradigm in an Inclusive Regional Quality Framework for Cross-Border Higher Education in the SADC Region

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ABSTRACT

The noble notion of the regional collective rationalisation of accreditation, quality assurance (QA) and audits within Southern Africa borders is affirmed by the desire to encourage adherence to quality assurance standards or protocols, that should result in believability and authenticity of university qualifications. The study employed a qualitative research approach, underpinned by an African ant leadership philosophical overview to analyse experiences and views of 12 university professoriates' readiness to facilitative the smooth implementation of Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework within Southern African Development Community region. I used Structured Online Mediated or Facilitated Conversations as a method and a computer as a tool to collect data. Thematic analysis was preferred to analyse data. Findings indicate that Southern African Development Community member university professoriates are hamstrung by archaic colonial self-caging and partitioning quality assurance audit modalities that promote so-called "institutional independence" over the prioritisation of regional "collective independence". I propose that Southern African Development Community universities' academic bodies should prioritise the establishment of an independent inclusive Communalities of Regional Quality Framework body that will craft a quality assurance audits design model to be used by higher education institutions to benchmark educational programmes. I further posit that the persistent employment of self-caging, colonially inherited quality assurance frameworks that continue to compartmentalise Southern African Development Community higher education institutions within the confines of colonially drawn borders denies all in sundry equal education opportunities and promotes regional exclusion.

Keywords: Quality assurance audits, African ant leadership approach, communalities of ethical peer review, de-borderisation of quality assurance protocols

INTRODUCTION

Nearly every nation has recognised the importance of quality higher education to its economic prosperity as well as the economic well-being of its citizenry (Lane, 2012). There were approximately 178 million students enrolled in tertiary education in 2010. Some have estimated that this number will increase to 262 million by 2025 (Goddard, 2015). Students also study in other countries, with nearly 4.5 million studying outside of their home country in 2012 (OECD, 2016). Higher education institutions (HEIs) have emerged as multi-national organisations with branches in multiple countries (Lane & Kinser, 2011). By the same token, the high level of outbound mobility takes place in a context of explosive growth in tertiary enrolments across the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Currently, over 4.8 million students are enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) in sub-Saharan Africa (Irfan and Magolese-Malin (2011). The critical aim of

this narrative article therefore is to analyse the potentialities for the establishment of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) for higher education in the SADC region with reference to qualifications benchmarking, peer review mechanisms and qualitative improvements while at the same time creating opportunities for the de-borderisation of higher education for students and regional inclusion. This was done by analysing the experiences and views of SADC member university professoriates obtained by means of structured mediated online conversations.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PROTOCOL BACKGROUND

Article 4 (c) on cooperation in policy for education and training (CPET) from SADC's protocol of education (1997) and training document stipulates thus, "Rationalising admission requirements to education and training institutions and accreditation of qualification". The task of developing and recommending policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonising and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC was designated to the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).

Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) was established in 2011 by the Ministers of Education in the SADC region. The purpose of the SADCQF was to enable easier movement of learners, professionals, and ordinary workers across the SADC region and internationally. The SADCQF is a reference framework consisting of ten Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) Levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC. However, the SADCQF has never been formally launched despite being approved in 2011 to date.

The study explored experiences and views of universities of Africa professoriates of their readiness in playing facilitative role in the smooth implementation of SADCQF in the SADC region.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

In 2000 a SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) was established, comprising nominated qualifications and quality assurance experts from Member States and with support from the SADC Secretariat. The purpose of the TCCA is, "to develop and recommend policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonising and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC".

The SADCQF is a regional mechanism whose purpose is for comparing and recognising of full qualifications, credit transfer, creation of regional standards and facilitation of quality assurance (QA). It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across SADC, facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States (MS), harmonise qualifications, and create acceptable regional standards.

The main purpose of the SADCQF then includes:

- Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC,
- Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member States,

- Harmonising qualifications wherever possible,
- Promoting the transfer of credits within and among Member States and even beyond, and
- Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.

Southern Africa Development Community Education and training protocol

A protocol is a legally binding document committing member states to the objectives and specific procedures stated within it. For a protocol to enter into force, two-thirds of the member states need to ratify or sign the agreement, giving formal consent and making the document officially valid. Any member state that did not become party to a protocol initially can accede to it at a later stage.

The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) is a reference framework consisting of ten Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC. At a meeting of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation TCCA held from 20 to 23 September 2016, the SADCQF was revived and positioned for implementation. A clear two-year milestone plan was developed, and an implementation model comprising three areas, namely (1) development and alignment, (2) quality assurance and (3) verification was adopted.

All SADC member states have articulated their education policies, but only a few have done so by directly taking into consideration the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and the African Union Second Decade of Education. Mozambique is one of the exceptions, with laws aimed specifically at incorporating the protocol into the education legal system (SANF 10 No 17). The slow pace experienced by implementation agency could be alluded to the fact that individual countries find it difficult to shift from their individual historical colonial education legacy systems that prevailed in each country before in independence.

History of colonial government, missionaries, and political control in education

The current formal university structure in South Africa began with the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873. Receiving its Royal Charter in 1877, it was modelled on the University of London. Prior to the founding of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, there was no higher education in southern Africa, and even proper basic schooling was generally lacking. If they could afford it, colonial settlers would send their children to study abroad. Higher education was not a priority in the republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State or even in the colony of Natal, but the educated community in the Cape perceived the lack, particularly after that colony had received a measure of independence from Britain with responsible government in 1872. Neither of the universities in London or Cape Town had campuses or resident students. Instead, they were examining bodies that guaranteed quality by setting examinations and conferring degrees on students who passed the required examination no matter where they had acquired the appropriate knowledge. The University of London was founded to oversee the examination process as a new and neutral body (Phillips, 1993)

Soon after the end of World War 1 more higher education institutions were established in Africa, including Makerere University in Uganda (1922), Egerton University in Kenya (1939), the University of Ghana (1948), the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (1948), Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia (1950) and the University of

Zimbabwe (1952) (Damtew, 2003). The establishment of higher education institutions in Africa, however, was concentrated mainly in the Northern African countries and South Africa. By the end of the 1960s, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa had only 6 universities for a population of 230 million and some countries, including Cape Verde, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Seychelles, and Sao Tome and Principe, had no universities at all (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). In all the universities listed above, quality assurance audits were conducted by host colonial universities, who had an influence on their establishment and operations. Even though these universities were granted autonomy soon after independence, quality assurance standards remained a replica of those of the universities on which they were modelled, usually the universities of London, Cambridge, and Oxford.

However, SADC has taken a huge step towards the harmonisation of its education system by approving the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF). The RQF (2011), which was initiated a few years ago, seeks among other things to enable SADC member states to compare and recognise qualifications obtained in the region.

In the long run, the establishment of a standardised educational system should promote deeper regional integration, as it has the potential to help facilitate the movement of students and professionals in southern Africa.

However, there is divergence rather than unity in the operation of the regional grouping, with each SADC member state tending to promote its own economic and political interests, contrary to the vision encapsulated in the protocol, in which each member state has committed itself to (Jafta and Samuels, 2017), "operate, coordinate, harmonise and integrate policies and strategies in one or more sectors". The ratification of the protocol by 9 out of 20 SADC member states has further confirmed that regional integration is in jeopardy, since not all member states have shown the same degree of commitment to regional integration, to be achieved by:

- Spearheading the development and harmonisation of education policies and programmes on the continent towards achievement of the SADC vision of prosperity, peace and integration;
- Contributing to the development of revitalised, quality, relevant, harmonised education systems through intra-African networking;
- Facilitating the contribution of education and research to the African renaissance and the empowerment of the people of Africa to generate Africa-led solutions.

African Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF), whose goal it is to catalyse improvement in quality in higher education in Africa. It aims to bring Africa under one umbrella in quality assurance in higher education by setting minimum standards. This, however, does not mean that it is a single, one-size-fits-all quality assurance currency for Africa. Despite the linguistic diversity that groups African countries into Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabophone regions, linguistic barriers in the QA process need to be dismantled. The QA process should be aligned with the goal of sustaining Africa's economic growth through the production of quality graduates.

In 2008, the African Union Commission proposed the creation of the Pan African University (PAU), which would require the promotion, networking and development of programmes and research centres within selected existing high-quality universities in the five geographic sub-regions, namely: Northern, Western, Eastern, Central Northern and Southern Africa. Each sub-region would

host a thematic component of the PAU, which would be committed to selecting and networking with centres of quality developing similar programmes, and to serving as a coordinating hub for those institutions. Thus, Algeria in the Northern region would host Water, Energy and Climate Change; Nigeria in the Western region would host Life and Earth Sciences; Kenya in the Eastern region would host Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation; Cameroon in the Central Northern region would host Humanities, Social Sciences and Good Governance; and South Africa in the Southern region would host Space Sciences.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

A separate initiative has been taken jointly by the OECD and UNESCO to develop guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education. The OECD–UNESCO guidelines were finalised in 2019, and the drafting process identified the contrast between the need to regulate the internationalisation of higher education and the fact that existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions. Therefore, the current quality assurance systems face the challenge of developing appropriate methodologies and mechanisms to cover foreign providers and programmes in addition to national providers and programmes to maximise the benefits and limit the potential disadvantages of the internationalisation of higher education.

This interest has been directed towards the development of three initiatives, namely: The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Good Practice Guidelines; the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Higher Education; and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, which were developed as part of the Bologna Process.

Educational accountability has traditionally been premised on the sovereignty of nations and immobility of institutions. While students, scholars, and knowledge have long been mobile, the institutions themselves and the educational opportunities they provide have not. In fact, where an institution is located, either in a national or sub-national context, has long influenced its evolution, with governmental preferences relating to public subsidy, research support, cost to students, hiring practices, and even the level of academic freedom guiding institutional development. Alongside these governmental preferences there have developed external quality assurance and accountability mechanisms intended to ensure that the institution is operating in the public interest (or at least the students' interest), and these interests are typically defined by the government. Member states agree that universities must ensure that the content, quality and relevance of their undergraduate degrees is acceptable to graduate schools and employers in the region for further study and for employment.

Yet, higher education institutions are increasingly multi-national in scope. Not only do they cross borders to deliver educational programmes to local students, but also have established joint and dual degree programmes, international research partnerships, and extensive global student recruiting networks. These developments pose new challenges in terms of accountability and quality assurance efforts, as they raise issues of sovereignty, legal jurisdiction, and geo-political dynamics that cannot necessarily be attended to by means of traditional accountability frameworks.

There is no data on the totality of the Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) activity globally; however, there are 33 countries exporting 247 international branch campuses to 76 countries (Cross-Border Education Research Team (2017)). Twenty-two international branch campuses (IBCs) are known to be in development, and at least 42 have been closed – demonstrating a great deal of instability in the global market. The university of South Africa has successfully opened some campuses outside South African borders. The other largest exporters of IBCS are developed countries, and most are in the Western world (i.e., the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Germany). The largest importers are largely developing nations in the Middle East and Asia (e.g., China, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia, and Qatar).

According to Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in South Africa, quality management entails several elements of institutional planning and action to deal with issues of quality. These include institutional arrangements for:

- Quality assurance – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to satisfy itself that its quality requirements and standards are being met;
- Quality support – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to support and sustain existing levels of quality;
- Quality development and enhancement – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to develop and enhance quality; and
- Quality monitoring – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to monitor, evaluate and act on quality issues.

The disharmony that exists in national policy differentiations on quality assurance protocols and audits in education ecosystem in the SADC region require a collective approach in their design and implementation. A regional collective policy design contributes to and support the harmonisation of higher education programmes and the creation of a revitalised, distinctive, attractive, and globally competitive African higher education space, through enhanced intra-African collaboration and development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional level, national, regional and SADC level. The collective regional approach requires arguably, the employment of an African leadership theory or paradigm.

AFRICAN ANT LEADERSHIP PARADIGM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

Theory of paradigms is introduced, and the radical verificationist and radical emergence paradigms are considered as extensions of the schema, based on ontological and epistemological characteristics grounded in relatively more recent societal and scientific changes and the emergent properties of these changes (Burrell and Morgan (1979). The ant leadership paradigm ontology is a set of leadership styles and characteristics displayed by ants that can be adopted by humans to enable organisations or entities such as Southern African Development Community (SADC) to excel in their collective operational foci and practices of interests. This paradigm focuses on teamwork (the collective) and what a small creature or a small organisation can achieve by harnessing the leadership style and characteristics of ants. The aim of this paradigm is to explore the true nature of ants so that political leaders and education leaders can benefit from their admirable characteristics.

Nyoni (2013): African ant leadership model: This model allows for authentic stakeholder consultative processes, transparency, and division of labour, and demands total commitment to ethical values and organic rule of law. SADC Region Education Quality Assurance policies can be ratified and/or modified to dovetail towards achieving one regional quality assurance standards.

African ant leadership (AAL) theory seeks to explain how and why certain people become leaders. Such a theory often focuses on the characteristics of leaders, but some attempt to identify the behaviours that people can adopt to improve their own leadership abilities in different situations. Research has established that leadership is practised universally among all people, regardless of culture**.** Bass (1995) notes that the earliest literature on leadership was concerned almost entirely with theoretical issues. Theorists sought to identify different types of leadership and to relate them to the functional demands of society. In addition, they sought to account for the emergence of leadership by examining either the qualities of the leader or the elements of the situation. The functionality of the concept "traditional" is not intended to invoke a philosophical binary with "modern" or "modernism," but rather to denote indigenous forms of African cultural group identity formation and nation-state governance that predate substantial European colonial influence, which is to say, pre- late 18th and early 20th century. Richards and Engle (1986: 206) define leadership as, "the process about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished". SADC Leadership seeks to develop and share their vision(s) with others in the region. For the shared vision to be pursued with focus, a regional value system based on a collective participatory leadership approach is necessary. SADC region needs to wean itself of global north (Western countries) influences that impact post political, educational, and administrative models that have no relevance with decolonial projects.

AFRICAN POLITY IN DECOLONISED EDUCATION IN THE SADC REGION

European colonial officials established secular schools for Africans in the early 20th century. Whereas French educators promoted educational "assimilation," British territories introduced the "adapted education" system for Africans in the 1920s, a policy modelled after the American segregated school system. Africans made demands for more schools and a more literary curriculum in the 1930s and 1940s and, in some cases, even established their own schools. This period also saw the development of higher education for Africans. During the

nationalist era, the educated elite were at the forefront of demands for independence, and many of the leaders of new nations in the 1960s were Western-educated elites.

In his review of post-colonial African leaders, (Mazrui, 1986) (15) asserts that their leadership behaviours were characterised by monarchical tendencies, describing these tendencies as a combination of elements of political style including the quest for aristocratic effect, personalisation of authority, sacred authority and the quest for a royal historical identity. The tendencies illustrate the extent to which leadership paradoxes and contradictions have existed from the post-colonial era through to present-day African democratic states. Mazrui, (1986) believes that with few exceptions, the rest of Nkrumah's generation of leaders tended to demonstrate monarchical tendencies, manifesting these over the years.

Salim (2015) contend that pan-Africanists must accelerate the pace of integration as well as strengthen a Pan-African identity among, "our people across borders". He goes to say, "We continue to linger in an era of prejudices and stereotypes, keeping our people further apart instead of moving closer together through our shared history and shared aspirations for our individual and collective prosperous future" in line with African ant leadership model (AALM) (Salim, 2015).

REJIG AND HARMONISE AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Education is seen as a catalyst for equity, meritocracy, employability, economic performance, happiness and sustainable development. Harmonisation fosters trust. It makes possible the consolidation of African systems of education and assures the quality of educational provision against locally, regionally and eventually internationally agreed benchmarks of excellence, ultimately leading to regional integration.

In a harmonised environment, there is transparency in terms of curriculum development, and a synchronised understanding of definitions relating to HE, the learning load, the duration of courses, credit accumulation and recognition of experiential learning. There is also improved visibility concerning how individuals progress along and across educational systems. Regionally approved credible QA processes are critical in the authentication and believability of qualifications awarded thereof.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An initial desktop research exercise was undertaken to identify QA practices in each SADC member state, followed by more in-depth research conducted via online mediated conversations to understand external and internal QA systems in higher education, focused on QA-related needs, demands and priorities in each member state. I drew on Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Creswell's (2014) thematic analysis (TA) framework and applied it in a systematic manner to describe and explain the process of analysis within the context of QA research. There are many other different ways to approach TA (cf. Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis,1998; Javadi & Zarea, 2016); indeed, one of the advantages of TA is that it is flexible from a theoretical point of view. This means that it can be used within different frameworks, to answer widely differing types of research question. It suits questions related to people's experiences, and those relating to people's views and perceptions.

Structured Online Mediated or Facilitated Conversations (SOMEC)

SOMEC are a useful way for people to work through their issues and arrive at solutions that are mutually satisfying to everyone. A mediator, or some other neutral party, facilitates or helps to structure the conversation, thereby helping people to move from conflict to agreement. It is easily manageable with between five

and twelve participants. A topic or a question is introduced by the mediator, and participants are free to respond. By focusing on discourse and conversation analysis of the views shared online by university lecturers, it was possible to show that practising professoriates steadfastly protect individual institutional QA audits, and are not willing to shift to accommodate regional collectivism. Profoundly ingrained colonial ways of thinking continue to dominate individual institutional QA systems and sub-systems. Responses were grouped according to themes identified during analysis of the data. Mediated interactions such as SOMEC should not be analysed as though they were simply a form of talk-in-interaction, but instead key views that locate critical thought should be identified.

Conducting the Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a six-phase guide which is a very useful framework for conducting this kind of analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1: Six-phase framework for conducting thematic analysis

Step 1: Become familiar with the data	Step 4: Review themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Define themes
Step 3: Search for themes	Step 6: Write up

Braun and Clarke (2006): sequential six-phase framework for conducting thematic analysis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Quality Assurance Parity in the SADC Region

SADC member states realise the urgent need for the development and promotion of QA in higher education in the African continent through sharing information, experience, good practice and innovations with members and other stakeholders by means of platforms such as conferences, workshops, seminars, publications, projects and websites. SADC chapter 3 of 1997 (consisting of 7 articles) acknowledges, among other objectives, that while each member state has its own policies for education and training, and while cooperation and mutual assistance in education is desirable, this can be facilitated more effectively through the development of harmonised and eventually standardised policies regarding education and training.

The Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) (2011) that was initiated a few years ago seeks among other things to enable SADC member states to compare and recognise qualifications obtained in the region. However, professoriates noted that several targets that the SADC regional bloc intended to attain over a period have not been achieved. This is confirmed by Hancock (2010), who argues that the SADC has forged ahead with setting targets "but has barely made a dent into realising those goals," with some targets having been missed. Professoriates agreed that pathways for RQF design were clear, but that there was a lack of commitment to financing processes, as there were marked differences in levels of economic development of the various member states. As things stand, each university relies on its own national quality assurance (NQA) and accreditation agency (AA). SADC member states insist on parity instead of putting their shoulder to the wheel in arguing for the establishment of a SADCQF that harmonises RQF levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and QA mechanisms in the region.

Table 2: National quality assurance and accreditation agencies in Africa

Country	Agency	Date established
Cameroon	National Commission on Private Higher Education (NCPHE)	1991
Ethiopia	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA)	2003
Ghana	National Accreditation Board (NAB)	1993
Kenya	Commission for Higher Education (CHE)	1985
Mauritius	Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)	1997
Mozambique	National Commission of Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education (CNAQ)	2003
Nigeria	National Universities Commission (NUC)	1990–91
South Africa	Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE)	2001
Sudan	Evaluation and Accreditation Corporation (EVAC)	2003
Tanzania	Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC)	1995
Uganda	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)	2005

Table 3: Universities in the SADC Region as of 2019

Member state	Number of universities
Angola	7
Botswana	1 (a new science and technology university is being established)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	38
Lesotho	1
Madagascar	8
Malawi	5
Mauritius	2 state universities, and numerous branches of foreign universities from Australia, India and the UK
Mozambique	3
Namibia	2
South Africa	23
Swaziland	1
United Republic of Tanzania	27
Zambia	3
Zimbabwe	12
Total	132

During the mediated conversation exchanges, the professoriates continued to demonstrate a silo mentality in defence of their individual institutional QA processes instead of advancing regional efforts in line with SADC chapter 3 of 1997. Both Tables 2 and 3 clearly show how each country prioritises the establishment of universities and national quality assurance and accreditation agencies but devotes little effort to country-to-country or regional integration.

Decolonial Quality Assurance Audits in the SADC Region

Regrettably, the views of those who peddle neoliberalism are not capable of unifying members in developing a logic that counterplots colonial development projects. "Counterplots" derive from, and are rooted in, indigenous colonial conditions that inform the identity and politics of the colonised mind. A decolonial alternative denaturalises assumptions about development being attained by adopting a one-size-fits-all theory of development by privileging human dignity – even though this is constantly denied by the rhetoric of (Western) modernity, in which human dignity takes second place to progress. The critical thought of the professoriates of SADC regional universities relating to QA remains captured within the academic frames of perceived acceptable Western approved assessment and QA standards. QA standards undoubtedly remain transfixed and a microcosm of quality Western education.

The SADCQF embodies the commitment to the development and implementation of a quality assurance system which is suited to the regional needs and realities of SADC higher education and which is premised on the need for harmonisation, fairness and social justice. Professoriates strongly emphasise an institutional integrated framework for QA. One could argue that post-independence, African states simply assume the reins of power and continue along the path laid down by colonial rulers, remaining captured within technocratic and political dispensations and unable to dismantle systems that kept indigenous people separate and borderised. There is a need to adopt a "decolonial turn" in the way in which curricular and QA processes are carried out at university level. The decolonial turn, according to Grosfoguel (2007:211), is a project that aims to, "epistemologically transcend, decolonize the Western canon and epistemology." Professoriates need to re-think how to rid themselves of "colonially embedded critical thought capture" and embrace a communitarian, collective approach to QA and curriculum designs. A concerted disruptive decolonial turn endeavours, through the professoriates and other lecturers, to decolonise, de-borderise, and communalitarise QA and curriculum designs to unify organically linked ethnically diverse groups of people.

Appropriateness of the African Ant Leadership Model

The African ant leadership model helps to maintain some consistency in a complex multidisciplinary field and reinforces a particular way of thinking about culture that seems particularly ill-suited to understanding multicultural societies such as those found across Africa (Jackson, 2004) and, increasingly, elsewhere. Individualistic nations such as the UK and France demonstrate collectivism under certain circumstances, whilst collectivist cultures, such as Japan, demonstrate individualism under others. If, indeed, dimensions such as those identified by Hofstede, (1980/2003) do exist, then perhaps they should be considered less like a unitary scale and more like the Chinese principle of dualism typified by yin and yang (Lowe, 2001; Fang, 1998). Thus, just as the Chinese believe that yin and yang exist in everything, so to, must the seed of collectivism reside within individualism, and vice versa. Such an approach encourages a shift from simplistic objectivist representations of culture to a more complex social constructivist appreciation of the myriad possibilities and perceived realities.

The African ant leadership model emphasises intra-collectivism and synergies of mutual interaction that assist in achieving collective objectives and seem to avoid silo mentalities. Despite the call by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki (1996), for Africans to embrace renaissance projects, colonially inspired psychological capture overtures restrict the

critical thought of university professoriates, who therefore continue mimicking Western-inspired values. Cutting the metaphorical umbilical cord that has tied Africa to its colonisers since they arrived on the continent is by no means an easy feat: the research methodologies and teaching approaches of African university lecturers remain entrenched within Eurocentric theories and epistemologies.

Colonial legacies are still to be encountered in the education systems of administration and planning. The SADC region has not transformed itself over the years to ensure sustainable de-borderised social inclusion and development. It is more of a settler episteme meant to last forever, which is a situation that should not be allowed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

African scholars must outgrow colonially embedded psychological barriers that continue to influence the way in which professoriates teach, assess and quality assure at universities. Exiting the black box will allow them to offer advice to SADC political elites about how to decolonise QA audits in the SADC region for the benefit of students who want to obtain skills and competences from the universities of their choice.

African scholars must continue critiquing those entities who seek to divide and polarise African nation states by deconstructing the deeply entrenched edifice of Eurocentrism embedded in the disciplines created in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the Western world was hegemonic politically, economically, and intellectually. African scholars must continue to work with African political elite in conscientizing them to work towards harmonising quality assurance system in the region for the good of the African people irrespective of border barriers.

CONCLUSION

Professoriates are constrained by psychological barriers set up during the colonial education era. Africanisation was popular among African nationalists in the sense of retaining ownership and reclaiming colonial institutions in the 1960s and 1970s (Ki-Zerbo, 1973). The political commitment to localising not only universities but also other public institutions was high. At the same time, decolonisation was not immune to criticism as an Afrocentric project with the potential to end Africa's isolation from the rest of the world (Bankole, 2006). Fanon (1952) speaks of the fatal internalisation of colonialism by the colonised, how an inferiority complex is inculcated, and how, through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors (Fanon, 1952). Findings indicate that colonially psychologically captured professoriates from different universities located within SADC region operate within the educational and QA framework bequeathed by former colonial technocrats and administrators. Divergent views emanating from colonised minds on the inclusive communality of a Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) with reference to qualifications benchmarking, peer review mechanisms and qualitative improvements will hamper all efforts to de-borderise QA harmonisation projects. To successfully dismantle colonially embedded political and educational policy ecosystem, SADC must use the tried and tested African ant leadership theory to decolonise political, educational and administrative paradigms that continue impair university education QA reform. The biggest challenge lies in decolonising the captured mind before seriously engaging in regional QA reforms.

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Challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of curriculum changes for primary schools: The case of Mamabolo Circuit, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated challenges faced by ten primary school teachers in the implementation of Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) programme. The study was inspired by the apparent misinterpretation of teaching and learning programmes by teachers in the implementation of CAPS in schools. In consequence, the theory of assimilation and accommodation was used as a lens to understand how teachers cope with curriculum challenges emanating from the new programme at five primary schools. Furthermore, the interpretive paradigm, which was underpinned by the qualitative methodology, was applied because of its significance and relevance for providing researchers with thick data designed for scholarly research. In order to afford participants an opportunity to express their views on the topic, data were collected through interviews, which will engage them on their lived experiences. Interviews strengthen participants' ability to explore facts. Participants were selected on the basis of teaching experience. Findings suggest that although the implementation of the new curriculum seems to be a challenge, teachers acknowledge that curriculum change is imperative. Consequently, they realise that it is important to adapt in order to cope with the new demands espoused by the curriculum.

Key words: assimilation; accommodation; interpretive paradigm; CAPS; veracity; phenomenon and curriculum

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to improve curriculum delivery in South African public schools, the Department of Basic Education announced the introduction of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012. According to the Department, "CAPS is a single, comprehensive, and concise policy document, which has replaced the Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R – 12" (DBE, 2012: 9). NCS signifies a policy statement for teaching and learning in all public schools, leading to Policy Statements for all officially accepted school subjects, which define promotional requirements for all programmes as well as the national protocol for assessment.

In addition, the Department asserts that the central purpose of NCS (Grades R-12) is to nurture learners that would, among others, exhibit the following qualities:

- identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team;
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

- communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
- use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (DBE, 2012d: 12).

The Department has also considered the need to implement inclusivity as an integral part of "organising, planning and teaching" in all schools. Essentially, for this to be realised, broad awareness and the ability to handle learning barriers become necessary for serving educators. It is important to understand that all support structures earmarked to address barriers have to work together for proper implementation of Inclusive Education (IE). These structures include School-Based Support Teams, District-Based Support Teams, parents as well as Special Schools serving as resource centres. It is also helpful to note that when dealing with learner barriers in a classroom, teachers take into consideration appropriate strategies as recommended in the Department of Education's (2001a) Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning. The preceding narrative forms the basis for challenges faced by teachers in their daily execution of duties.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM CHANGES

The dilemma facing teachers involves factors such as readiness for the implementation of the new repackaged curriculum statements. It should be noted that teachers were still grappling with NCS after the discontinuation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which lasted for a short space of time after its revision by the Ministerial Task Team. Failures of C2005 along with Outcomes Based Education are well documented (Jansen, 2007; 2001; 1999 & Christie, 2006). Consequently, more and more teachers got involved in paper work, administration, systematic reporting and attention to recording (Chisholm, 2003). Drawing from previous experiences suggests that curricular implementation is further complicated by teachers' poor comprehension of the new curriculum. As a result, teacher efficiency is at risk, and the ability to produce sound results is compromised. In the midst of all these dynamics, teacher moral and performance goes into a tailspin.

This paper focuses on challenges of curriculum changes confronting primary school teachers. Studies carried out on this subject involved, to a large extent, secondary school teachers. However, this study seeks to determine the impact of changes as they relate to primary (school) teachers. My view is that literature on coping strategies in the implementation of the curriculum at primary school is inadequate because a lot examines secondary education. For example, Wright (2012) argues that infrastructure in education in the rural schools of South Africa is reminiscent of total neglect. His study focused more on infrastructure and resources than challenges faced by primary school teachers. Similarly, studies by Bersin (2011) and Aguardo (2013) focused on problems faced by teachers in the implementation of C2005 and the consequent abandonment of same in 2002. Jansen (2007) reflected on numerous grounds on the impending failure of C2005 and OBE in schools. Peebles and Mendaglio (2014) pointed out weaknesses of some programmes in curriculum structure and persistent unresponsiveness on the part of authorities to address these weaknesses. It is against this background that this paper addresses challenges of

curriculum change confronting primary teachers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following aspects form part of the objectives of the study:

- What alternative support could be made available for teachers to mitigate against existing challenges of the CAPS programme?
- To what extent do teachers need support?
- How best can teachers be supported to achieve expected results of teaching and learning within the CAPS purview?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by the theory of assimilation and accommodation as espoused by the French psychologist, Piaget. According to Lumadi (2013), whereas assimilation refers to using an existing schema (knowledge) to deal with a new object or situation, accommodation occurs when an existing schema does not work, and therefore needs to be changed to deal with a new object or situation. Construed in the current context, teachers whose training experiences were foregrounded in the past, and who may find it hard to cope with current curriculum developments are duty bound to assimilate the new schema in order to survive the new educational dispensation underpinned by curriculum transformation and change. In essence, curriculum changes bring with them new principles, approaches and methods. Similarly, teachers are expected to accommodate these changes in order to implement them efficiently.

METHODOLOGY

Informed by the need to understand the research problem from the perspectives of (affected) participants, the qualitative research methodology was used. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally explicit information about values, behaviour and social contexts of specific population (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell, 2014; de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). The selection of the interpretive design in this paper was informed by the need to engage participants as well as the desire to accord them a platform to express themselves in their own words. The opportunity to give participants platform to express themselves forms one of the basic tenets of the interpretive design (Creswell, 2014). In the process of attempting to realise the objectives of this study, interviews through purposive sampling were conducted. According to Bornman and Rose (2010), the use of purposive sampling to conduct interviews stretches from long established traditions of social science research. Each sample is selected for a purpose because of its uniqueness, which may suggest studying the entire population or a subset thereof.

In the current study, a subset of population of primary school teachers in Mamabolo Circuit was sampled. Part of the sampling procedure involved participants' age and experience. The latter was considered important because the study required experienced teachers who would have had a berth on both the old and the new dispensations. In the present context, seven female teachers and three male teachers from five primary schools in Mamabolo Circuit participated in the study. Based on the criteria mentioned above (experience and age), two teachers were selected from each of the chosen schools. Consideration was given to these factors because of the need to understand participants' views about their experiences of teaching during the pre- and post-1997 eras. Six of the participants were born in the late 1960s and four in the early 1970s. The majority of them joined the teaching profession in the mid- and late 1980s. They all confirmed their participation in the old and the new

dispensations, and therefore, were eligible to share their teaching experiences. They were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Although the majority appeared to be mature teachers, their gender and subjects offered were not considered for the purposes of the study. As pointed out earlier, the purpose was to examine challenges confronting teachers in the new system of teaching and learning.

RESULTS

As mentioned in the preceding section, data were collected using semi-structured interviews. It should be noted that for study purposes, rather than real names, names and codes used in the study are fictitious to preserve the confidentiality of both schools and participants. The following table shows the number of schools and participants in the study:

Table A: **The number of schools and participants including experience of participants**

SCHOOL	*PARTICIPANT*	*EXPERIENCE IN YEARS OF SERVICE*	*PHASE*	*STATUS*
Spegs Primary	James & Mary	19 & 21	Senior Phase	Senior Teachers
Schol Primary	Tom & Trob	17 & 18	Intermediate Phase	Senior Teachers
Part Primary	Jenny & Josh	16 & 16	Intermediate Phase	Senior Teachers
Expar Primary	Peter & Joe	24 & 18	Senior Phase	Senior Teachers
Grads Primary	Kim & Rob	25 & 21	Senior Phase	Senior Teachers

Table A (above) represents the number of schools, participants as well as personal data about participants' teaching experiences. The table also indicates the phase that participants were responsible for in the past fifteen years before 2017, as well as their current status. Once again, the reader is reminded that all names used in this table are pseudonyms. James and Mary command 19 and 21 years of teaching experience respectively, and both are responsible for senior phase classes (i.e. from grades 6, 7 & 8) in terms of the South African schooling system. The same can be said about Peter and Joe from Expar Primary School as well as Kim and Rob from Grads Primary School. However, Kim and Rob's teaching experiences spans more than two decades, as does Peter's. I need to point out that these teachers have all been elevated to the status of senior teachers, and in terms of the Department of Basic Education's grading system, the position of a senior teacher can be equated to that of the head of department at a school level. Like Jenny and Josh, Tom and Trob are responsible for classes in the intermediate phase. This implies that they are responsible for grades 3, 4 and 5. All these teachers, it has to be pointed out, have taught in different grades at different times in their careers, and have amassed experience over time, i.e. moving from one primary school to another during the years that they spent in the profession. None of them has been at the current work station throughout their careers, but have worked at these stations for more than seven years in recent times (as at 2017 school year).

On the question: "have you all been trained in the new NCS/CAPS curriculum?", James and Mary replied in the affirmative. They

went on to indicate that Limpopo Department of Education (LDE) provides continuous training to teachers on the new curriculum. "How often do you receive training?" Mary: "On average I would say we attend workshops twice a year. Remember, the workshops are organised by the Department and are carried out by curriculum specialists". I went on to ask: "Do you feel that the workshops are helpful in preparing you for curriculum implementation?" James expressed mixed feelings and indicated that some of these specialists leave much to be desired. Both James and Mary agreed that the training workshops are important but more needs to be done. "What exactly do you mean by 'more needs to be done?'", I asked. "By that we mean sometimes you come from the workshop and you are not very clear about some of the explanations given. We are also expected to cascade the training to our colleagues at our workstations. You cannot train someone on something about which you yourself (sic) do not understand." Does this suggest that your trainers do not understand CAPS? I asked. Peter interrupted by stating that "Certainly, some of these specialists do not seem to understand CAPS and I hold the same view as James that some specialists need more training to up their game." Peter further pointed out that teachers, at times, get frustrated from these workshops. Joe further hinted that one cannot be expected to understand and carry out a successful curriculum process after a two-day training workshop - "it is insufficient"- he concluded.

Let's get back to the issue of implementation in class: what could be challenges confronting you in handling the subjects that you teach?" James retorted: "My problem is mainly about paper work. Having to deal with paper as it relates to reports, portfolio records as well as lesson preparations, etc." Isn't what you have to do as teachers, isn't the same with everybody? I asked. "Yes, that's correct that has to be done by all of us but my view is, the Department does not 'feel for us', they demand this and that within a short space of time and this, at times, compromises quality of curriculum delivery." The views of the two teachers relate more to the challenge of paper work than curriculum delivery.

The same questions were put to Tom, Trob, Jenny and Josh from Schol and Part Primary Schools. The reader is reminded that the quartet is responsible for teaching classes in the inter-mediate phase in their schools. Their opinions were slightly different from those of Mary and James, as captured in the preceding paragraph. They raised the issue of jam-packed classrooms as some of their major concerns. Jenny: "I am worried that the issue of overcrowding has become a norm in our classrooms and the government appears to condone that". What do you mean by that, Jenny? "By that I mean teachers are overburdened with work and we are expected to meet submission deadlines without delay in a situation like this. Where is quality? How can you be expected to produce quality in this kind of environment?" protested Jenny. You really sound aggrieved, I said. "Sir, you see, it is like the case of somebody promising you a fish and in turn giving a snake", Tom added. "Since the dawn of the new dispensation, Ministers after Ministers came up with acceptable teacher-learner ratio of 1:35. In most schools, I believe, this is just a complete ruse, it is non-existent", remarked Tom in support of Jenny. Kim and Rob touched on poor teaching facilities and lack of home-school bond to enable an appropriate teaching-learning environment. All participants expressed displeasure of issues such as insufficient training by (curriculum) specialists, the ineffectiveness of trainers, as well as insufficient training time. In the ensuing section, I will discuss these issues as raised by participants.

DISCUSSION

The preceding section looked at participants' responses in which they raised important issues that warrant special attention. ***Table B*** below presents themes identified during interviews with participants. Each of the themes will come under the spotlight later.

Table B: Depicting themes emerging from participants' responses in the current study

THEMES	PARTICIPANT(S)
Insufficient training time on CAPS Implementation	James & Peter
Training abilities of (curriculum) specialists	Peter
Precarious training by specialists	Mary & James
Exaggerated paper-work for teachers	Tom, Trob, Jenny & Josh
Continuous submissions within shorter space of time.	Tom, Trob, Jenny & Josh
Overcrowded classrooms	Tom, Trob, Jenny &Josh
Quality of teaching	Jenny
Poor teaching facilities/resources	Kim & Rob
Poor home and school connection	Kim & Rob

Table B above summarises participants' views and their feelings about the CAPS programme. The table further outlines challenges that participants come across in the implementation of the curriculum in the five selected schools. In the present paper, I have adopted Piaget's theory of assimilation and accommodation as the underpinning framework of the study. I indicated earlier in the section on ***Theory*** that assimilation refers to using existing schema to deal with a new object or situation. Relating this to the current setting, one is convinced that the study participants command enormous wealth of experience in respect of the erstwhile education dispensation, and a reasonable amount of experience regarding the new dispensation. Therefore, it is possible that their schemas can be deployed to successfully confront curriculum implementation in the new dispensation. However, their responses point to a unanimous, negative view of the CAPS programme.

Similarly, accommodation as spelt out above occurs when the existing schema does not work, and therefore needs to be changed to deal with a new object or situation. It is expected that when one commands a wealth of knowledge, as displayed by participants, spontaneity and resourcefulness could be relied on to address challenges that confront them about implementation, particularly because the teaching profession remains their realistic territory of expertise. Needless to say that the state, through its curriculum advisory teams, provides basic training in the curriculum implementation process. Whereas one may accept that curriculum implementation is a complex process, one also assumes that guidelines need to be interrogated and understood at a baseline level for propitious articulation in schools and, indeed, in the classrooms as well. While it may not be easy to apply a one-size-fits-all approach in the complexity of curriculum implementation, the new dispensation provides an auspicious platform to engage teachers in curriculum implementation. Creswell (2014), along with De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Deport (2005), maintain that understanding curriculum complexity constitutes the threshold of human endeavour in

ascertaining the dynamics of the curriculum act.

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari (2010) point to rhizomatic thinking. In terms of this view, thinking is a complex process that is like rhizomes or assemblages stretching from one level to another, guided by curriculum philosophy at play. Ordinarily, the rhizomorphic reality constitutes differentiated layers that could be viewed as conjoined thinking patterns characterised by banality and complexity. To comprehend this assertion, challenges faced by teachers at primary school level may best be understood through processes of assimilation and accommodation. These processes are further elaborated below.

As pointed out earlier, the underpinning theoretical framework of this paper relates to the concepts of assimilation and accommodation espoused by the French psychologist, Piaget. According to McLeod (2015), whereas assimilation refers to using an existing schema (knowledge) to deal with a new object or situation, accommodation occurs when the existing schema does not work, and therefore needs to be changed to deal with a new object or situation. Construed in context, teachers whose training experiences are foregrounded in the past and who may find it hard to cope with current curriculum developments are duty-bound to assimilate new schemas in order to survive the new educational dispensation, which is underpinned by curriculum transformation and change. In essence, curriculum changes bring with them new principles, approaches and methods. Similarly, teachers are expected to accommodate these changes in order to propitiously implement them as the new curriculum unfolds. It is therefore important for all teachers to accept that change cannot be postponed due to reluctance to transform. It is hoped that teachers in the affected schools would eventually accept and live with the reality that CAPS is here to stay, and the sooner they embrace it, the better for the schools. Such a process occurs in keeping with the philosophy espoused by Deleuze and Guattari (2010), and by Piaget's assimilation and accommodation theory.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated that the struggle for perfection is enormous and is far from being won for schools to become efficient in the delivery of curriculum. What is distressing is the fact that the blame game continues unabated. This is notwithstanding the need for young people to prosper. The authors raised questions about challenges that confront the teachers under the spotlight, but many of them cite numerous factors that have nothing to do with teaching and learning but administration of schools. It is inconceivable that learners, who are depended on teachers, often suffer because teachers and the Department of Basic Education cannot get their act together. The current study has revealed that polemical forces prevail in the environment of learning when least expected. Ordinarily, the training of teachers is part of the policy directive of the Department of Basic Education towards the advancement of teaching skills of its workforce. However, it inexplicable that well qualified teachers would consistently complain about lack of training and poorly trained specialists, when in fact, they can read and, to a greater extent, improve their efficiency for curriculum delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings above, the following are recommended as part of efforts to make our schools functional:

- That all curriculum specialists should be trained sufficiently as competent trainers;

- That the Department of Basic Education should use some of the former colleges of education in the provinces to improve teacher in-service capacity;
- That existing in-service programmes be reviewed, renewed and reinvented to breathe new life into teacher professional development;
- That the state should prioritise in-service programmes and invest heavily in the institutions to create a cohort of expertise that will engender superior appetite for school transformation; and
- That collaboration amongst continental teacher sectors be strongly encouraged to consolidate relationships and foci towards the reinvigoration of professional teacher discipline.

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Discourses that transient into broken bridges for student teachers on teaching practice: A case of primary and secondary schools in Masvingo Province

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ABSTRACT

Building bridges for student teachers is the fountain and link-pin to moulding effective teachers in any system of education. This study seeks to highlight challenges faced by student teachers in primary and secondary schools in Masvingo Province. The study adopted a post-positivist approach rooted in the interpretive philosophy and employed the qualitative research methodology. The population for the study were 250 student teachers who had gathered at a teaching practice workshop at Masvingo Regional Campus. Convenience sampling technique was employed to select information rich participants who were asked to write down narratives on challenges they faced during teaching practice. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were employed as data generation tools as well. The major findings of the study were that student teachers had several challenges rooted in mentoring, pedagogical, time constraints, implementing updated curriculum with the new learning areas, disciplinary issues, lack of textbooks, overloaded lasses and teaching periods, supervisor related issues, among others. The study concludes that student teachers find it a rocky road to effectively practice in the absence of a supportive environment. The study recommends that schools should attach student teachers to competent and qualified mentors. Universities and schools should work hand in glove and come up with several seminars and workshops for student teachers so that their practice is made rich.

Key terms: teaching practice; student teachers; discourses; broken bridges

INTRODUCTION

> ***"I cannot teach with clarity unless I recognise my ignorance, unless I find out what I do not know, what I have learnt" (Freire, 1996, p. 2).***

Teaching practice is a critical and compulsory course in the teacher education programme (Aglazor, 2017; Mokoena, 2017) not only in Zimbabwe but the world over and its relevance is 'germane' (Olugbenga, 2013, p. 236). Teaching practice is the make or break phase for student teachers (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009) and is a central issue on the training of would be teachers. The professionalisation of the teacher has become the central motif in the public domain in Zimbabwe. There is a general outcry of poor performance by learners due to lack of qualified teachers and the presence of under qualified teachers in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This article argues that the discourse and philosophy of teacher professionalisation and exposure to the practice of teaching brings quality in teacher training programmes. Clearing student teachers' concerns and challenges become the roadmap and highway to building their bridges to become effective professionals (Mokoena, 2017).

Teaching practice is an exercise that is carried out by most schools of education in

the rest of the world (Leke-atech, Assan & Debeila, 2013) and is considered as the most challenging experience for student teachers in the teacher education programme (Aglazor, 2017; Broadbent, 1998). Teaching practice is the **"passage"** (St Augustine as cited in Quasten and Plumpe, 1962, p. 145) through which all those who want to be teachers must be funneled through to be effective. Effective teaching requires the teacher to possess a wide knowledge base of teaching (Shulman, 1987). Teaching practice thus brings **"mansions of the heritage"** (R. S. Peters, 1967, p. 92) in which the teachers should strive to live. In Zimbabwe, quite a significant proportion of both primary and secondary school teachers did not receive any preparation for their teaching role. The content they got during their graduate studies was aimed almost solely at promoting their knowledge frontiers of the subject matter rather than their teaching (Hativa, 1997).

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe has gone into a rampage to capacitate its teachers through teacher development programmes. Universities have been given the mandate to develop the teachers in primary and secondary schools who have not received teaching qualifications. Secondary school teachers who hold degrees but lack teaching qualifications were sponsored by the UNICEF through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. These school teachers are offered a programme which takes three semesters called Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PDGE). Primary school teachers who teach Early Childhood Development are also exposed to a degree called Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development (BECD). The Zimbabwe Open University is among such universities who were given the mandate for teacher capacity development. In these programmes, teaching practice is a major component which is done over one or two semesters depending on the programme. Student teachers have to undergo a period where they are attached to schools so that they put into practice theoretical foundations which they learnt. Faculties of teacher development have to be on the watch out so that they clear roadblocks for student teachers to practice effectively. The Zimbabwe Open University conducts workshops with student teachers on teaching practice after the first supervision exercise. The workshops aim at highlighting areas of strengths and areas of weaknesses so that they are ironed out.

Teaching practice is a professional training that involves the student in trying to teach pupils in school. For a student to graduate as a qualified professional, one has to undergo the practice of teaching in some school. Several fundamental areas are covered with theory being married with practice while students are on teaching practice. Universities have to fulfill their teaching function by equipping students going on teaching practice with the requisite skills that make them competent in the field. It is argued that:

> A more fundamental issue is the extent to which the responsibility for the development of new university teachers has been gradually removed from the traditional academic disciplinary communities of practice and placed in the hands of education specialists, and whether this has undermined the ownership and commitment academic departments should have for the development of the teaching function within the context of disciplinary

> cultures and practices (Mathias, 2005, p. 97).

Initiatives about teaching practice competencies and designs are grounded in the hands of specialist academics who direct how teaching practice is best prepared for by students. There is need for intellectual positioning of student teachers to heighten their teaching effectiveness when they go out for teaching practice. Intellectual positioning of an educational development initiative refers to the intended learning, an emphasis on acquiring either particular content or the tools of on-going professional development (Webster-Wright, 2009). Student teachers have to be placed on the correct pathway to achieving intended goals. Like shepherds who take their flock to greener pastures, student teachers need lecturers to show them the highway and remove stumps that might hinder their smooth performance of their jobs in schools. In line with this thinking, Webster-Wright (2009) concluded that learning at work is different from learning through attending a professional development workshop. Workshops are more practical and experiential and provide the real work experiences that student teachers meet when they are in schools. Student teachers are exposed to changes in pedagogy and practice. McAlpine, Amundsen, Clement, and Light (2009, p. 272) suggested that:

> Changes in teaching practice (theories in use) may lead to changes in thinking about teaching and learning (espoused theories) or changes in thinking about teaching and learning (espoused theories) may lead to changes in teaching practice (theories in use).

Student teachers need to be conversant with changes in the school system so that they do not become misfits in curriculum implementation practices. Workshops and seminars thus become the answer to the conceptualisation of such changes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are many children in school but they seem to be learning very little or nothing. Some school leaders shun student teachers from certain colleges of education advancing the argument that they are not adequately prepared. One of the many criticisms levelled against student teachers in contemporary education is lack of adequate preparation in the practice of teaching. The need for student teachers to become more knowledgeable, competent and skilful in connecting the subject matter to their learners is increasing. Thus the complex and dynamic nature of education today requires teachers to be real teachers who have been baptised in the pool of effective teaching practice sessions. There is need therefore, to look closely with adequate depth and breadth challenges that militate against effective teaching practice by student teachers in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the school related teaching practice challenges?
2. What are the supervisors related teaching practice challenges?
3. Which mentoring challenges are encountered during teaching practice?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Teaching practice has its origins in the ideas of craft apprenticeship (Stones, 1984). As education for the mass of the population in industrialising countries began to develop in the nineteenth century, the demand for teachers grew. Existing school teachers catered for the demand by recruiting apprentices from among their pupils as pupil

teachers. The pupil teachers were treated like other apprentices and initiated by a process of instruction, demonstration and imitation. The master teacher told the students what to do, show them how to do it, and students imitated the master (Stones, 1984). There has been a shift from considering teaching practice as apprenticeship to the concept of field experience in a school (Menter, 1989). Teaching practice is the opportune time when student teachers get field experience in the practice of teaching. During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Msangya, Mkoma & Yihuan, 2016, p. 113). Teaching practice provides the teaching experience that student teachers need to develop important professional knowledge which is fundamental in their professional lives (Chimhenga, 2017).

Theoretical Frameworks: Reflective Teaching Practice theory

This study was undergirded by the reflective teaching practice theory. John Dewey's ideas of reflective thinking became the precursor to the development of the theory of reflective teaching practice. In his conception of the term reflective practice, Dewey points out that individuals move from one experience to another with a deeper understanding of their relationship with a previous one (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). Schon (1983) conceptualise the reflective practitioner as one who is systematically self-assessing as he/she constantly gets feedback from the external assessment process and is most times preoccupied with early identification of problems and proffering of solutions to them.

Reflective teaching practice entails an ongoing examination of beliefs, and practices, their origins and their impacts on the teacher, the pupils and the learning process. A major focus of reflective teaching practice is personal growth. The reflective process involves continuous self observation and evaluation of the trainee to understand individual actions and the reactions of learners. The process was conceptualised by Comb (1984) cited in Ogonor & Badmus, (2006) as an action research model whereby people learn and create knowledge by critically reflecting upon their own action and experiences, forming abstract concepts and testing the implications of these concepts in new situations. Reflective teaching practice process consists of the collection of detailed information on the events that happen in the classroom as perceived by the student teacher, as well as observations in working with people, establishing classroom climate and managing instruction, planning of instruction, command of subject, personal and professional qualities (Ogonor & Badmus, 2006). For student teachers to see that there are challenges militating against their effective practice, they need to engage in reflective practice, which is the essence of this study.

LITERATURE

Teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher and is a make or break phase for student teachers (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). It grants student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003, p. 18; Marais & Meier, 2004, p. 220; Perry, 2004, p. 2). During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Kasanda, 1995). It is in teaching practice that student teachers are baptised with the experience to gain knowledge of how teachers go about the many and complex tasks involved in actual classroom practice (McGee and Fraser, 2001; Bechuke, Ateh, Assan & Debeila, 2013).

Student teachers know the value of teaching practice. Student teachers perceive teaching practice as 'the crux of their preparation for the teaching profession' since it provides for the 'real interface' between student-hood and membership of the profession (Menter, 1989, p. 461). As a result, teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence their teaching practice (Manion, Keith, Morrison & Cohen, 2003; Perry, 2004, p. 4).

Teaching practice is a kind of scholarship. Scholarship, for Weber, is regarded as an 'inner calling' in which the individual should demonstrate 'an inner devotion to the subject and only to the subject [raising] him to the height and dignity of the subject which he claims to serve' (Weber, 1989, p. 12). It is important to note that teaching practice is a calling, a vocation. This vocation is characterised by passion, inspiration (Weber, 1989, p. 9), and a willingness to 'overtake' (Weber, 1989, p. 12) in serving the common goal of scholarship.

Levinson-Rose & Menges (1981, p. 416) carried out a study based on instructional improvement programmes in higher education and found out that the initiative of workshops, seminars and one-to-one consultations were the most common instructional development intervention strategies. Consistent with the above findings are Steinert et al. (2006, p. 509) who do provide evidence that workshops and seminars lay the foundation of effective teaching and provide preliminary grounding for quality practices in teacher preparation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was rooted in the post-positivist philosophy and employed the interpretivist paradigm whose central endeavour is to understand the subjective world of human experience as well as investigating interaction among individuals (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). This study employed qualitative metholodology. Qualitative research places emphasis on understanding through looking closely at people's words, actions and records (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 16). The researcher employed the qualitative methodology because using the subjects' words better reflects the postulates of the qualitative methodology. The qualitative research looks to understanding a situation as it is constructed by the participants. The qualitative research attempts to capture what people say and do (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

Convenience sampling was used. In educational settings, an accessible group may be used, what researchers call "convenience sampling" (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993; Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993; Gall *et al*., 1996). Convenience sampling is often used in educational research because of its practical benefits, as it is seldom feasible to get access to the theoretically ideal sample, so researchers "*often need to select a convenience sample or face the possibility that they will be unable to do the study*" (Gall *et al*., 1996, p. 228). Convenience sampling can involve, for example, an available class of students or a group of people gathered for a meeting (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993). The students who were conveniently sampled included students from Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development (BECD), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Bachelor of Education Secondary (BEDS). When student teachers had been visited once by supervisors, the department of teacher development in Masvingo regional campus invited them for a workshop where they would share with the student teachers observations made during their first visit. The researcher, who was part of the supervision team and workshop presenter, asked the

students to write down narratives on challenges they faced during teaching practice that affected their performance. Semi structured interviews were employed as data generation tools as well. Three focus groups were held for triangulation of data. Each programme had a focus group. The participants who were involved in focus groups were not selected for interviews. Triangulation is a strategy for improving the validity of qualitative research and it provides a rich and complex picture of some social phenomenon being studied (Mathison, 1988). Denzin (1978) suggests using multiple methods for triangulation which was the case in this study. The emerging themes were then categorised with relevant voices given. The BECD group was regarded as FGD 1, PGDE group was FDG 2 with the BEDS group regarded as FDG 3. P in this study represents participant and these were the interviewed participants. N stands for a participant who gave a narrative when they were asked to write their stories on paper.

FINDINGS

Overloaded periods and classes

The issue of too many teaching periods was pointed out as a broken bridge for effective teaching. One of the participants gave a narrative and had this to say:

> NI: I had 36 periods on my school load per week and coming up with detailed lesson plans for these periods each week was not a joke. I would end up dodging and omitting to plan some of the lessons due to the overload. You know this overload affected my preparation of media to use during the teaching process.

Student teachers are pointing to the issue of having too many periods to plan for every day and every week. While planning is the main activity that a student teacher has to meet, some end up failing to plan. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Overloaded periods destroy the energy levels of the teacher and have an impact on the breath and the depth of the curriculum implementation and on teacher effectiveness. Organizational learning is affected by such practices (Mulford & Silins, 2010).

Large class sizes

Large class sizes were found to be a broken bridge for effective practice during teaching and learning. A participant in FDG 2 said the following:

> I was given a class of 92 ECD learners yet the recommended class size stipulated by the policy is 1 teacher to 20. So you can see that I am teaching more than four classes. You know I really get exhausted and at the end of the day I cannot do anything. If I continue in that scenario then my teaching practice is totally affected.

Interaction between the teacher and the learner is fundamental during the teaching and learning process. A student teacher who has little opportunity to interact with all the learners gets a false picture of their performance. Large class sizes become a hindrance to effective classroom practice because it provides less practice to the student teacher. The challenge of overcrowded classrooms renders student teachers ineffective (Marais, 2016). Khalid (2019) argues that in overcrowded classrooms, it becomes difficult for the teacher to evaluate all the students at the same time. Where “personalized education” (Waldeck, 2006, p. 345) lacks, class size does

affect teaching styles (Westerlund, 2008). The normal trend in classroom pedagogy is that after explaining and demonstrating a skill, for example, a sewing skill in Home economics subject, each pupil is then given a chance to demonstrate to others. If the class is too big, the pupils would not have the chance to show to others their level of skill grasp and understanding (Farrant, 1985, p. 143).

Time constraints

Students who participated in semi-structured interviews said the following:

> P4: I did not have enough time to perfect all my records neither did l have enough time to attend to individual learners in the various learning areas that I taught.
>
> P2: There were a lot of unexpected interruptions that even frustrated me
>
> P3: There is a lot of meaningful supervision of learners that is required but l had challenges in meeting such higher order needs

The purpose of teaching practice is to give the student teacher under guidance, the opportunity to develop and assess his or her competencies and attitudes in the major areas of school activity (Kasambira, 1995, p. 132). This can only happen if there is ample time for student teachers to practice what they are supposed to and lack of it becomes a broken bridge. Teaching practice has a lot of challenges that create a negative impact on the time management of the programme and on the academic knowledge of the learners (Msangya, Mkoma & Yihuan, 2016).

Curriculum changes

The issue of curriculum change brought in challenges in terms of content for various learning areas. What most teachers specialised in at university slightly changed and they were left in a vacuum state. This is expressed by one of the interviewees who said:

> P2: The school curriculum has changed and the content has changed too. It is very difficult to catch up with new ways of scheming and planning

The practice of clearing the rocky road for student teachers through capacity building and systems of accountability are being pointed out as critical for effective curriculum implementation. Effective schools are characterised by advance empowerment (Mulford & Silins, 2011) of student teachers.

In the same vein one of the participants from FDG 1 had the following to say:

> FDG 1: We lack thorough training through workshops of the strategies to attack the new curriculum. You know the have brought in many new learning areas we are not versatile in. We also need to be taught how best to teach the new learning areas otherwise we waste learners' time.

It is argued that student teachers from the higher education landscape are not adequately prepared for their teaching role, have unsophisticated conceptions of teaching and learning, and have little knowledge of effective teaching practices, both in general and in their own specific discipline unless they have received workshops on the actual practices (Evers & Hall, 2009). To that end,

departments of teacher development in universities have to pursue a number of ways to develop teaching practice. Higher education institutions have to come up with a philosophy that underlies effective principles and guidelines in a bid to capacitate students going out on teaching practice. The thinking here is that student teachers need to acquire skills, techniques and methods, in a meaningful way and these must be understood through the lens of the specialist lecturer who is in the teacher development discipline of that institution.

Local and university-based supervisor-related problems

The issue of supervisors tormenting student teachers was raised by participants during interviews. They said the following:

> P3: Some supervisors took teaching practice as a fault finding exercise and looked at weaknesses only. The marks that were awarded did not tally with the effort that we put. The comments given were quite unrealistic.
>
> P2: The session groomed and upgraded my professional and intellectual growth. Before this, I admit that I was cheating innocent souls.
>
> P5: After overwhelming student participation during the lesson, the supervisor would tell you that this is a repeat lesson. You would wonder what the supervisor expected me to do.

Supervision is not a fault-finding mission and student teachers were astonished to realise that both school based and university-based supervisors were at war with them. Sergiovanni and Starrat (2002) suggest that the exchange between supervisor and the novice teacher must be trusting, open and flexible to allow both to speak from their own sense of integrity and that a human relations supervisor should adopt shared decision making practices to facilitate teacher satisfaction.

Communication challenges

The problem of poor communication is riding high from this group. Participants in the interview had this to say:

> P2: Communication between the school leadership and us as student teachers is rather too instructive. I think they forget that we are also human beings who need to be told properly.
>
> P4: Our school leader never had time with me to shape me. You could see that they avoid talking to us as student teachers. We are four at our school and at least it was good if they call us in the office and help us where we are lacking rather than shouting at us even in front of other teachers. That is a hard time for me because I feel that the self in me has been destroyed.

Student teachers are pointing to lack of effective communication in their schools and this becomes a broken bridge for them to practice teaching effectively. Communication is the lifeblood of a school and is a vital enabler of effective and productive human interactions (Albalawi & Nadeem, 2020) and if done poorly, then the nerve system of the school is destroyed. Drake and Roe (2003) argue that school principals and teachers should exchange ideas, brainstorm, trade experiences, discuss alternatives and generate data about areas of

interest. Improved communication platforms are critical for student teachers to gain professional knowledge from such discourses. This is critical for continuous development of the student teacher.

Mentoring challenges

Mentoring is a skill that a mentor has to acquire. It is important that a mentor becomes a knowledgeable person who possesses the mechanics of the field. Failure to have such a site guide results in broken bridges for student teachers on teaching practice. Interviewees had these stories to tell:

> N1: Mentors are a big challenge in the secondary schools. My mentor was not qualified and had a non-teaching degree. I wondered how this person could be my mentor yet I am already in the process of becoming a teacher. Accepting the assistance from my mentor in that kind of scenario was a very big challenge for me.
>
> N2: The mentor's comments on effective teaching were not clear. I could not find the head and tail about it.
>
> N3: My mentor always told me that l am lazy, not time conscious and attributed all learners' failure to me, hey.

It is important for mentors to realise that they should educate, mentor, nurture and improve the transition of student teachers from initial teacher education to qualified status and beyond (Gordon, 2020). Mentors are guardians who should not lock the gates for student teachers to learn. Chapman and Burchfield (1994) observed that those individuals selected for leadership but lack formal training in instructional supervision may not command sufficient respect among teachers. In the same vein, it is argued that an instructional supervisor unfamiliar with proven supervisory techniques and strategies will perform poorly or will slide into 'supervision avoidance' (Kosmoski, 1997, p. 25).

Pedagogical challenges

Student teachers pointed to pedagogical challenges in the various platforms they were. They had this to say:

> N5: I was totally confused in the way I employed the various teaching methods. It was extremely difficult for me to make a mix of them in one lesson.
>
> FDG1: Teaching a large class makes one gets puzzled. The teaching methods advanced by progressive and constructivist educators which call for learner centred methods like experimentation, discovery, among others, require one to have a reasonably sized class. Even marking large piles of books at the end of the day discourages one from giving constructive feedback. One would just end up putting a tick or marking wrong things.

Student teachers face several challenges particularly lack of sufficient knowledge of learner-centred teaching (Du Plessis, 2020). Lack of sufficient knowledge of pedagogical and didactical principles is ranking high in this theme. Failure to employ a varied array of teaching methods is tantamount to failure in effective teaching and learning. It is important to have a knowledge base that is broad in terms of pedagogical methods as this is crucial for

clarity of instruction. The knowledge base for effective instruction consists of several categories which include, among others, general pedagogical knowledge, that is, know ledge of pedagogical principles and techniques that is not bound by topic or subject matter (Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987, p. 114).; and knowledge of self, i.e., teachers' knowledge of their personal values, dispositions, strengths and weaknesses, and their educational philosophy, goals for students, and purposes for teaching (Grossman, 1995; Wilson et al., 1987). Hativa (2000) argues that broken bridges for student teachers arise when they are lacking the proper pedagogical knowledge and when they do not know what makes effective instruction. Student teachers need guided reflection to develop their pedagogical practices for effective teaching (Kwenda, Adedorff & Mosito, 2017).

Staff attitudes towards the student teacher

Negative attitude towards student teachers is cause for concern. Student teachers thus point to lack of freedom to practice because of the negative atmosphere portrayed by other teachers. These are their stories:

> P1: Some qualified teachers really looked down on me and my interpretation of such looks were that they think l know nothing in this field. That really prickled me and got disappointed.

> P5: The attitudes of qualified teachers towards me reduced my motivation to teach. I was rather traumatised by their attitudes and behaviours that downgraded my status even in front of the learners in our class.

It is important to realise that the broken bridge in this case is a result of negative attitudes by qualified teachers towards student teachers. Such negative attitudes become broken bridges for student teachers to effectively learn to teach. Teaching practice is the culminating point and bedrock upon which the student teacher builds his/her professional identity (Aglazor, 2017) and displaying negative attitudes might build broken bridges for character moulding by student teachers.

Lack of adequate textbooks for use

Lack of textbooks is a worrisome issue for student teachers. In their focus groups they had the following to say:

> FDG1: Textbooks a key resource in the process of teaching and learning. Schools that we practice in lack adequate textbooks and this is a big challenge. No matter how resourceful you might be asked to be, textbooks are the fountain and pillar to transform knowledge among learners. The idea of making learners share textbooks is impractical. Our schools are in rural areas where learners stay in different villages. If you give them work to do then it becomes a non starter because they cannot meet due to distances. So the following day you ask them to make presentations and they will tell you that they had no access to textbooks.

The climate of accountability for schools goes beyond providing classrooms and chalk to include provision of adequate text books. World Bank (2011) argues that

books are effective in raising test scores. It further argues that where there are really no textbooks in schools, virtually no learning takes place. Allan, Clarke & Jopling (2009) argue that effective teaching requires the provision of supportive material, of which text books are a critical component.

Lack of teaching and learning materials

Lack of teaching and learning materials was regarded by student teachers as a broken bridge for them to practice effectively. This is what they said:

> P1: For lessons that l wanted to use ICT in delivery, l could not get that due to paucity of the facility in the school
>
> P2: We are now in the world of computers and it is a big challenge if they are not available in the school like in the case of school X where l was practising.
>
> P3: The problem of general lack of teaching and learning resources affected the quality of my teaching. Learners would crowd on the thinly provided resources.
>
> P4: Sometimes we would scramble for classrooms to use for teaching because they were not enough.
>
> P5: It is boring to teach a class without adequate resources. You end up cutting the lesson short.

Participants expressed that it is important for schools to provide teaching and learning materials. The issue of congesting learners on thin resources does not provide student teachers with the proper ways of engaging the learners. Chances to learn are minimised for learners who lack adequate reading material (Berlin & Cienkus, 1989). Learning is successful when teachers are empowered with resources for teaching and learning (Day, Stobart, Sammons, Kington & Gu, 2006).

Lack of discipline by some student teachers

Participants pointed to lack of discipline by some of the student teachers as a broken bridge to effective teaching. They had this to say:

> FDG2: Some student teachers lack self discipline and fail to plan for lessons. The school head and the mentor chase them on daily basis to make sure that they submit their lesson plans and other records. You know, it is not professional to stand in front of a class without a plan. Surprisingly enough, you find some student teachers without any plan at all.

In the teaching fraternity, planning is the fulcrum of effective teaching and learning. Without a plan, there is no teaching because you do not have objectives to achieve and even the methods to employ. Planning is an ingredient for effective teaching practice and increases proficiency in teaching (Cilliers, Fleisch, Prinsloo & Taylor, 2018). Discipline is thus quite critical by the student teacher to make all records available. It is argued that discipline constitutes half the education of the student, if that half is missing then the rest is useless (UNESCO, 2006).

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that student teachers who man overloaded classes and have overloaded periods become ineffective

during their teaching practice and end up failing to prepare for lessons thoroughly. Lack of discipline among some student teachers affects their performance in the process of teaching practice. The paucity of teaching and learning materials like textbooks negatively affects the practice period for the student teachers. Where student teachers do not get competent and qualified mentors, this becomes a broken bridge because they end up getting very little advice on the practice of teaching. Supervisors who observe student teachers are not motivating them enough. Student teachers lack adequate preparation in handling the new curriculum in terms of the learning areas that have been brought into the school curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above conclusions, the study recommends that student teachers should be engaged in several workshops to familiarise them with the new curriculum changes so that their practice of teaching is enhanced and also develop their pedagogical skills. Mentors should be exemplary to student teachers so that they improve the quality of their practice and also schools should attach the student teachers to qualified mentors. School leadership should provide adequate teaching and learning materials in order to improve self-efficacy among student teachers in their practice of teaching.

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COVID-19 AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS' MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING LOCKDOWN IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

During COVID-19 lockdown, teachers, education professionals and stakeholders (the management of private schools) were asked to supply students with teaching materials and teach students directly via remote digital tools. While public schools were catered for by the government, private schools were left in the midst of the myriad of the pandemic to decide their fate. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated private school management strategies during the COVID-19 lockdown. The study adopted the descriptive type of research design. Proprietors of private schools formed the population of the study. Two hundred respondents were randomly selected to form the sample for the study. Online questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. Face and content validity of the instruments were established by experts in the field of test and measurements while reliability test was carried out via pilot study where cronbach alpha of .93 was obtained. The findings of the study showed that a majority of the respondents agreed to use social media tools such as WhatsApp, Telegram for dissemination of knowledge as well as communication with teachers. The findings further revealed that the class attendance was taken to maintain the class population during the teaching learning process. However, it was discovered that a majority of the respondents agreed that they did not maintain relationship with school community during the lockdown, while no income was generated as all lessons were done free of charge. It was thus recommended that the private school management should organise workshops and seminars on online teaching tools (e.g. zoom, Google meet, webex) for their teachers and need to provide alternative financial means for them to cater for the future lockdown as a result the pandemic among others.

Keywords: Covid-19, Management Strategies, Private Schools, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The importance of ownership and property mechanisms of school has recently been a debate among researchers. At the centre of the debate is the fact that attending a private school is not a random event, but rather the consequence of a decision taken by students and families, conditioned by their financial wealth (Alabi 2018). Still, the requirement to pay tuitions in most private schools puts strong constraints on the access to those schools. For all these reasons, students who apply to private schools are self-selected into them and thus the student body of public and private schools tends to be varied (Rosado & Seabra, 2015).

Private schools are reliant on user fees to cover all or part of their operational and development costs. Thus, the distinctiveness of private schools is that they have to follow the market to attract and retain students in order to be financially viable. Private schools are founded, owned and/or managed independent of the state. On the other hand, 'private' schools may be partially funded and regulated by the state; even those that operate most independently of the state still interact with governments whether to achieve registration, get teaching materials, follow a national curriculum or examination system, or just to avoid scrutiny (Ashley, Mcloughlin, Aslam, Engel, Wales, Rawal, Batley, Kingdon, Nicolai & Rose, 2014; Mushtaq, 2014). The school managements of private schools, with some exceptions, are astutely conceived enterprises which aim at generating revenue enough to satiate the expectation of investors/managers. It is observed that there is a rapid expansion and changes that have been taking place in education in both public and private sectors, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Private school management needs to seek constantly to improve its ways and means of functioning and it should also provide its employees what they need to excel (Azhari, & Fajri, 2021; Esposito, Cotugno & Principi, 2021; Vanapalli, Sharma, Ranjan, Samal, Bhattacharya, Dubey & Goel, 2021).

Meanwhile, low-cost private schools have developed somehow spontaneously over the past 15 years in many developing countries worldwide: in Asia (India, Pakistan), Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya) and Latin America (Colombia, Chile). More recently, they have also emerged in Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (Nambissam, 2012; UNESCO, 2015). The business model of low-cost private schools is similar in all these countries: low fees but poor infrastructure; often multi-grade; and low-paid young teachers often recruited from the local community with minimum qualifications if any (Kremer & Muralidharan, 2008; Schirmer, Johnston & Bernstein, 2010; Ohba, 2013; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015). These schools typically survive from "hand to mouth" as they depend on the meagre fees they receive from poor parents mostly on daily, weekly or monthly basis. Many of these schools were already facing other challenges prior to this crisis (Sustainable Education and Enterprise Development, 2020).

The covid-19 pandemic poses an enormous risk to the health and safety of learners, teachers, parents, school administrators, education practitioners, and the wider community (Obiakor, & Adeniran, 2020). According to UNESCO, at the end of April 2020, educational institutions were shut down in 186 countries, affecting approximately 74% of total enrolled learners worldwide. In many countries, schools were closed at the beginning of March 2020, while in others (such as China and South Korea) in-person classes had been already cancelled

since January 2020. Several countries (e.g. Malta, Portugal, Ireland) announced that (parts of) the formal education system would not re-open that academic year, whereas in others (e.g. Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Poland) the formal education system was gradually re-opened in April/May to facilitate assessment and certification, depending on medical advice for de-confinement (Di Pietro, Biagi, Costa, Karpiński & Mazza, 2020). On the 19th of March 2020, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria approved school closures as a response to the pandemic. States in the federation contextualised this, with some State Ministry of Education releasing a schedule of radio and TV lessons for students in public schools. On the other hand, COVID-19 has indicated a critical gap in school-based (learning) unforeseen event planning and emergency preparedness within the education sector in Nigeria. Learning-based contingency preparedness is essential to ensure learning continuation during the time of crisis, to protect students and educators, and to build resilience within the educational sector (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020).

According to UNESCO, about 35.9 million primary and secondary school learners were out of school as a result of the school closures. For primary schools, this number approximately gave a total of 25.6 million pupils; about 87 percent (23.5 million) among them were public school pupils. The number was just as stark for secondary school learners. Of the roughly 10.3 million secondary school students who were out of school as a result of the closures, approximately 81 percent (8.4 million) of them were public school students while 19% were private school students (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020). During the time, teachers and education professionals/ stakeholders (private school management inclusive) were asked to supply students with teaching materials and teach students directly via remote digital tools. The expectation was that most students learned from home under the supervision of their parents. This practice is referred to as "home-schooling" in the media. In reality, the arrangement comes closer to remote learning or distance learning in that teachers and schools still remain responsible for the learning content and outcome (Scully, Lehane & Scully, 2021; Trade Union Advisory Committee, 2020). It was against this backdrop that this paper investigated strategies employed by private school management in Nigeria during Covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies such as Mei Ling Yeo (2014) indicated that study focused on the experiences of the youth and the educators with the tapping of social media such as YouTube videos and the social networking application of Facebook for teaching and learning. The results of the data indicated students' preference for using YouTube videos and Facebook to make friends, network with friends and be able to learn further at their own time and at their preferred place. They like to learn informally via the YouTube videos and Facebook postings with the information and knowledge that extend beyond the boundaries of the textbook and the classroom. The data also indicated that the youth the students and the lecturers were positive about using Facebook as a "social" platform to build a good relationship with one another, outside the school. Also, Usen (2017) discovered that there was a significant relationship between head teachers' communication skills and teachers' task performance in public primary schools.

Moreover, Alabi (2018) revealed there was a significant relationship between

principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities in secondary schools. Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo's (2015) study revealed that effective communication brought about the effective and efficient supervision and management performance of employees in the university. Jacobson (2014) submitted that increasing the degree of attendance would be a way to improve the quality of the education for our students. Tetteh (2018) investigated the relationship between the student's class attendance and learning strategies. The results showed that class attendance, mid-semester examinations and study time had a significant positive influence on the learning outcome. The result of Lukkarinena, Koivukangasa and Seppälä's (2016) study on the relationship between university students' class attendance and learning performance indicated that attendance was positively and significantly related to performance, after controlling for the effect of other variables potentially related to performance.

Furthermore, the school also assists the community in sharing good information with the public. A lot of messages reach the community through the schools, particularly in our villages. Mitrofanova (2011) and Bakwai (2013) were of the view that school passes vital information to the community and it is normally done through news release and newsletters. This sharing of information creates a better school-community relationship which ultimately improves teaching and learning and general development of education, particularly primary one. Mahuta (2007) and Sa'ad and Sadiq (2014) concluded that the school-community relationship has long been recognised as a strong tie for the smooth running of the school in the community. He identified the role of the school as a community centre. It is also mentioned that School principals should have some information about the composition of the community and the community opinion regarding both broad educational issues and day-to-day operation of the school itself. Also, Bakwai (2013) concluded that school administrators should acquaint themselves with educational resources available in the community in order that they can be utilised to enrich and enhance the school programmes. The study of Farsalinos, Poulas, Kouretas, Vantarakis, Leotsinidis, Kouvelas and Tsatsakis (2021) outlined strategies that can be used to improve school effectiveness during lockdown. They include, constant use of technology for teaching and learning and use of social media for communication with the parents of children.

Furthermore, this study is anchored on Geoffrey P. Chamberlain's theory of strategy, which was first published in 2010. The strategy theory is based on the combination of four factors, which include what strategy is, the forces that shape strategy, the processes that form strategy, and the mechanisms by which strategy can take effect. The first factor, which is what strategy is, is based on seven propositions. The first proposition is that strategy operates in a bounded domain (e.g. separate from the tactical, policy and operational terms); the second proposition is that strategy has a single and coherent focus; the third one is that strategy consists of a basic direction and a broad path; fourth proposition is that strategy can be deconstructed into elements; and fifth proposition is that each of the individual components of a strategy's broad path (i.e., each of its essential thrusts) is a single coherent concept directly addressing the delivery of the basic direction. The sixth proposition is that strategy's essential thrusts each imply a specific channel of influence;

and the seventh proposition is that strategy's constituent elements are each formed either deliberately or emergently (Chamberlain, 2006; Chamberlain, 2010).

The second factor, which is the forces that shape strategy, is based on the results of the interaction of a variety of forces in and around the entity, with the strategist's cognitive bias. The forces are then divided into three categories (internal, external, and shareholders). Also, the second forces rest on cognitive bias assumption that applies two established psychological theories, namely Michel Kirton's adaption-innovation theory and Eduard Spranger's theory. The theories postulate that there are six types of cognitive emphasis that can be used for effective strategy in organisation. They are executives, operators, administrators, entrepreneurs, pioneers, and visionaries.

The third factor under strategy theory is the processes that form strategy in organisation. The third factor assumes that Factors 1 and 2 implicitly specify the various processes that can be involved in strategy formation because they show how they relate to each other by presenting a simple and clear sequential process chart that can be used to distinguish between deliberate and emergent strategies at each step. Specifically, this aspect of strategy theory offers a clear solution to dispute in the management literature concerning the technical and practical differences between deliberate and emergent strategy formation (Chamberlain, 2010; Chamberlain, 2006).

Lastly, the last factor, which is mechanisms by which strategies can take effect, is based on Chamberlain's ways in which environmental areas can be influenced into two main types. The first type is the rational approach, which consists of only standard economic forces, as described by Adam Smith and Micheal Porter. The second type, which is social approach, considers the combination of psychological and economic forces, including for example those described by Herbert Simon, Hilman and Pfeffer that combined the three environmental areas with the two influential techniques to create six main categories of strategies that can be employed to achieve the intended effect. Chamberlain referred to these categories "channels of influence", and asserted that a competent strategist is able to use all of the six. He argued that a strategist who only considers one channel of influence, for example the external rational channel, which Porter's theories rely on, is trapped in a paradigm (Chamberlain, 2010).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Investigate mechanisms employed to disseminate knowledge to students by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown.
2. Find out methods of communicating with teachers by private school management during the lockdown.
3. Identify strategies employed for maintaining class population by private school's management during the lockdown.
4. Identify strategies employed to maintain relationship with parents and community by private school management during the lockdown.
5. Find out strategies employed in generating income by private school management during the lockdown.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What mechanisms did private school management employ to disseminate knowledge to students during the COVID-19 lockdown?

2. What methods were employed to communicate with the teachers by private school management during the lockdown?
3. How were private school management maintaining the class population during the lockdown?
4. What were the strategies employed to maintain relationship with parents and community by private school management during the lockdown?
5. What were the strategies employed to generate income by private school management during the lockdown?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive type of research design. This involved the collection of information that described the strategies employed by Nigerian private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown. The proprietors of private nursery, primary and secondary schools constituted the population for the study. The study adopted the multistage sampling procedure. Three sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Cluster sampling was used to divide the country into the existing six geopolitical zones of North-east, North-west, North-central, South-east, South-west and South-south. Thereafter, proprietors of nursery, primary and secondary schools were purposively selected. Lastly, convenience sampling technique was employed to select 200 proprietors across the six geopolitical zones of the country for the study.

An instrument titled "Private School Management Strategies Questionnaire (PSMSQ)" was designed and used to collect relevant data from the respondents. The instrument was divided into six sections. Section A contained the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Sections B to D contained items eliciting responses for the content of the study placed on a four-point scale of ALWAYS-ALW, OFTEN-OFT, OCCASIONALLY-OCC, NEVER-NV, while Section E was on a two-point of YES and NO. Face and content validity of the instrument were established by two (2) experts in test and measurement, while reliability was carried out through pilot study that established a reliability index of .93.9. The instrument was administered to respondents via Google Form. Data collected were analysed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). Specifically, analysis of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation were employed for the study to provide answer to research questions raised.

RESULTS

Before data analysis, data screening was performed to determine the usefulness of the data. Specifically, missing value analysis was performed to identify the missing values in the data sets. In the data sets, few missing values (under gender and type of school distribution) were discovered and filled accordingly. After that, descriptive analysis of the respondents' demographic information was carried out. The figures below explain the demographic information of the respondents:

Fig. 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

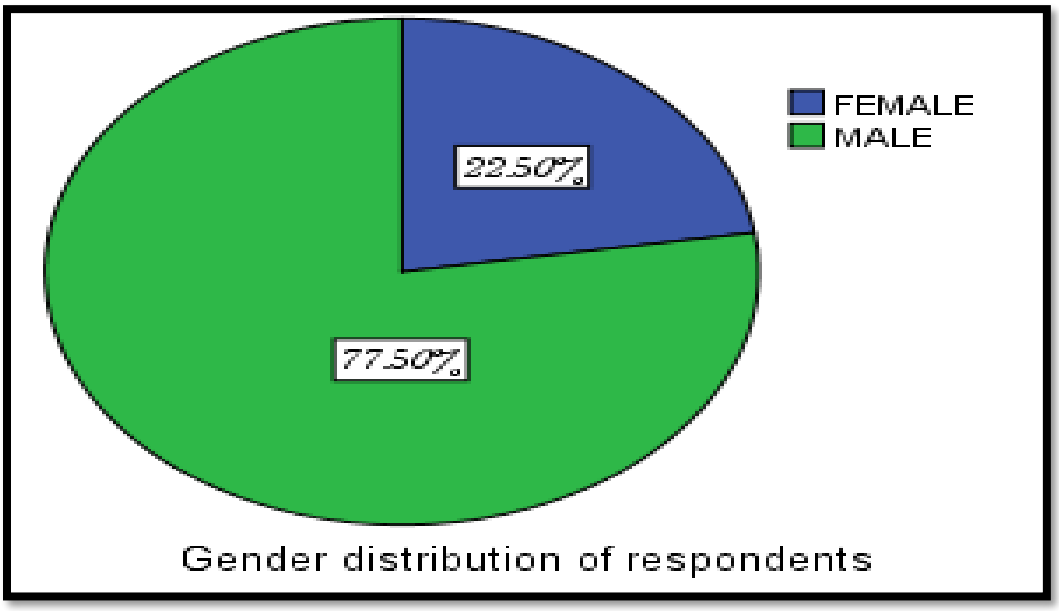

Fig. 1 depicts the demographical information about the respondents. It indicates that 22.5% of the respondents were males while 77.5% were females. This implies that both genders were represented in the study, hence giving room for no bias. Also, it indicates the male participation was more than the female participation in this study.

Fig. 2: Geopolitical Distribution of Respondents

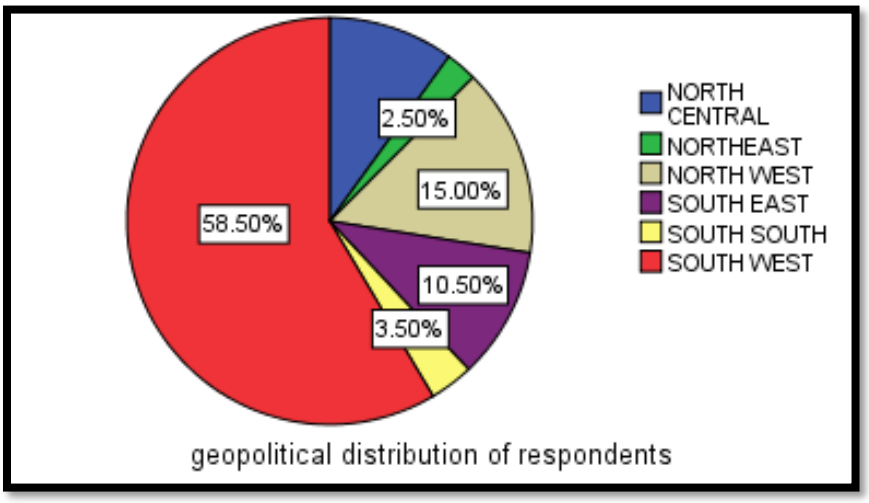

Fig. 2 displays the geopolitical distribution of the respondents. It indicates that SW (60%) was the largest represented zone followed by NW (15.3%), SE (10.77%), NC (10.26%) followed respectively, while NE (2.5%) has the least representation. This implies that all the geopolitical zones of the country were well represented. Hence, the study gave a true picture of what actually happened in private nursery, primary and secondary schools across Nigeria during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Fig. 3: Types of School Distribution of Respondents

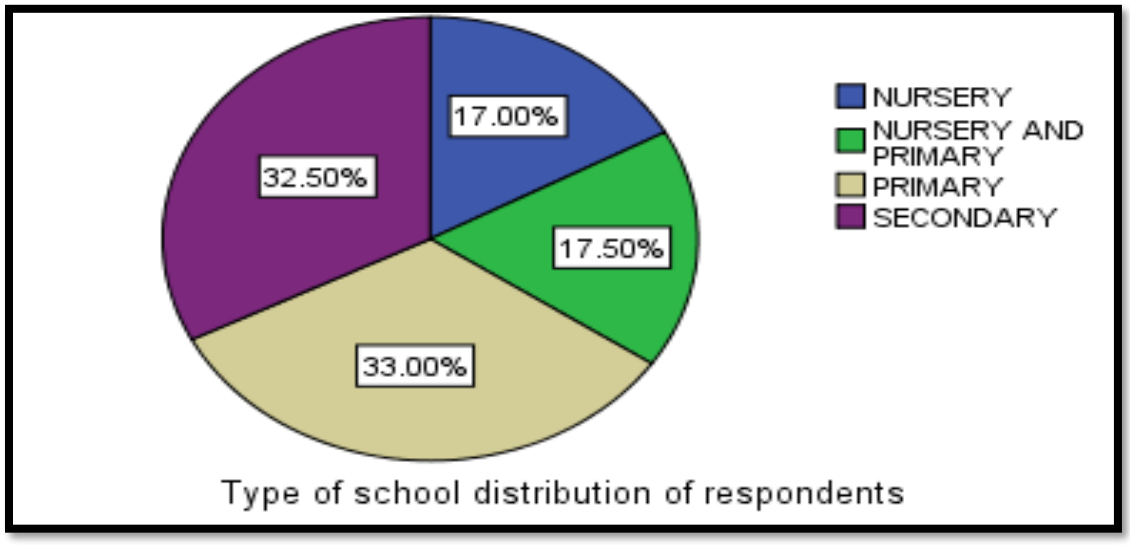

Fig. 3 displays the types of school operated by respondents. It indicates that a large percentage of the respondents operated primary schools (33%) followed by secondary schools (32.5%), nursery and primary schools (17.5%) respectively, while 17% operated nursery schools only which had the least percentage. This indicates that all the levels of education for children and adolescents were captured in the study. The reason for these categories was because they are more vulnerable to the pandemic spread-out. Hence, their levels of education were well-represented.

Research Question 1: What mechanisms did private school management employ to disseminate knowledge to students during the Covid-19 lockdown?

Table 1: Mechanisms employed by private schools for teaching and learning process during Covid-19 lockdown

S/N	Item	Alw	Oft	Occ	Nv	X	Std. Dev.
1	The school organises online lesson classes using zoom, google meet, etc.	33(16.5%)	21(10.5%)	13(6.5%)	126(63%)	3.20	1.188
2	The school sends printed materials to parents for home teaching.	14(7%)	7(3.5%)	19(9.5%)	154(77%)	3.61	.864
3	The school emails students to remind them of school as well as repeat classroom lessons.	35(17.5%)	32(16%)	26(13%)	107(53.5%)	3.03	1.184
4	The school organises social media groups on WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.	62(31%)	53(26.5%)	13(6.5%)	72(36%)	2.48	1.264
5	The school discusses COVID-19 online with students.	47(23.5%)	7(3.5%)	60(30%)	86(43%)	2.93	1.186
	Grand Average Mean and Standard Deviation					3.05	1.137

Table 1 displays frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation of responses on the mechanisms the private school management employed for teaching learning process during the COVID-19 lockdown. The table indicates that a majority of the respondents agreed that they always and often used social media tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown while Google meet, Zoom, printed materials and e-mails were occasionally and most times never used during the lockdown. This is further depicted by the means of items with Item 4 having the lowest mean of 2.48, followed by Items 5(2.93), 3(3.03) and 1(3.20) respectively, while Item 1 having the greatest mean of 3.61. This implies that the management of private schools in Nigeria organised and employed social media groups for the continuation of teaching learning during the pandemic lockdown.

Research Question 2: What methods were employed to communicate with teachers by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown?

Table 2: Methods employed to communicate with teachers by private school management during COVID-19 lockdown

S/N	Items	Alw	Oft	Occ	Nv	X	Std. D.
1	The school organises online meeting/seminar with teachers using, zoom, Google meets on effective delivery of learning content.	34(17%)	32(16%)	35(17.5%)	99(49.5%)	3.00	1.158
2	The school sends subject curriculum and materials to teachers through e-mail.	35(17.5%)	26(13%)	25(12.5%)	114(57%)	3.09	1.183
3	The school organises physical meetings with teachers maintaining social distance.	27(13.5%)	39(19.5%)	20(10%)	114(57%)	3.11	1.140
4	The school schedules meetings with each teacher physically at different times.	6(3%)	34(17%)	28(14%)	118(59%)	3.39	.895
5	The school organises social media groups on WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. to train teachers on appropriate methods to disseminate knowledge.	62(31%)	46(23%)	14(7%)	78(39%)	2.54	1.287
	Grand Average Mean And Standard Deviation					3.02	1.133

Table 2 displays frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation of responses on the methods employed to communicate with teachers by the private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown. The table reveals that social media tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram were more used during the lockdown to

communicate with teachers than zoom, Google meet and printed materials. Mean scores showed that Item 5 had the lowest implying that individual physical meetings were never used. This was further depicted by 2.54, followed by item 1(3.00), items 2(3.09) and 3(3.1) but Item 4 had the highest mean of 3.39.

Question 3: How were private school management maintaining class population during Covid-19 lockdown?

Table 3: Strategies employed for maintaining class population by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown

S/N	ITEMS	ALW	OFT	OCC	NV	X	S. D.
1	The school organises online attendance to ensure students' participation.	69(34.5%)	39(19.5%)	73(36.5 %)	19(9.5 %)	2.21	1.025
2	The school communicates with parents to remind their wards to attend classes.	42(21%)	6(3%)	32(16%)	120(60 %)	3.15	1.206
	Grand Average Mean And Standard Deviation					2.68	1.116

Table 3 displays frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation of responses on the strategies employed for maintaining the class population by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown. The table indicates that the online attendance was employed always and often during the teaching learning process to maintain the class population. Parents were often, occasionally and never communicated most times. This was further indicated by the mean of Item 1(2.21) falling below the mean benchmark of 2.50. It implies that the online attendance was the major tool used to maintain the class population during the lockdown.

Question 4: What were the strategies employed to maintain relationship with parents and community by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown?

Table 4: strategies employed to maintain relationship with parents and community by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown

S/N	ITEMS	ALW	OFT	OCC	NV	x	S. D.
1	The school provides palliatives for parents and host community.	7(3.5%)	7(3.5%)	21(10.5%)	165(82.5%)	3.72	.696
2	The school sensitises the community through the distribution of flyers about COVID-19.	14(7%)	26(13%)		160(80%)	3.73	.582
3	Private school committee shares information with community on students' education.	13(6.5%)	14(7%)	59(29.5%)	108(54%)	3.35	.882
4	PTA consults with school on ways of engaging students during the COVID-19.	41(20.5%)	13(6.5%)	20(10%)	126(63%)	3.16	1.224
5	School committee provides materials for learning during the COVID-19.	13(6.5%)	21(10.5%)	6(3%)	160(80%)	3.57	.922
	Grand Average Mean and Standard Deviation					3.50	.861

Table 4 displays frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation of responses on the strategies employed to maintain relationship with parents and community by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown. The table indicates that most of the respondents occasionally and most times never sent palliatives to parents, sensitised the community through distribution of flyers, shared information with community on students' education, and school committee did not provide materials for learning during the COVID-19. This was further indicated with all the mean scores of items rising above the criteria mean of 2.5. This implies that a majority of the respondents did not maintain relationship with parents and community during the lockdown.

Question 5: What were the strategies employed to generate income by private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown?

Table 5: Strategies Employed to Generate Income by Private School Management during the COVID-19 Lockdown

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO	NR	X	Std. D.
1	Students pay fees for daily classroom lesson.	47(23.5%)	153(76.5%)		1.77	.425
2	Parents are required to pay for materials only.	25(12.5%)	175(87.5%)		1.88	.332
3	Parents are required to pay normal school fees for learning.	35(17.5%)	165(82.5%)		1.83	.381
4	Students pay per class.	13(6.5%)	175(87.5%)	12(6%)	1.93	.254
5	The school organises free classes for the students.	59(29.5%)	141(70.5%)		1.71	.457
	Grand Average Mean And Standard Deviation				1.82	.370

Table 5 displays frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation of responses on the strategies employed to generate income by the private school management during the COVID-19 lockdown. The table indicates that a majority of the respondents agreed that they did not collect daily fees neither did parents pay for materials. Also, the payment of normal school fees and per class was not employed. But, a quarter of the respondents agreed to organising free classes for the students during the lockdown. This was further depicted by the mean scores of all the items rising above the mean benchmark of 1.5.

DISCUSSION

The study focused on investigating private school management strategies during the COVID-19 lockdown. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that a majority of the respondents agreed to using social media tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram to ensure teaching and learning process during the lockdown. This is in tandem with Mei Ling Yeo's (2014) finding that the youth, the students and the lecturers were positive about using Facebook as a "social" platform to build a good relationship with one another outside the school.

Also, the findings revealed that the private school management communicated with teachers using social media tools always. This result tallies with that of Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo (2015) which revealed that effective communication brought about the effective and efficient supervision and management performance of employees in the university. Alabi (2018) revealed there was a significant relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities in secondary schools. In addition, the class attendance was taken to maintain the class population. This further reinforces the findings of Tetteh, (2018) that class attendance, mid-semester exams and study time had a significant and positive influence on the learning outcome. Also, the study of Lukkarinena, Ksoivukangasa and Seppälä (2016) indicated that attendance was positively and significantly related to performance, after

controlling for the effect of other variables potentially related to performance.

In the same vein, a majority of private school management, as revealed by the findings, did not maintain relationship with parents and school community during the COVID-19 lockdown. This is in contradiction with Bakwai's (2013) opinion that school should pass vital information to the community and this should be normally done through news release and newsletters. He further reinforced that the sharing of information created a better school-community relationship which ultimately improved the teaching and learning and the general development of education, particularly primary one. To crown it all, it was revealed that all classes organised by private school management were done free of charge. The finding is in line with the theory of strategy, which is based on the combination of four factors, which include what strategy is, the forces that shape strategy, the processes that form strategy, and the mechanisms by which strategy can take effect. If organisation combines these factors for the smooth running of organisation, it will help in achieving the positive results (Chamberlain, 2006; Chamberlain, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the management of private schools in Nigeria was not fully prepared ahead for the pandemic. Hence, a low rate of strategies used was discovered. It was thus recommended that the private school management in Nigeria should organise workshops and seminars as well as develop sustainable strategies to help bridge the gap against future occurrence. Based on the findings of the study, it was also recommended that the private school management in Nigeria should:

1. acquaint the school with online lesson dissemination;
2. organise workshops and seminars for teachers on the use of online teaching tools for the teaching learning process;
3. develop a more systematic rather than the conventional way of getting attendance such as automatic collation of e-mails during online classes;
4. develop sustainable strategies to bridge financial gap during and against future occurrence; and
5. ensure that adequate ICT facilities are provided for the effective implementation of school programmes.

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STUDENTS' AND LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES OF CAUSES AND MANAGEMENT OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study is a report on causes and management of deviant behaviours among students in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research design for this study was a descriptive survey. Thirty lecturers and 150 final year students were selected as participants in the study. An instrument validated was used to elicit relevant information from the participants. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, rank ordering and mean were used to answer the research questions raised in the study. The findings of the study showed that examination malpractice was ranked the most prevalent deviant behaviour among students in the universities. The major cause of deviant behaviours was peer influence. It was agreed that there were strategies put in place by the university management to curb deviant behaviours among the students. It was recommended that parents should inculcate right moral/religious values in their children while at home. Also, the university authority should ensure that all activities relating to examinations are handled with a high sense of responsibility by those concerned, and educate students on sex education so that they would not fall victims of health risks such as HIV/AIDs.

Keywords: *Deviant behaviours, Causes, Management, University students*

INTRODUCTION

Education remains a veritable tool on which every society hinges. It brings about the holistic development of an individual in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Any nation of the world that takes education with levity is toying with her future. Education is now universally recognised to be the prime key of moral, cultural, political and socio-economic development of a nation. The nations, that had taken major initiatives, made revolutionary advances and performed "miracles" in the last two decades through their effective educational

system (Ahmad, 2001). Educational system of any country can provide a guarantee of success and prosperity for such a nation. The achievement of a comprehensive and effective educational system is necessary for the survival of a nation (Saeed, 2001).

Universities are statutorily charged with the responsibility of producing high level manpower. Learning at the university level is effective if it results in bringing about the expected transformation in the attitudes, skills and knowledge of the students over time. Moreover, effective learning should result in producing graduates who are adequately informed, technically equipped and morally prepared to become responsible parents, good citizens and selfless leaders, who can handle the menace of health risks, such as HIV/AIDS in the 21st Century (Babalola, 2008; FRN, 2013).

Fehnel (2000) noted that for centuries, the principal mission of higher education has been the creation and dissemination of new knowledge. A critical challenge for contemporary university education, then, is how to create the commitment and capacity to observe, analyse and understand environmental forces and to act in response to them. Therefore, to meet this challenge, many institutions of higher learning are putting various measures in place to address deviant behaviours among students. Management is an act of harmonising both human and material resources to achieve institutional goals and objectives at a given point in time. It involves planning, organising, controlling, directing, coordinating, supervising, staffing and budgeting. Effective management of deviant behaviours among the students will not only benefit the concerned students but also the entire institution.

According to Pearson (2006), deviant behaviour is a term of comparative condition. In all societies, it occurs to some extent. There is no society which is free from any deviant behaviour. The meaning of normative system is changing according to the needs of the society. There was a time when disobeying the rules of caste was considered as deviant behaviour; however, now in the age of equalisation, norms of caste are valueless. Furthermore, to purposely violate any law which exists in the society such as the university is called a deviant behaviour. The university environment is indispensable in moulding the lives of the students while on campus. Effective provision of students' personnel services tends to reduce the breaking of institutions' rules and regulations at a given point in time.

Every institution has a standard way of behaviour that students are expected to abide by. Code of conducts is made available to students at the point of registration. Any behaviour contrary to the established university conduct is referred to as deviant behaviour. According to Gomme **(**2003), deviance refers to behaviours that do not conform to social norms and values, and in doing so elicit a negative response. Deviance encompasses both crime and otherness. Otherness is non-conformance with both formal and informal norms and values, whereas a crime is specifically an infraction against norms and values that have been codified into law. The former type of deviance is based on the interpretation of the observer, unlike the latter which is based on the established criteria.

Pearson (2006) opined that deviant behaviour in school can quickly foster additional problems for students, including ostracism, lower rates of interaction with teachers, less supportive interaction with teachers, and therefore lower academic achievement. In consequence, these students may begin to act out which produces a vicious cycle of increasing anti-social behaviours and increasing social rejection. This conduct may yield adverse changes in the attitude of the students as they do not gain the respect of teachers and

later do not receive respect from more socially conventional persons (perhaps peers, family, and potential employers) in their adult life. Examples of deviant behaviours in institutions of learning range from simple offences such as lateness, truancy, immodest dressing to serious crimes such as examination malpractice, cultism, rape, violence/destruction of property and murder.

Behaviour is a response which an individual show to his environment at different times. The environment has a great role to play in the behaviour of an individual. Das (1993) identified seven categories of behaviour to include response, association, multiple-discrimination, chains, class concepts, principles and strategies. He further stated that both good standards set by the institution and good behaviour models provided by the teachers had positive effects on students. Ahire (1990) noted that personality disorders and socio-economic environment are the major determinants of the victim's involvement in drug abuse.

Delinquent behaviour or a crime is likely to occur if the motivations of deviant acts are strong and containment is weak (International Encyclopaedia of Justice Studies, 2007). Similarly, environmental factors such as schools and neighbours still exercise relatively strong control over juveniles. Furthermore, strong conformist traditions and relatively higher levels of religiosity are other factors that contribute to preventing juvenile delinquent acts (Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006). This problem on the conduct of young adults has long been a concern for different societies. Their challenges to tradition and violent behaviour have often been attributed to the declining influence of the family (Popenoe, 1993). The family's declining influence has been associated with shifting cultural values as well as disintegrating societal standards (Adams, 1995).

An examination is known to be a very strong tool for an appointment, promotion and selection to various positions - including political (Salami, 1994, Nwadiae, 2003 and Olanipekun, 2003). The value attached to the examination has made learners see it as a matter of life and death. Since a certificate is the only valid document for appointment in nearly all places, without good result or certificate, one cannot be admitted into a higher institution or be gainfully employed (Fasakin, 2012). As a result of all these, learners can be so desperate that they seek any means to have good results; some of the means get them indulged in examination malpractice. Examination malpractice has constituted a great threat to the educational system not only in Nigeria but also in developed countries. Examination malpractice, therefore, is the act of omission or commission intended to make a student pass examination without relying absolutely on his/her independent ability or resources (Anwuluorah, 2008). This paper, therefore, examined causes and management of deviant behaviours among university students in Kwara State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent times, lawlessness and negative attitudes exhibited by university students on campuses have become major concerns to the institutions and the society at large. Disciplinary problems engulf precious times of the university life and examination malpractices which often lead to rudeness and the breakdown of law and order. Akinboye (2003) observed that prostitution, cultism, lesbianism and indecent dresses among students on campuses affect the quality of graduates produced in Nigerian universities every year.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study:

i. What deviant behaviours are prevalent among students in the universities in Kwara State?
ii. What are the major causes of deviant behaviours among students in the universities?
iii. What are the strategies put in place to curb deviant behaviours among students in the universities?

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey. Three Universities, Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State University and University of Ilorin were used in the study. Thirty lecturers, that is, 10 from each university and 150 students, (that is, 50 from each university) were selected for the study through the purposive random sampling technique. Thus, a total of 180 participants were used as sample for the study. A research instrument entitled "Causes and Management of Deviant Behaviours Questionnaire" (CMDBQ) was used to elicit relevant information from the participants (lecturers and final year students). Lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation at Al-Hikmah University and University of Ilorin validated the questionnaire designed for this research work. These four experts who were senior lecturers, readers and professors examined the questionnaire to determine whether it was suitable for the information required. In so doing, these professionals assessed the face and content validity of the questionnaire by ensuring that irrelevance and ambiguous items were eliminated. A test re-test method was applied through a pilot test undertaken to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire and this yielded 0.87 coefficient of reliability. This was considered reliable and usable for the study. The researchers administered 180 copies of CMDSQ to participants in the sampled universities. One trained research assistant was used to complement the efforts of the researchers in the institutions. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistical techniques of frequency, percentage and rank ordering were used to answer the research questions raised in the study. Mean rating was also used, that is, the means from 0.00 to 2.49 represented "disagree" while those from 2.50 to 5.00 meant "agree".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What deviant behaviours are prevalent among students in the universities in Kwara State?

Table1: Deviant Behaviours among Students in the Sampled Universities

S/N	Items	Frequency	Rank
1.	Bribery and corruption	121	4
2.	Cultism	24	8
3.	Drug abuse	132	3
4.	Examination malpractice	175	1
5.	Lesbianism	85	6
6.	Prostitution	168	2
7.	Smoking	52	7
8.	Theft	107	5

Table 1 shows responses to deviant behaviours prevalent among students in the universities. Examination malpractice (with a total count of 175) was ranked the most prevalent deviant behaviour often exhibited by students in the universities, while cultism (24) was ranked the list. Prostitution and drug abuse were ranked

second and third respectively, while bribery and corruption, theft, lesbianism and cultism were not too popular among deviant behaviours exhibited by students of Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State University and University of Ilorin.

Deviant behaviours such as examination malpractice will not only truncate the future of the culprits, but also adversely affect the nation. Examination malpractice, according to Nwadiae (2003), is in the form of examination leakages, cheating, impersonation, bringing foreign materials into examination venues, collusion, giraffing, aiding and abetting, machinery or 'Ecomog'. Other forms are forgery; throwing prepared answers; hiding of answers inside wig and shoes; verbal insults or assault on invigilators or supervisors, tampering with the work of others, fabrication of results and showing disregard to academic ethics (Adeyegbe and Owokade, 2003). It is also regarded as an academic misbehaviour capable of truncating an educational system. Examination malpractice has also been described as dishonesty in examination (Omotoso, 1992,). Prostitution, drug abuse and lesbianism are capable of shifting students' attention from their studies. Anti-social behaviour among the young population has become a global concern in developed and developing countries, including Nigeria (Fatoki and Kobiowu, 2020)

Research Question 2: What are the major causes of deviant behaviours among students in the universities?

Table 2: Causes of Deviant Behaviours among Female Students in the Universities

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Adolescent age	14	8
2.	Economic factor	42	23
3.	Environmental factor	22	12
4.	Parental upbringing	30	17
5.	Peer influence	72	40
	Total	**180**	**100**

As shown in Table 2, the major cause of deviant behaviours among students was peer influence with 72 (40 %) frequency counts. Also, 42 (23%) of the respondents indicated that economic factor was one of the causes of deviant behaviours in the sampled universities. Other causes of deviant behaviours among the students included economic factor, parental upbringing and adolescent age with 30 (17%), 22 (12%) and 14 (%) frequency counts respectively.

Peer group has a strong impact on the lives of students while on campus because they can rub minds and discuss life issues. A child that can survive peer influence while in the university is likely to stand a better chance of achieving his/her goals in life. Ugbuegbu (1995) and Fasakin (2012) concluded that lack of confidence as a result of the inadequate preparation, peer influence, social influence, parental support and poor facilities in schools are the causes of deviant behaviours among students. Badmus (1992) and Agbo (2005) identified school programmes, teaching/learning environment, the teacher, the student, over value of the certificate, decadence in the society and parental support as some of the factors responsible for the phenomenon. One of the possible factors affecting effective learning in schools is the divorce of the two parents of a child. Such a child in this circumstance may easily be influenced by peers.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies put in place by the university management to curb deviant behaviours among students in the universities?

Table 3: Strategies Put in Place by the University Management to Curb Deviant Behaviours

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean
1.	Students reside on campus.	44	78	32	26	180	2.78
2.	All students involved in examination malpractice are expelled from the university.	12	52	82	34	180	2.23
3.	Seminars and workshops are constantly organised for students on the danger of unprotected sex.	30	99	24	27	180	2.73
4.	Scholarships are granted to indigent students by the school authority.	18	62	77	23	180	2.42
5.	Dress code is mandatory on campus.	65	92	16	7	180	3.19
6.	Lecturers do not compromise during invigilation of examinations.	42	123	11	4	180	3.13
7.	Male students are allowed into female hostels.	73	89	12	6	180	3.27
8.	Students are allowed to leave the campus at will.	27	135	10	8	180	3.01
9.	Students have access to the university counsellors.	34	92	30	24	180	2.76
10.	There is adequate security for the students on campus.	10	126	12	32	180	2.63
11.	The university authority does not restrain the students from attending religious activities on campus.	39	92	29	20	180	2.83
12.	There are adequate health facilities for the students.	38	66	42	34	180	2.60
13.	Parents often visit their children while on campus.	45	96	22	17	180	2.94
14.	The students are not allowed to live their hostels at night.	68	104	6	2	180	3.32
15.	There is adequate provision of water in students' hostels.	16	102	44	18	180	2.64
	Overall mean						**2.83**

Mean<2.5 = Disagree, Mean > 2.5 = Agree

Table 3 shows responses to strategies put in place by the university management to curb deviant behaviours among students. The overall mean is 2.83 which implies that there are measures put in place at Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State University and University of Ilorin to curb deviant behaviours among the students. With the means of 2.3 and 2.42, the respondents disagreed that not all students involved in examination malpractices were expelled from the university and scholarships were granted to indigent students by the university authority respectively. The respondents agreed that students resided on campus; seminars and workshops were constantly organised for them on the danger of unprotected sex;

dress code was mandatory on campus and lecturers did not compromise during invigilation of examinations. The university authority did not restrain the students from attending religious activities on campus and there were adequate health facilities for the students. Students get involved in deviant behaviours due to poor academic performance; a poor attitude of teachers to work; and a low education level of parents (Jacob and Adegboyega, 2017).

CONCLUSION

It is a truism to assert that deviant behaviours among students cause havocs not only to the students themselves but also to the institution. The prevalent deviant behaviours among university students included examination malpractices, smoking, lesbianism, prostitution, theft, bribery and corruption, drug abuse and cultism. Peer influence often makes some students exhibit certain deviant behaviours. Various measures are put in place to curb deviant behaviours among the students by the university authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i. Parents should inculcate the right moral values in their children while at home. This could be achieved through proper religious orientation.
ii. The government should checkmate film industries on what they produce to the public to curb deviant behaviours among students.
iii. The university's management should lay more emphasis on scholarships for the indigent students.
iv. Dress code should be enforced on all students to prevent them from wearing clothes that show sensitive parts of their bodies.
v. Students should be well educated about sex education so that they would not fall victims of health risks such as HIV/AIDs.
vi. The university management should encourage the students to consult counsellors on issues bordering them concerning their academic and personal life.
vii. Lecturers should ensure that they expose the students to all the necessary course contents they need to know to reduce examination malpractices among the students to the barest minimum.

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Evaluation of an academic support workshop on assessment by hospitality lecturers at a university in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of and for learning plays a critical role in helping students achieve the intended learning outcomes, as well as providing a mechanism with which to determine the extent to which learning outcomes have been attained. Without pedagogically sound assessment strategies, lecturers and universities will not succeed in their roles of promoting student learning and success. Consequently, research into assessment and how it is understood by academics needs to be foregrounded. The aim of the study was to assess perceptions of hospitality lecturers on the efficacy of a workshop on assessment conducted at a university in South Africa. A qualitative research design was used, in which the written responses of 14 purposively selected participants were used to evaluate the workshop. An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis and verbatim statements from participants. The results indicated that participants benefited from the workshop and intended to use formative, summative and criterion-referenced assessment in the evaluation of learning outcomes. The need to capacitate university lecturers on how to design and implement differentiated assessment strategies was therefore the major recommendation of the study.

Key words: formative assessment; summative assessment; criterion-based assessment; measurement; learning.

INTRODUCTION

University lecturers operate within a challenging area of professional practice, as they are normally expected to possess both discipline-specific and educational expertise in order to function effectively (Council on Higher Education, 2016; Machingambi, 2020; Maphosa and Mudzilwana 2017). Paradoxically, most universities worldwide continue to hire academics on the strength of their research capacity and not on their pedagogical grounding. This largely explains why academic professional development (APD) has emerged as an area of practice in higher education (HE) so as to help academics acquire the critical pedagogical skills, theories and competencies that would enhance their facilitation of learning strategies. Of necessity, conceptualisations of APD across the world and within the country vary as universities try to respond to different teaching and learning contexts, institutional cultures, curriculum transformation, forces of globalisation, diminishing resources, community educational needs and changes in student demographics. However, they share the common vision of trying to influence the quality of teaching and learning with a view to enhancing student learning outcomes.

At the international level, the search for a solid conceptualisation of APD, its purpose

and philosophy was most intense during the period 1979-2000 (Frick and Kapp, 2007). In New Zealand, APD programmes centred mostly on the need to improve teaching. They were mainly championed by units or centres created within the universities. However, these were largely peripheral endeavours, as the APDs were not strategically positioned to have the desired impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment (Akerlind, 2007). The work on APD in the US is brought into the spotlight by researchers such as Lieberman (2005) who depict APDs as laboratories for learning in universities.

In the South African Higher Education system, academic development is mostly championed by teaching and learning centres. These are strategic units which have various designations across universities. Some universities refer to these units as Academic Support Units, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning or Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning. These units or departments carry out research that helps lecturers improve their teaching and assessment methods (Matthews, Duck, and Bartle, 2017). There is a need to continue offering teaching and learning support and enhancement services to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment activities are sustainable and effective. Teaching and learning departments in universities perform evaluations for lecturers to assess teaching ability and the departments help lecturers in designing teaching content that is suitable or appealing to students. Content that is appealing, engaging and well-structured helps students to like lectures, which usually results in high lecture attendance (Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016).

This study looked at perceptions of hospitality lecturers of an academic support workshop on assessment. The content of the workshop included formative assessment, summative assessment, criterion-referenced assessment, the use of taxonomies in assessment, and the backwash effect of assessment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of educational assessment and its permutations

Assessment is defined by Brown (2004**)** as the process of collecting, measuring, analysing, synthesising and interpreting information about student performance, which could be collected through a variety of practices and tools in relation to curricula objectives. Assessment information could be obtained using a range of practices and assessment instruments both quantitative and qualitative, such as assignments, tests, examinations, class quizzes, oral presentations, portfolio exhibits and practical demonstrations. Closely related to the issue of assessment is the concept of measurement, evaluation and testing. Bachman (2004) conceives evaluation as a process of allocating a numerical value to traits associated with students' performance. The concept of measurement largely finds expression in assessment models that result in the allocation of points, scores or percentages.

Testing (or examining) is a type of assessment consisting of a set of questions administered during a fixed time under reasonably comparable conditions for all students (Miller, Linn and Gronlund, 2009). Evaluation is conceived by Vandeyar and Killen (2007) as the process of making

judgements about the worth of something and is concerned with the quality of a measured result. In other words, evaluation forms part of assessment, and assessment is the practice of judgement. Assessment is regarded as a powerful tool that can either enhance or hinder students' learning. It is therefore critical that assessment should be well understood and conducted in a pedagogically sound manner. Ghaicha (2016) maintains that whatever model of assessment a lecturer selects, adopts or adapts for his/her classroom assessment practice, it should be:

(a) guided by a theory of how learning happens
(b) aligned with the outcomes of the learning that is being assessed.

Brown (2004) identifies key aspects for an effective classroom assessment as including the following:

(a) It must have clear standards and criteria
(b) It must involve multiple measures
(c) It must communicate assessment results
(d) It must enable the use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning

This resonates well with the criteria for high quality assessment that require assessment measurements not only to be compatible with a variety of instructional models, but also to assist in addressing important educational decisions (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Crotty (1994) and Lopez and Pasquini (2017) advance the view that classroom tasks should be predicated on real-life tasks that call for the use of higher-order thinking skills by students. This is the essence of authentic (contextual) assessment, which Bell and Cowie (2001) contend should involve intellectually engaging tasks that assess a wider range of learning outcomes through various assessment modes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The backwash effect of assessment

The backwash effect of assessment is an embodiment of the belief that the quickest way to change the learning outcomes and the way students learn is to change the form of assessment (Biggs, 1987). This is an acknowledgement of the tremendous role of assessment in shaping the learning of students. As Boud (1995) contends, if assessment tasks are set to evaluate critical and deep understanding, this will predispose students to approach their studies in a critical and deep manner. Similarly, if students are assessed through tasks which call for reproduction of what was presented in lectures, this give rise to a narrow instrumental approach to learning that is devoid of deep understanding and independent activity. Lecturers' beliefs about learning and assessment and how the two are related need to change if they are to deliver appropriate assessment. In other words, a lecturer's views and practices of assessment is a reflection of his/her beliefs about what it means to have learned something (Posser and Trigwell, 1999).

Formative assessment

Formative assessment generally encompasses all activities undertaken by teachers and learners that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities (Black and William 1998; Anderson, 2017). It is sometimes referred to as an ethereal and multifaceted concept that could imply self-assessment, peer-assessment or interim assessment (Dunn and Mulvenon, 2009).

Some regard it as an informal assessment in which the lecturer interacts with students to have a sense of what they can do and the problems they are facing in their learning.

Evaluating students' understanding of the subject matter regularly throughout a teaching unit enhances learning and it helps lecturers adjust their teaching methods in accordance with the students' learning needs or performance (Pinger, Rackoczy, Besser and Klieme, 2017). In this context, formative assessment is associated with self-assessment, which leads to self-regulated learning and peer-assessment, and which improves learning through peer-assisted learning (Anderson, 2017). Lecturers adjust their teaching methods and students adjust their information acquisition skills based on the feedback they get during formative assessment (Anderson, 2017). Formative assessment helps lecturers identify student needs through the provision of teaching and learning exercises such as tests, quizzes or essays. Students could use the feedback they get to inform the lecturer about their understanding of the content taught and areas in which they encounter difficulties. The involvement of learners in teaching and assessment, which is referred to as shared assessment, contributes positively to student learning and academic growth (Lopez-Pastor and Sicilia-Camacho, 2016). Formative assessment is assessment for learning, which could be improved using feed-forward techniques. These involve giving feedback with specific direction on how to improve performance on subsequent or future tasks of a related nature. Feed-forward should be used timeously and constructively to improve performance on the next assignment (Hine and Northeast, 2016).

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is an evaluation of learning. It tends to focus on a limited number of cognitive outcomes, thereby reducing the content of the curriculum (Lopez and Pasquini, 2017). Summative assessment comes at the end of the course, teaching unit or a teaching period and it emphasises tests, examinations and grades (Lopez-Pastor and Sicilia-Camacho, 2016). The purpose of summative assessment is to establish the overall achievement of a student on a particular course. The characteristics of summative assessment are that it is done at intervals when achievement has to be reported and it is performed to show learning progress against set criteria (Harlen and James, 1997). It utilises reliable assessment methods that do not compromise validity and it takes stock of quality assurance procedures. Summative assessment relies on material that is taught or covered during teaching and learning to examine students' understanding of the subject matter (Harlen and James, 1997). The dominance of summative assessment in higher education is perceived with mixed feelings. There is a negative sentiment in tertiary education, locally and abroad, that high-stakes testing is not good for learning, as students would be preoccupied with getting good grades and passing to such an extent that they might not be interested in studying material that is not included in a test or examination (Harrison, Konings, Schuwirth, Wass, and van der Vleuten, 2017). High-stakes testing as assessment of learning or summative assessment results in sanctions for students who fail and rewards for successful students. The penalty could be in the form of low grades, exclusion from the course, deregistration from the university, failing to

graduate on time, failure to secure scholarships, bursaries, government study grants such as the National Student Financial AID Scheme (NSFAS) or expulsion from the university.

Criterion-referenced assessment

Criterion-referenced assessment involves judging each student's work against set standards or criteria without regard to the performance of other students in the same class (Lok, McNaught, and Young, 2016). The majority of students, even all students, could get distinctions as long as they meet the set assessment standard, and in the same way the entire class could fail when the assessment criterion is not met. Grade inflation occurs when the majority of students are awarded distinctions, and when most graduates obtain distinctions for a particular degree. Grade inflation could erode public confidence in the qualifications churned out by universities (Lok et al., 2016). Criterion- referenced assessment rubrics are used to make sure that student responses are judged on the set criteria (Burton, 2015). Criterion-referenced assessment rubrics provide details of standards by which students' assignments are assessed (Broadbent, Panadero and Boud, 2017). The rubrics show the expected outcomes that a student should meet. The assessment protocol shows evaluative criteria, quality definition and a scoring strategy (Broadbent et al., 2017). Students use the rubrics to evaluate their own work before submitting their work for assessment by the lecturer (Broadbent et al., 2017). This is a democratic process that shows the responsibility of the student to adhere to the requirements of the task and the responsibility of the lecturer to mark work based on shared criteria or standards kept by both the student and the lecturer. This is done to ensure fairness, reliability and validity of assessment as grades are linked to the marking criteria.

Use of Bloom's taxonomy in assessment

Bloom's taxonomy has hierarchical levels of complexity that a student goes through during learning and mastery of the subject matter. Students demonstrate mastery when they reach the peak of the reasoning pyramid. Bloom's six cognitive levels, starting with the lowest, are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Forehand, 2010). Bloom's taxonomy has been revised and the new hierarchical structure starting with the lowest level is as follows: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating (Forehand, 2010). The first level – that is, knowledge or remembering – represents lower level of thinking. It requires students to remember or demonstrate knowledge through recalling, naming, recognising, or identifying (Ramirez, 2017). Another lower level of reasoning up the cognitive ladder is comprehension or understanding. A lecturer operating at this level would ask students to understand, explain, paraphrase, summarise or give examples to demonstrate comprehension of the subject matter (Ramirez, 2017). Higher levels of thinking are application (applying), analysis (analysing), synthesis` (evaluating) and evaluation (creating). Application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation denote the old cognitive structure, while applying, analysing, evaluating and creating represent the revised cognitive structure. Tasks requiring higher levels of thinking at application level have questions that use a

new but similar situation (Ramirez, 2017). At analysis level, students are expected to deconstruct perspectives, explore options and to parse data in a way that shows ability to break down information into simple, understandable units (Ramirez, 2017). The characteristics of assessments at synthesis level are tasks that ask students to create, generate, design or formulate phenomena. At the apex of the cognitive pyramid is the evaluation level. At this level student are expected to 'critically examine' or 'make informed judgement' (Ramirez, 2017). Lecturers incorporate the taxonomies into the tasks that students work on in order to accommodate students at different cognitive levels.

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, assessment has been viewed narrowly as a terminal activity that is meant to measure understanding and certify students. The role of assessment was thus reduced to that of certifying existing knowledge and giving students feedback on current learning. Little or no attention was paid to the role of assessment in promoting learning for the longer term, which is the essence of sustainable assessment. Sustainable assessment focuses not only on content, but also on the processes of learning and how students would continue to learn and solve learning problems beyond the timescale of a given course or module (Boud and Soler, 2016). Lecturers are therefore encouraged to think beyond the immediate classroom context and design assessments that prepare students for a lifetime of learning and work. The aim of the study was to assess hospitality lecturers' perceptions of a workshop on assessment and how they would use assessment knowledge to improve teaching and learning for the longer term.

METHODOLOGY

This study was located within a qualitative research methodology, since it sought to gain a deeper understanding of how hospitality lecturers felt about the efficacy of a workshop on assessment and how the acquired experiences would influence their future approach to teaching in general and assessment in particular. McMillan and Shumacher (2020) contend that qualitative research enquires into the ways in which people interpret and derive sense from what they have experienced. Qualitative methodology was considered appropriate, since it enabled the researcher to collect and interpret detailed narrative data from the participants through an unstructured questionnaire. The use of open-ended questions was therefore key to the generation of rich, descriptive data that forms the mainstay of qualitative research.

The research employed a cross-sectional design in which data collection occurred at one time without pre-test and post-test assessments. The study was a case study in which one comprehensive university in South Africa was involved. Creswell (2013) contends that qualitative research uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives and case studies to gain detailed descriptions of reality. Neuman (2011) conceives a case study as a method in which the researcher explores one setting, or single subject, or one event. The views of hospitality lecturers based on their experience of an academic support workshop on assessment guided the findings.

Participants and sampling

The convenience sampling strategy was used to engage with the responses of 14 hospitality lecturers who had fully participated in the academic support workshop on assessment that was conducted at the university under study. Participants to the workshop were recruited by email and the purpose of the workshop was explained to all prospective participants. Each lecturer attended once and only the responses of those lecturers who attended the workshop in full were conveniently selected, since these would provide a complete picture of what was needed. The workshop was conducted in two training sessions with seven participants attending each session. This was meant to accommodate the large group of lecturers in the section as well as promoting interaction amongst the participants. The sample comprised seven males and six female academics teaching in the school of hospitality.

Instrument

An open-ended questionnaire that sought to elicit hospitality lecturers' perceptions about the usefulness of the assessment workshop was developed and completed by each willing participant at the end of the workshop. The items on the questionnaire required participants to express their rich views and narratives on the usefulness of the assessment workshop to their teaching, learning and assessment. The researchers analysed the detailed responses to evaluate the perceived usefulness of the assessment workshop.

Procedure and ethical considerations

Participants attended the sessions after consenting to participate in the assessment workshop. At the end of the academic workshop, participants voluntarily completed the questionnaire that was distributed to them as a means of evaluating the workshop. Participants were informed that they were required to share their honest views on the workshop, as their views were critical in improving the quality of future workshops offered by the Academic Support Services Division of the university. They were informed that their views would be kept confidential. Anonymity was guaranteed, as no names of participants were written on the questionnaire and none would appear on any part of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using the interpretational analysis approach (Gall et al., 1996). This refers to examining the data for themes, patterns and constructs that can be used to describe and explain the issue being studied. First the individual responses from each participant were read and analysed several times to become familiar with the data (Bryman, 2012) and to form a clear understanding of the information. The data were coded using open coding and, thereafter, analysed inductively by examining it closely to develop patterns, themes and categories (Creswell, 2009). Common themes were developed for the combined data for all participants. Thematic content analysis coupled with verbatim statements from the participants were therefore the main mechanism by which data were analysed.

FINDINGS

Data for this study were subjected to the interpretational analysis approach (Gall et al., 1996) The following key themes were developed to guide the presentation of findings: usefulness of the workshop, the use

of assessment to influence students' learning styles, usefulness of Bloom`s taxonomy, types of assessment and strategic use of assessment to influence students' approaches to learning.

Usefulness of the assessment workshop

Participants were generally agreed that the assessment workshop was very empowering, as it helped them to acquire useful assessment skills, knowledge and competencies in the design of a variety of assessment tasks and instruments. Many participants indicated that they were ready to apply the knowledge they gained, not only to enhance their assessment skills, but to improve student learning outcomes in general. The following responses were representative:

I learnt how to assess students effectively, I have been doing surface teaching and I now want to focus on the application. (Participant 9)

The workshop should be made compulsory for all academics, as it empowers them in their facilitation and assessment activities. (Participant 12)

The strategic use of assessment to influence students learning habits

Academics were asked to share their understanding of how the assessments can be used strategically to influence students learning approaches. It emerged that several senior academics were familiar with how assessment tasks can be set in such a way that students change their approach to their studies. The quotations below were representative:

By setting your tests and assignment in a certain way, you are actually communicating to your students the way you would like them to approach their studies. For instance, if you want your students to adopt the problem-based learning approach, then design your assessment tasks around problems. (Participant 5)

The best way to test students how to prepare a sauce in Hospitality is to ask them to demonstrate practically. You cannot assess this meaningfully through multiple-choice questions. (Participant 10)

However, the early career academics were not aware of the use of assessment to influence students' patterns of studying. For instance, some new lecturers indicated that their choice of an assessment is determined by the class size and convenience of marking**.**

Forms of assessment

Participants indicated that the assessment forms they learnt were useful and relevant to their work and they explained how they would use formative assessment, summative assessment, norm-referenced assessment and criterion-referenced assessment to improve teaching, learning and assessment activities. It also came to light that before the workshop, many participants had a narrow view of assessment, viewing it as a separate activity that comes at the end of a learning phase. The following responses were typical:

Formative assessment is a teaching strategy that helps the lecturer to prepare students for formative assessment. Before students are able to tackle tests and examinations (summative assessment), they need to be supported, guided, given feedback, which is

the essence of formative assessment. (Participant 14)

The need to blend the use of different assessment strategies in line with student diverse needs was underlined. With regards to the distinction between formative and summative assessment, participants indicated that each of these plays a significant role in students' learning. In this way, it became clear that there is no single assessment strategy or method that is sufficient on its own. The integration of a variety of assessment strategies was therefore seen as key to effective teaching.

I was impressed with how I would be able to set outcomes for the course and the examination for the course. To test the achievement of these outcomes, I would need to assess students summatively. However, I need to guide, coach and mentor my students during every lesson or practical so that they are helped to realise the stated learning outcomes. This day-to-day coaching and mentoring require me to employ formative assessment. (Participant 7)

Criterion-referenced assessment appealed to participants. Participants raised the concern that it is not always easy for them to align their assessment with the learning outcomes and what is taught, which is the essence of criterion-referenced assessment. The workshop was therefore regarded as offering space for academics to acquire skills of aligning teaching with assessment. Their responses were supportive.

Criterion-referenced assessment helps me in setting learning outcomes and what assessment tasks to include and students will know what they will be assessed on in the test and examination. (Participant 10)

When students know the assessment criteria, I will be better equipped to do effective assessments with my students. (Participant 7)

It gives me confidence, as students would know what they would be assessed on and how. This makes all learning transparent and ethical. (Participant 14)

Bloom`s taxonomy

Bloom taxonomy was already known to several academics, but they had challenges with implementing it, particularly at the higher levels. Academics raised the concern that it was not always easy to balance the questions in an assessment in accordance with Bloom's level of complexity. The following comments were noteworthy:

The challenge with our diverse classes, if you set too many questions at the higher order level, the students will fail and the lecturer is in trouble. If you set many questions at the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy, all students will pass and this raises questions about the suitability of the paper. (Participant 9)

Timing of assessment

It was indicated by participants that training on assessment should be done before much teaching and learning starts, preferably at the beginning of the year. This was in recognition of the importance of the workshop to the lecturers. Selected comments can help clarify the point:

The workshop on assessment is empowering and should be held before any teaching starts in the faculties. (Participant 13)

The workshop should be made compulsory to all lecturers as it capacitates them in their teaching. (Participant 18)

Training workshops on assessment should be held regularly. (Participant 1)

Training should be done during periods when lecturers are relaxed. (Participant 10)

Training should not be done during examination time. (Participant 4)

DISCUSSION

From the findings, it is evident that the key to effective assessment is aligning learning outcomes with what is taught and what is assessed. This requires university teachers to state desired outcomes in the form of criteria that students are expected to achieve. As Biggs (2003) succinctly expresses, matching individual students' performances against set criteria requires making holistic judgments. This is the essence of criterion-referenced assessment, which is made even more effective through the use of criterion-referenced rubrics. The use of criterion-referenced rubrics helps make assessment democratic, progressive and fair. When students are given rubrics containing the dimensions on which they would be assessed, chances of student acrimony and complaints about marks diminish.

The study has shown that it is critical for all academics to be aware of the way in which assessments can be used to influence students learning, which is the essence of the backwash effect of assessment. Thus, the decision on which assessments to use in class needs to be informed by the impact of that type of assessment on the students' future learning, and not on the mere ease of marking on the part of the academic. This links up very well with what Briggs and Tang (2011) refer to as constructive alignment, whereby all that is learned in class should be well related to what is taught in class and how it is taught (Anderson, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Although formative assessment was reported as useful in ensuring that assessment of outcomes is performed regularly so that feedback is used to improve subsequent learning activities (Anderson, 2017), it was accorded a low status as compared to summative assessment. This means that academics need to align their beliefs about formative assessment with practice on the ground. The limited use of formative assessment strategies in universities as compared to summative assessment gives credence to the argument that the university assessment system is still disproportionately examination centred. Without dismissing the value of summative assessment, it is crucial to point out that feedback, which is central to formative assessment, benefits both the lecturer and the student in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (Pinger et al., 2017).

It is therefore critical to point out that while summative assessment remains vital, it should not become the dominant assessment strategy in the university (Lok et al., 2016).

It emerged that the principle of Bloom's taxonomy, while known to many academics, continues to present implementation challenges to academics, particularly at the higher levels of the

taxonomy. There is therefore a need for more professional development programmes on the incorporation of Bloom's taxonomies in the design of teaching, learning and assessment tasks. It is suggested in this study that poor student performance and inflated marks are associated with the lecturer's inability to mix questions in such a way that students are assessed on low, average and high cognitive skills (Forehand, 2010).

Educational Implications

This study has important implications for educational practice in general and assessment in particular. The fact that assessment influences the manner in which students approach their studies serves as a reasonable justification for universities to invest more in the continuous professional development of their staff in teaching, learning and assessment.

Lecturers should use various forms of assessment in order to stimulate and sustain the learning needs of their diverse student population. Assessment should be conducted on a continuous basis so that students could benefit from the feedback they receive to improve their academic performance. Examinations, tests and assignments should take into account Bloom's taxonomy so that all students' learning styles and cognitive abilities are accommodated in teaching, learning and assessment processes.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the perceptions of hospitality lecturers on the efficacy of a workshop on assessment conducted at a university in South Africa. This study builds upon the existing knowledge on promoting quality student learning by exploring the issue of assessment and how it is conceptualised and implemented by academics in the school of hospitality at a particular university in South Africa. Its empirical findings and the literature on current assessment practices in HE point to the need to engage academics in professional development programmes on assessment so as to develop their knowledge and skills as effective university teachers. The study has depicted assessment as a lever that does not only measure students' level of understanding or skills level, but also influences the manner in which they approach their studies. It is therefore important that academics develop the necessary competencies to design, implement and evaluate pedagogically sound assessment protocols in their programmes. This places capacity development of academics in the area of assessment development, implementation and evaluation at the centre of the academic enterprise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made to inform higher education teaching practice in general and assessment of learning in particular. It is recommended that universities conduct induction programmes and short courses for academics that foreground the essence of assessment planning, implementation and evaluation. This is important, given the fact that many university academics are primarily employed on the strength of their disciplinary expertise, but with very little pedagogical grounding. Engaging academics in professional development on sound assessment practices will therefore be critical to the enhancement of effective professional practice and ultimately student learning outcomes. It is also suggested that universities actively

promote the use of learning communities as spaces to enable university teachers to share, critique and validate existing teaching and assessment practices in their programmes, schools and faculties with a view to enhance overall student learning outcomes.

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MATHEMATICS TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF GEOGEBRA INTEGRATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The South African Government has made concerted efforts to introduce GeoGebra and similar open-source dynamic graphics mathematics software to schools. This study appreciates that teachers are crucial in the integration 3of technology that assists in teaching, including GeoGebra, and hence focuses on exploring teachers' perceptions about the value of using GeoGebra. This article presents four qualitative case studies that illustrate the views and experiences of selected teachers in the integration of GeoGebra within a South African curriculum context. Located in the interpretivism paradigm, the researchers listened to the views, opinions and understandings of teachers concerning the integration of GeoGebra. Data were generated by conducting semi-structured interviews with four purposively sampled teachers from four high schools in the Bojanala District in the North-West Province of South Africa. The key finding of this study revealed the need to strengthen the professional development of teachers concerning the integration of GeoGebra into the mathematics curriculum. The study concluded that teachers are enthusiastic in applying GeoGebra as they believed that it was valuable in teaching mathematics to South African high school student. The study recommends the enhancement of professional development with a focus on GeoGebra because of its strong link to the South African curriculum.

Keywords: Information, communication, technology, integration, GeoGebra software, mathematics

INTRODUCTION

In order to master mathematics, it is essential to develop specific skills of understanding in applying problem-solving strategies. These include the solving of equations and their logical application which require an attentive approach to ensure accurate solutions (Iji, Abah, & Uka, 2013). The use of mathematics software facilitates such processes (Zilinskiene, 2014). As most learners perceive mathematics as being abstract and difficult to understand, teachers have become increasingly key in the integration of ICT and mathematics (Bayaga, Mthethwa, Bosse & Williams, 2019). Teachers' perceptions of their ability to use ICT effectively influence their quality of teaching mathematics. There are various ICT tools that are available to use in the education environment such as *Mathematica*, *Matlab,* and *Maple*. These tools have been used to teach, reinforce and enhance the teaching-learning of mathematics of those who use them regularly and effectively (Kilicman, Hassan, & Husain, 2010). GeoGebra has been explored in various studies, and results

show that it enhances learners' conceptual understanding and instils positive attitudes towards mathematics learning (Adegoke, 2016). In addition, it promotes the professional development of teachers, specifically in the teaching of mathematics (Jelatu, Sariyasa, & Ardana, 2018). It is also known to improve the understanding of mathematical concepts in geometry (Singh, 2018), trigonometry (Kepceoglu, 2016), and linear algebra (Mudaly & Fletcher, 2019). This study explores teachers' perceptions of what they regard as significant concerning integrating GeoGebra into the teaching of mathematics.

GeoGebra is widely used in South African high schools especially in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Gauteng (Bayaga et al, 2019; Chimuka, 2017). Mushipe and Ogbonnaya (2019) postulate that the impact of integrating GeoGebra and mathematics teaching-learning was remarkably positive. Since GeoGebra is a free mathematics software programme, it can also be used for teaching statistics and probability, geometry and functions, and can be applied at different school levels. It has received numerous awards since 2002 (Hohenwarter & Lavicza, 2009; Majerek, 2014; Zilinskiene, 2014). *GeoGebra,* as the name suggests, is a combination of "geometry" and "algebra", is known to be an innovative, open-code mathematics software (GNU General Public Licence) that can be downloaded free of charge from the www.GeoGebra.org website which works within a wide spectrum of operating system platforms that have the Java virtual machine installed (Dikovic, 2017).

Most South African schools have access to ICT tools and various mathematics software programmes (Ford & Botha, 2014; Van Wyk, 2014). GeoGebra is widely used in South African high schools with most research showing its use in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Gauteng and Limpopo (Bayaga et al., 2019; Chimuka, 2017). It is therefore imperative to explore teachers' views in the value of GeoGebra in their teaching of mathematics in South African high schools.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African Department of Education has made strides in providing ICT resources in schools and upskilling teaching in using the provided the ICT resources (Van Wyk, 2014). However, according to Banas (2010) and Tella et al. (2007), teachers struggle with the actual integration of technology into their mathematics lessons. Hence, it is important to establish teachers' perceptions of the value of GeoGebra in teaching mathematics within the South African high school curriculum.

Furthermore, Macias (2017) indicates that a positive learning environment is possible when teachers take on a leadership role in applying innovative processes of teaching. The bottom-up structured professional development approach is deemed to provide flexibility for teachers to collaborate and construct knowledge. Hence, this study seeks to establish teachers' perceptions of the value of integrating GeoGebra software with the teaching of mathematics in South African high schools.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research is underpinned by technology pedagogy and content knowledge (TPACK) as a conceptual framework. Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) is the concept that encapsulates the integration of technology into the teaching and learning

environment (Chai, Koh & Tsai, 2013). TPACK is described as an amalgamation form of knowledge that aims to integrate ICT into teaching and learning in any classroom. This interaction results in seven components included within the TPACK framework: technology knowledge (TK), content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), PCK, technological content knowledge (TCK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Chai et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2009). TPACK is known to be "the basis of effective teaching with technology which requires an understanding of concepts representation using technology; pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content, knowledge concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress some of the problems" (Koehler, Mishra & Cain 2013, p. 16).

This study seeks to engage teachers in their views and opinions of the value of GeoGebra in the integration of GeoGebra in the mathematics teaching. In reaching this objective, the study seeks answers relating to the teachers' knowledge of mathematics and how what they consider to be valuable in teaching with GeoGebra. TPACK is relevant as a framework in giving the guideline of measure of the value that teachers place in GeoGebra as a technological tool of choice. In order to answer the research question, what are teachers perceived value of GeoGebra in the integration of GeoGebra in South African high school. TPACK offers the measurement and assessment instrument with which to engage the knowledge and practices of teachers in the integration of technology into the teaching environment which informs what they consider valuable about GeoGebra.

LITERATURE REVIEW

High School Mathematics Curriculum in South Africa

The administrative structure of South African schools is divided into primary schools (Grade 1-7) and high or secondary schools (Grade 8-12). The high school band is divided into the Senior Phase (Grade 8-9) and the FET Phase (Grade 10-12). Mathematics is compulsory from primary school level until the last phase of GET, which is Grade 9. Mutodi and Ngirande (2014) state that mathematics performance in South Africa is one of the worst globally. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse what other researchers have observed to be a challenge concerning poor mathematics results.

Spaull (2013) argues that the challenge emanates from primary school where all teachers are expected to teach mathematics, regardless of whether they have qualifications in mathematics or not. Furthermore, Prew (2013) mentions that in the year 2012, 84 secondary schools did not offer mathematics at matric level. Less than 50% of matric learners from the two best performing provinces in South Africa – Western Cape and Gauteng – sat for mathematics in their final examination. This is a reflection of a poor situation concerning mathematics education in South Africa. It is, therefore, important to consider the content aspects of mathematics covered in the South African curriculum, and how this content relates to the mathematical knowledge and skills that GeoGebra has to offer.

Researchers such as, Kumar & Kumaresan, 2008; Okafor & Anaduaka, 2013 point out that part of the challenge in understanding mathematics lies in its abstract nature making it difficult to grasp mathematical concepts and its applications.

Learners fail to develop the crucial visualisation and exploration skills required for mathematics. Hence, GeoGebra is a tool to assist mathematics teachers and learners, as it is regarded as one of the best mathematics software packages that illustrate mathematics ideas with its visualisation technique (Majerek, 2014). This simplifies the understanding of difficult and abstract mathematics concepts. With the introduction of GeoGebra into South African high schools, the study seeks to establish its value in mathematics teaching-learning.

Integration of ICT in Mathematics Teaching and Learning in SA

The DoE (2012, p. 5), as articulated in its National Curriculum Statement (NCS), aims to produce learners who have the ability to "identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking". Learners also need to be able to use technology effectively, with an understanding that problem-solving does not happen in isolation (DoE, 2012).

The Mathematics teaching and learning framework proposes teachers need to aim to develop critical awareness skills and the aptitude to handle mathematics problems in all learning environments, even in real-life situations (DBE, 2018). Therefore, when the curriculum is being designed, it is supposed to cater for this aim. It is a known fact that integrating technology in teaching and learning will enhance and develop learners' problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. This study explores teachers' views regarding the integration of ICT software and the teaching of mathematics in the SA high school curriculum, focusing on the FET Phase. The mathematics curriculum in the FET Phase under the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), is divided into several topics (DBE, 2011): functions, number patterns, sequence series, finance growth and decay, algebra, differential calculus, probability, Euclidean geometry and measurement, analytical geometry, trigonometry, and statistics.

GeoGebra Integration in Mathematics Teaching and Learning in SA classrooms

This section explores relevant literature that links the effectiveness and relevance of GeoGebra to the South African high school mathematics curriculum. GeoGebra is known as an open-source dynamic graphics mathematics software that offers geometry, algebra, statistics and calculus in a connected, user-friendly software environment. It has a variety of features that makes mathematics relatable (Dikovic, 2017; Kovacs, 2014; Majerek, 2014). Marejek (2014, p. 52) describes the main features of GeoGebra software as follows:

> … free for non-commercial use, multi-platform; clear and easy understanding graphical user interface; rich database of ready-made examples; technical documentation in many languages; marking objects follow the mathematical syntax; ability to save a project in multiple formats; works with LaTeX; all objects in GeoGebra are dynamic; possibility to publish the work on the website through JavaScript.

Below, the effectiveness of the integration of GeoGebra in mathematics topics that are part of the South African high school curriculum is explored.

Effectiveness of GeoGebra in Algebra

Functions refer to mathematics work that relates to the relationship between

variables in terms of numerical, graphical, verbal and symbolic representations of functions (Van de Walle et al., 2015). The functions may be represented as tables, graphs, words and formulas. The algebra section of the curriculum also encompasses the investigation of algebraic expressions and the simplification of exponents. Learners have to understand the mathematical rules and language necessary for effective learning (DBE, 2011). For example, when dealing with algebraic concepts, one needs to multiply the binomials – a binomial has two terms; for instance, $2x - 2$.

Mushipe and Ogbonnaya (2019) found that learners who were taught linear functions using GeoGebra outperformed learners who were taught the same topic using "chalk and talk". Mudaly and Fletcher (2019) attest that GeoGebra is effective in teaching linear algebra where the gradient and the *y* intercept of a line may be investigated. Moreover, Brzezinski (2017) designed various GeoGebra applications where teachers and learners can experiment and learn about solving quadratic equations.

Effectiveness of GeoGebra in Euclidean Geometry and Measurement

According to the DBE (2011), the Euclidean geometry and measurement section in the FET South African curriculum includes the investigation of the properties of special triangles, quadrilaterals and polygons (isosceles, equilateral and the right-angle triangles, e.g. the kite). Choong and Hale (2017) designed a GeoGebra application that illustrates the teaching of geometry concepts which involved noting various properties of triangles using GeoGebra. GeoGebra simplified the drawing of sides and measuring of angles. For example, for a scalene triangle, it was clear that all its sides and interior angles were not equal.

Various studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of GeoGebra in teaching Geometry. Venkataraman (2012) found that learners assisted by the GeoGebra application made better progress towards mathematical understandings, which provides a foundation for further deductive reasoning in mathematics. Several studies highlighted the impact of GeoGebra in the understanding of Euclidian Geometry with a special focus on lines, angles, triangles, and problem-solving skills (Jelatu, Sariyasa, & Ardana, 2018; Singh, 2018; Khalil, Sultana, & Khalil, 2017). Additionally, Yildiz and Baltaci (2016) and Shadaan and Eu (2013) illustrated the positive impact of understanding circles, and cylindrical and spherical coordinates through the integration of GeoGebra.

Effectiveness of GeoGebra in Teaching Trigonometry

Using GeoGebra software for high school mathematical functions (Trigonometry), helps to perform the following classroom task: Evaluate trigonometric functions of an angle given on its terminal ray (Brzezinski, 2017). As illustrated in Figure 1 below, for demonstrational and experimental purposes, Point P may be dragged wherever a teacher or learner chooses for [Min, Max] both coordinates equal to [10, 10]. The same image may be copied and pasted on Microsoft Word as part of the assignment and used as part of the learning process.

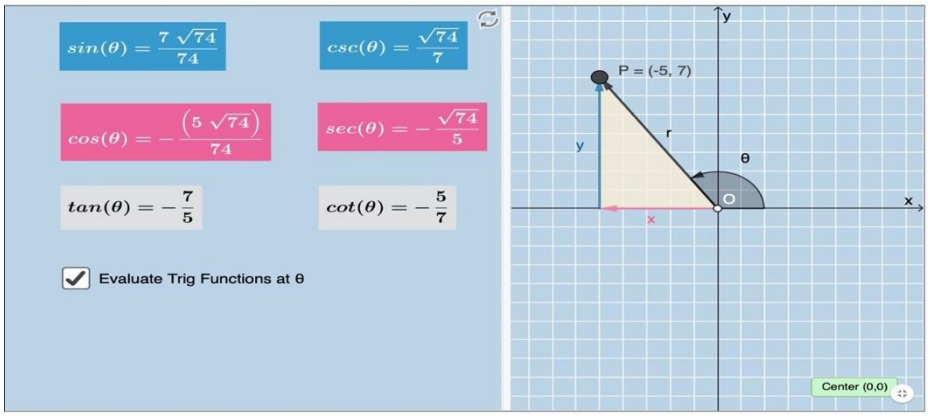

Figure 1: Illustration of integration of trigonometric GeoGebra functions in teaching trigonometry

According to Zengin, Furkan and Kutluca (2012) and Kepceoglu (2016), GeoGebra is effective in teaching trigonometric concepts with a special focus in periodicity of trigonometric functions. Hence, it can be concluded that the integration of GeoGebra helps in creating a learning environment in which learners can discover, explore, estimate and visualise. It has the characteristic of promoting the conceptual understanding of abstract mathematics concepts that are included in the South African high school mathematics curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a larger research project that qualitatively explored how teachers integrate GeoGebra in their teaching of mathematics in South African high schools. This particular study used interpretivism as a paradigm to explore such teachers' views. Interpretivism is a paradigm where individuals seek to understand their world by providing participants with opportunities to share their experiences, views and opinions (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The qualitative approach has been particularly suitable for this study, as the meaning of the phenomenon was made clear by using the views, perceptions and experiences of the participants (Maree, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Okeke and Van Wyk (2016), qualitative research methods are concerned with understanding human thoughts and behaviour with an emphasis on the meaning they attach to their actions. We therefore considered in detail the cases of four teachers, each as a separate case, and proceeded with an intra-case analysis. Punch (2013) maintains that the case study is an empirical research method that investigates the phenomenon within its real-life setting and relies on multiple sources of evidence. We, therefore, considered the narratives of the four participating teachers as separate entities and cross-examined their responses in search of commonalities and differences.

In order to gather the necessary data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews, which facilitated a subjective relationship with the participants to understand the integration of GeoGebra from their perspective. Four teachers from four different high schools in the Bojanala District of North-West Province were selected using purposive sampling. The data generated was transcribed, coded and categorised into meaningful themes that emanated from the data. The use of both the

semi-structured interview and observation methods ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. All the participants signed the consent forms to illustrate their willingness to participate voluntarily in the study.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to fully understand teachers' perceptions of how they value GeoGebra in mathematics teaching in South African high schools, the responses of four sampled teachers were considered. The sampled teachers received training in the integration of GeoGebra, and also use GeoGebra in their mathematics teaching. They shared their stories through the unstructured interviews. The sampled teachers in this study are referred to using their pseudonyms as follows: Mr Magwe, Mr Sebaya, Mr Golenyane and Mr Maziya (all pseudonyms) – are provided. Below is the biographical information of the participants, outlining their qualifications and experiences in the teaching of mathematics.

Biographical background of the participants

The biographical data described below indicates the qualification and level of experience of all four selected participants in terms of teaching mathematics:

- Mr Magwe is a high-school teacher with six years' experience in teaching mathematics, physical science and technology from Grades 8 to 12. He holds a BSc in Computer Science and Electronics, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). He has been utilising other ICT tools, and recently has been using GeoGebra for 18 months.
- Mr Sebaya is a teacher with six years' experience in teaching mathematics, natural science and technology from Grade 8 to 13. He taught in many provinces in South Africa. He holds a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree, a PGCE in natural science and mathematics, and a Bachelor of Commerce degree in statistics. He has been using other ICT tools, but currently has been utilising GeoGebra for over a year.
- Mr Golenyane is a teacher with nine years' experience in teaching mathematics, natural science and computer science. He holds a BSc (Computer Science) degree and a PGCE qualification. He has been using GeoGebra and other ICT software tools for a period of six years.
- Mr Maziya is a teacher with five years' experience in teaching mathematics and physical science in Grades 8, 10 and 12. He holds a BEd degree in science and mathematics, a BEd (Honours) degree in physical science, and is currently working on his MEd. He has been using other ICT tools but has utilised GeoGebra for over a year.

Integration of GeoGebra and its Connection to CAPS

The CAPS document outlines the mathematics content areas that need to be taught in South African high schools. It stipulates that the mathematics content should be taught in a manner that develops learners' mathematical reasoning, and creative and reasoning skills (DBE, 2011). As this study focused on teachers' perceptions of the integration of GeoGebra and the teaching of mathematics in South African high schools. Therefore, it was

imperative to establish whether they perceived GeoGebra to be relevant in the South African high school mathematics curriculum as outlined in the CAPS document. Participants unanimously agreed that most topics from the CAPS document could be taught by using GeoGebra. Mr Sebaya's responses are mentioned in the following excerpts:

> Yeah, because [for] most of the topics that are there, you can use GeoGebra. For example, the graphs, trigonometry and geometry are there on the CAPS document and you can also teach them using GeoGebra.

Mr Sebaya elaborated:

> Yah, in CAPS, you have functions, geometry … you have trig. All these topics, one can easily teach them using GeoGebra.

He further used the concept of gradient to illustrate how GeoGebra works:

> Calculate the gradient of the first line and the gradient and the coordinates, but there I just … you know, click, and then it gives me the gradient.

However, his interpretation of the two lines on the same Cartesian plane was incorrect because he thought the multiplication of two gradients would give an indication of the length of the line, whereas the multiplication of the two gradients gives an indication of whether the two lines are parallel or perpendicular. The following statement by Mr Sebaya confirmed his misconception:

> And then they would ask, now this is the gradient of this line, this is the gradient of this line and they can now multiply the two gradients to check if the lines are big or not. But if I have to do that on the chalkboard it was going [sic] to take me some time.

Mr Sebaya found GeoGebra valuable to teach functions. He mentioned that GeoGebra was important in comparing different types of graphs as the learners were able to observe the changes. Venkataraman (2012) affirms that GeoGebra makes the teaching and learning of mathematics meaningful and relevant. Mr Sebaya also noticed that the learning environment changed and improved when learners witnessed the advantages of GeoGebra's input. He stated:

> GeoGebra is so good … like in terms of comparison, you need to compare graphs. It's easy to compare different types of graphs and learners are observing. I can see the change in learners; they understand … and that is what I like.

Mr Golenyane also emphasised that he found GeoGebra to be relevant in teaching mathematics as outlined in the CAPS document. He hailed GeoGebra as a useful innovation in the teaching of geometry. He said that theorems, and the elements of circles were some of the topics included in CAPS, which he also taught using GeoGebra. His response follows:

> CAPS covers lots of topics. You know, like geometry, when we are going to be dealing with theorems, for instance, like [the] angle at the centre is twice the angle at the circumference, I teach those concepts using GeoGebra.

He elaborated on how he used GeoGebra in teaching geometry, giving the example that the circle has four spheres and how he used GeoGebra to demonstrate this:

> Why are they saying that? And then, by using the GeoGebra software, then you are just only to go there and pick the sphere and show them why are we saying the sphere has got four circles.

Maziya also believed GeoGebra was relevant in teaching mathematics in line with the South African curriculum. He gave examples of the correlation between CAPS and GeoGebra and stated that CAPS required graphs being taught to Grade 9 learners, especially how to draw the graphs. Accordingly, GeoGebra is a useful tool in drawing all kinds of graphs. Mr Maziya responded:

> Yeah, they do, they do match, CAPS and GeoGebra because, if for example, I am using GeoGebra to teach geometry at Grade 9 for example, or graphs, or and then CAPS, yes, CAPS would be saying learners have to be taught how to draw graphs. Meaning that automatically, if GeoGebra allows me to draw a graph on the graph slope, then definitely we rely [sic]. Yeah, because it supports what CAPS wants us to do.

Participants unanimously agreed that GeoGebra was a valuable tool to use in teaching mathematics in a South African high school curriculum setting.

Value of GeoGebra in Creating a Vibrant Learning Environment

Bower et al. (2010) hypothesise that the introduction of ICT in a learning environment encourages active engagement between learners and their teachers, as well as among learners themselves. Participants indicated that they found GeoGebra to be valuable in creating an exciting learning atmosphere as it enhances conceptual understanding. Mr Sebaya indicated that learners got excited at the sight of technological tools:

> GeoGebra has the ability to create an interesting learning atmosphere ... So, they were like 'oh you brought your laptop' like … they just like it when you are using technology...

Mr Magwe confirmed that GeoGebra encourages learners to be enthusiastic about learning, and therefore it encouraged independent learning. He noted that learners would be eager to share their learning experiences after they had worked on some mathematics problems independently. This further displayed a sense of enthusiasm for learning mathematics. Magwe responded:

> They would come to you and say, 'are you aware that with that software you gave us yesterday-?' that means when they got home they didn't go anywhere, they just stayed and they were interested in learning more.

Mr Maziya also shared similar sentiments indicating that learners would be thrilled with just the mention of the mathematics lesson being conducted in the mathematics laboratory.

> Learners love to work with technology. They will be so excited when you say, today we are working in the lab. I

> would give them maybe a classwork task to work on. Let's say we did a maths lesson in class. Yah… next time we will go to the lab and continue the maths we did in class.

From the above response, it was evident that learners look forward to a lesson that incorporates technology; and GeoGebra was contributing immensely in creating an interactive and exciting learning environment. Bower, Hedberg and Kuswara (2010) affirm that the introduction of ICT in a learning environment encourages interactive engagement between learners and their teachers, and amongst learners themselves.

The CAPS document (DBE, 2011) outlines the policy concerning the teaching of all school subjects, including mathematics. The value and workings of GeoGebra align to the aims and content areas in the South African curriculum document (DBE, CAPS, 2011). Mathematics learning has to include "an appreciation for the beauty and elegance of mathematics". Zilinskiene (2014) elaborates that GeoGebra is used mainly for demonstration, exploration, modelling, creation, and experimental work. From the participants' perceptions of GeoGebra, it is clear that it added significant value in solving mathematics problems, in addition to creating enjoyable experiences while learning mathematics. Moreover, the appreciation of mathematics as a subject of interest is amply evident; a change from it being previously abstract and boring - this challenge the general stereotype that mathematics is difficult and meaningless.

6.3 GeoGebra for Visualisation and Conceptual Understanding of Mathematics

This appreciation is shared by other researchers (Venkataraman, 2012; Zilinskiene, 2014), who confirm that GeoGebra is a valuable tool in helping learners visualise and conceptually understand mathematics. Azizul and Din (2018) concur that GeoGebra enhances the visualisation and understanding of mathematical concepts for both the teacher and the learner.

Moreover, the aims of teaching mathematics in the South African context include a "deep conceptual understanding in order to make sense of mathematics" (DBE, 2011:8). Similarly, the participants felt that GeoGebra was vital in the visualisation and conceptual understanding of mathematics.

Participants further indicated that GeoGebra was valuable because it helped learners visualise the abstract aspects of mathematics, while it also helped with conceptual understanding. Mr Magwe refers to the teaching of the abstract aspects of geometry when he wanted learners to understand that there is no angle that is 180 degrees because 180 degrees lies on a straight line.

> …when you can relate it stays in their mind that I cannot have an angle that is 180 degrees because it's just a line. When the lines have been connected and triangles drawn, learners see, this is the angle and this is the length….

Mr Golenyane added that learners often struggle with understanding graphs. They may confuse the aspect of gradient when the graph is increasing or decreasing. He made an example of how GeoGebra helps learners to visualise this aspect of algebra in learning functions succinctly:

> When we are comparing the graphs, why are we saying this graph is increasing, why are we saying this graph is decreasing. In GeoGebra, you can draw these graphs, then show learners that when the gradient is like this, then there is increasing graph; and when the gradient is like this, then there is decreasing graph.

From the above participants' views, it was evident that teachers perceived GeoGebra to be valuable as a tool that simplifies abstract concepts in mathematics to become relatable and meaningful. In sum, GeoGebra presented learners with opportunities to visualise and understand abstract concepts.

GeoGebra as a Valuable Time-management Tool

GeoGebra was also found valuable by participants in assisting them with their time- management. Participants indicated that they found GeoGebra to be valuable in teaching of mathematics because it allowed them to draw accurate diagrams without spending too much of their teaching time. Mr Magwe appreciated the GeoGebra software because of the feature that provided the accurate angle measurements. It is difficult to draw an angle of correct measurement (degrees) on the board - an inaccurate angle may distort the information. This could ultimately lead to misconceptions in mathematics. Mr Magwe praised GeoGebra, stating that:

> I have once tried Microsoft. But it always limits you. The triangles wouldn't be that perfect; sometimes they don't give you your 90 degrees angles precisely like GeoGebra.

Mr Magwe showed his elation with GeoGebra by illustrating that it saves time in the teaching of functions. He mentioned that he would just insert a few instructions on GeoGebra and the accurate Cartesian plane will be available for learners, and then learning proceeded without delay. He responded:

> Let's say, I'm teaching graphs… instead of re-drawing on the chalkboard you just click and open that page; open and explain whatever you want to explain… previously you had to draw it on the board, if it's a complex model you take plus or minus 5 minutes drawing it and learners would be making noise or something. But now you just jump from 1 diagram to the next, it's as easy as that. But once you are used to it it's very convenient

Participants expressed their appreciation regarding the integration of GeoGebra into mathematics teaching and learning, largely for its ability to provide accurate drawings and save teaching time. In South Africa, teachers are expected to spend about five hours per week teaching mathematics (CAPS, 2011). Therefore, the participants found GeoGebra to be valuable in assisting them with time-management. GeoGebra was also valuable because it allowed them to draw precise diagrams with angles with precise measurements. Also, GeoGebra saved time in teaching functions. GeoGebra has a feature that requires a few instructions on the GeoGebra input tab, and the accurate Cartesian plane will be available for the learners, and then learning could promptly proceed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The overall perceptions of the participants about GeoGebra indicated that they got "value for money" concerning the GeoGebra software for it created an exciting learning atmosphere relevant to the South African mathematics curriculum. Further, teachers perceived GeoGebra to be a valuable tool because it could help learners understand functions, geometry and some aspects of trigonometry. However, some examples which teacher-participants articulated showed a lack of understanding in the use of GeoGebra; this meant that with adequate training, practice and exposure, they could soon access, apply and exploit the GeoGebra software to its full capacity to benefit all learners (and teachers). Furthermore, as some of the teacher participants gave examples of an information gap in terms of assessing the effectiveness of the integration of technology in the teaching and learning of mathematics in South African high schools, there is need for further investigation. The teachers demonstrated basic understanding of the functions of the GeoGebra software, but needed more in-depth knowledge of practically applying it as a technological tool in teaching mathematics. As expected, all the participants endorsed GeoGebra in teaching functions and geometry. They believed in the illustrative power of GeoGebra that stimulated conceptual understanding of some of the abstract geometrical and other mathematics concepts without wasting valuable teaching-learning time. From the teachers' articulations, it was evident that GeoGebra had more to offer; therefore, further training will be beneficial to both teachers and learners in enhancing the integration of ICT into the teaching and learning of mathematics in South African high schools.

Therefore, this study recommends the enhancement of professional development with a focus on GeoGebra because of its strong link to the South African curriculum. Professional development takes strong measure in securing information and communication technology tools for learners to gain practical experience of learning with technology.

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Application of Ubuntu Philosophy for the enhancement of Guidance and Counselling: An alternative for facilitating Inclusive Education in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper addresses Guidance and Counselling as a crucial component for supporting and facilitating inclusive education in Lesotho. Research on inclusive education in Lesotho uncovered that some of the problems such as negative attitude towards learners with special educational needs, and lack of support structures for them hamper efficient inclusive education implementation. The paper considers the development of Ubuntu oriented Guidance and Counselling (GC) in Lesotho schools as another alternative for facilitating inclusive and equitable quality education. The paper argues from an assumption that inclusive education process should be framed within humanistic psychology which cultivate the attitude that learning communities should provide humane educational conditions to meet the needs of each individual of the learning community. The author beliefs that the development Ubuntu oriented GC can help to eliminate any discrimination of personality, and equal attitude to all learners become a culture in inclusive schools. A narrative literature approach was adopted as method of enquiry and foundation for discussions. The conclusion is that Ubuntu values of collaboration, solidarity, social justice, empathy, care and empowerment are the necessary cultural capital to enhance GC in Lesotho schools. The paper recommends that Lesotho education authorities and policy makers should ensure that Ubuntu is adopted as a guiding philosophy for the development of strategies and approaches intended to facilitate inclusive education.

Key words: Guidance and counselling, enhancement, facilitation, inclusive education, Ubuntu

INTRODUCTION

Since the Proclamation-Everyone has the right to education-in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), education systems worldwide, have made significant strides to make education accessible to their citizens. Through 'Education For All' (EFA) international agenda, countries are adopting inclusive education. Lesotho, as a signatory to major United Nations treaties, has committed to the EFA ("Author, 2017"). It has committed to achieving sustainable development goal (SDG) number four; "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning". However, it is generally agreed that the road to achieving inclusive education is long and varied, with challenges and opportunities ("Author, 2014"). After many years of committing to inclusive education, many countries, including Lesotho, are struggling to practice inclusive education efficiently. Scholars assert that no government can realistically expect to switch overnight from special or integrated approaches to education to inclusive education ("Author, 2014, p. 41").

In attempts to make adjustments necessary for inclusive education practice, scholars have suggested adoption of humanistic approach to education ("Author, 2017; Author, 2017; Author, 2014; Author, 2005"). These scholars concur with "Author 2017" that humanistic education provide a foundation for personal growth

and development so that learning can continue throughout life in a self-directed manner. This article argues for the development of Ubuntu oriented GC. The author of this article argues from an assumption that problems such as emotional difficulties, poor self-image ("Author, 2014; Author, 2010"), negative attitudes and behaviours by teachers, and normal learners ("Author et al. 2012; Author, 2014; Author, 2015; Author, 2017; Author, 2017; Author, 2017") and injustices ("Author, 2014; Author, 2016") obstruct inclusive education practice. "Author et al. 2019, p.281" indicate that to provide the best service for inclusive education in schools, in addition to modifying the learning model, GC services are also needed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AND CLIENT-CENTERED THERAPY.

This paper looks at enhancement of GC from perspectives of humanistic psychology to education. "Author 2017" argue that humanistic approach to education is good step forward that will help in overcoming the long standing challenges of inclusive education. "Author 2014" concur that inclusive education is the result of humanity ideas development based on the exclusive value of the human personality, their uniqueness and the right for the decent life. As such, strategies and approaches intended to facilitate inclusive education need to be guided by humanistic psychology that fosters conducive learning communities that enable learners to develop creative abilities ("Author, 2017"). "Author 2014" posits that inclusive education denotes equitable learning community where there is no any group of people isolated from the rest. It means the interests of any group of people are not suppressed by the interests and needs of others ("Author, 2014"). "Author 2017" postulate that the purpose of humanistic education is to provide a foundation for personal growth and development so that learning will continue throughout life in a self- directed manner. This article has adopted Ubuntu philosophy and Person-Centred Therapy of Carl Rogers as frameworks for GC enhancement.

Client-Centered Therapy: a humanistic approach to guidance and counselling

Client-centered therapy of Carl Rogers is a humanistic approach to guidance and counselling that emphasise respect for the human being. Its view of human nature is positive. It views a person as a unique, determined, free entity ("Author 2009"). The fundamental concept in this theory is the actualizing tendency, which according to Rogers, is an inherent self-directed tendency for the human organism to grow, develop and realise its potential ("Author, 2009; Author, 2005"). Rogers content that all people have the necessary resources for self-actualization. When a person fails to actualize his/her tendency, it has been blocked through environmental variables such as; conditions of worth-particular set of specific standards imposed on a person when his or her value is judged by others, and conditional positive regard ("Author, 2009"). Even though actualizing tendency can be impeded by external factors, this tendency activates in an environment characterised by genuineness, care, empathy and non-judgmental relationships.

Application of Client-Centered therapy in inclusive schools GC programmes aims at creating positive interpersonal environment through the attitude of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathetic understanding of individual learners' needs and challenges ("Author, 2005; Author, 2009"). In this type of counselling environment, learners experience acceptance and subsequently become more self-accepting. Unconditional self-acceptance permits learners to move toward self-fulfilment. Client-Centered therapy in African schools assumes that the relation

between a teacher and learners matters more that the techniques and methods that are considered important in other counselling approaches. “Author, 2005” claims that this nurturing relationship between the learner and the teacher counsellor can stimulate the inner resources of the learner and the innate capacity to find the best way to survive and enjoy life. Client-Centered therapy strives towards improving increased self-understanding, more positive feelings, greater self-exploration and improved self-concept. In inclusive schools, it can be adopted as a strategy for the promotion of learners’ resilience in the midst and context of various adverse conditions (“Author, 2005”).

Ubuntu/Botho Philosophy framework for Guidance and Counselling enhancement

Ubuntu philosophy can be infused in humanistic GC undertakings. It is an African philosophy of care and support that is concerned with the maintenance of well-being for all. Similar to Client-Centered therapy, Ubuntu aims at cultivating conducive and learner-friendly environments characterized by positive relationships. The appropriateness of Ubuntu in GC undertakings is supported by “Author et al. 2019”-in their contention that inclusion can be related to equality, justice, and individual rights in the distribution of resources. As such, inclusive education guided by Ubuntu is evidenced by an “educational reform that emphasizes anti-discrimination attitudes, the struggle for equal rights and opportunities, justice, and expansion of access to education for all...” (“Author et al., 2019”).

Moreover, the adoption of Ubuntu principles as a framework in this article is a response to the call by “Author 2018”-that; considering the challenges the African continent is faced with, it is necessary for people in their varying contexts to be oriented in Ubuntu principles since it can contribute towards general upliftment of African people. Ubuntu-orientated approaches and strategies for facilitating inclusive education, indicates mindfulness that for education to serve its purpose fully, it has to resonate with the socio-cultural context for which it is meant (“Author, 2018”). The Ubuntu principles of solidarity, harmony, social justice, empathy, tolerance, compassion, sharing, care and mutual support (“Author, 2011; Author, 2014; Author, 2013b; Author, 2017”) are values crucial for the enhancement of G/C and facilitation of inclusive education. The application of these values in counselling environment can promote positive emotions and self-esteem among learners experiencing challenges. According to “Author 2017”, teacher-student relationships are considered fundamental for students’ adjustment in schools.

Although it is argued that Ubuntu cannot on its own solve all the problems facing international agendas in this globalised world, this article argues that Ubuntu should continue to be integrated as the major social capital for developing new strategies for facilitation of inclusive education in Lesotho. Ubuntu tenets of collaboration, respect and integrity permits the creation of inclusive social and cognitive spaces for construction of knowledge needed to enhance GC. In the created social and cognitive spaces, no prescriptions have to be followed, instead, schools create their learning and solutions by collectively answering questions such as: How can we enhance GC? What is our target for enhancement of GC? What assets are needed and available to achieve this? How can we effectively utilize available support and resources? How can available support and resources be continuously strengthened? What expertise and resources does the school need from outside?

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper followed a narrative literature review as a method to establish

facts about inclusive education in Lesotho. This approach to literature helped the author identify patterns and trends in the literature, and found gaps in knowledge related to the facilitation of inclusive education in Lesotho. Although several studies in Lesotho have addressed inclusive education issues, many focused on challenges that obstruct its successful implementation. No study was found in Lesotho that discussed inclusive education from an African perspective of Ubuntu. Also, no study was found that discussed GC as another approach for facilitating inclusive education. The narrative approach to literature helped the author to contextualize the study, and establish Ubuntu as a theoretical framework. The study used articles published in credible scientific journals to strengthen arguments suggesting the enhancement of GC in inclusive schools from the perspectives of Ubuntu.

CONCEPTUALIZING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Several definitions are provided to conceptualize inclusive education. For example, "Author 2014, p.40" define inclusive education as an acceptance of all children without exception or discrimination into the neighbourhood schools that they should ordinarily attend. Similarly, "Author et al. 2019" state it is a form of education service which does not distinguish between regular students and those with special needs. Further, "Author et al. 2019" show that inclusive education is about inclusion of students in remote areas, isolated indigenous communities, areas experiencing natural disasters and social disasters. In the same vein, "Author 2016, p.100", posits that inclusive education "involves placing special pupils in regular schools with the necessary support services to raise their attainment and enhance their access to and participation in education". Moreover, "Author 2015, p.84" points out that the aim of inclusive education is "extending access to education, promotion of full participation in education system by all the students at risk of exclusion, and promotion of the opportunity of realisation of their own potential". "Author 2018, p.1" refers to inclusive education as "a process of addressing and responding to diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education".

Analysis of the above definitions provides that school systems should engage and make adjustments regarding curriculum, content, structures and strategies with a shared vision of including all children ("Author et al., 2019; Author, 2018; Author, 2017"). "Author, 2017, p.206" however argues that "no country has yet succeeded in constructing a school system that lives up to the ideals and intentions of inclusion as defined by international organizations". In this paper, inclusive education is understood as the process of educating all learners, regardless of their limitations. Inclusive education practice should ensure that each learner is supported to become a free member of a school and the community. Also, it has to empower learners to deal with challenges that pose a threat to their learning and academic achievement. Based on this understanding, the author argues for the enhancement of GC as another strategy to provide support to learners with special needs. At the same time, it is a strategy for mitigating threats to inclusive education, such as negative attitudes, maltreatment of learners with special education needs by their typical peers, and the emotional challenges that are reported to be common among learners with special educational needs ("Author, 2016"). GC is one educational support component that can promote attitudes of respect, acceptance and empathy. It can also promote opportunities for self-awareness and realization of one's potential while addressing emotions as integral to the school as a social world ("Author, 2016").

Its enhancement is viewed as part of a prudently designed approach to educate learners with diverse needs within the re-structured mainstream or school communities ("Author 2014). Enhancement of GC sits well with "Author, 2014" who argues that inclusive education is an effort that addresses inequalities in schooling and empowers learners with special educational needs (LSEN) to be independent. The following issues discussed hereunder are critical.

The context of inclusive education in Lesotho

Reports on issues of inclusive education in Lesotho show that for a long time, the Lesotho government had the plan to include learners with disabilities in education. Some reports show that even before the Education For All (EFA) initiative, Lesotho had already started movements in the direction of inclusive education. "Author, 1996" shows that the commitment to inclusive schooling was clearly reflected in establishing the Ministry's Special Education Unit and a series of national seminars conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1987 and 1988. Also, "Author, 1996" and "Author, 2012" concur that from 1990, the Lesotho Ministry of Education had already begun to explore ways to include disabled children within the school system. "Author 2009" shows that in1987, King Moshoeshoe II's charitable social organization "Hlokomela Bana" (Care for the children) called for a discussion on how to educate children with disabilities. Following the deliberations, it was recommended that Lesotho should move towards inclusive education because it fits into its cultural framework of extended family and caretaking of all children. It is, however evident that for a long time, there has been misunderstanding of what inclusive education involves. It seemed that instead of inclusion, integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream was adopted. "Author 2014" clarifies the concept of 'integration' as the placement of LSEN in mainstream schools that are unchanged, with an expectation that LSEN will adapt themselves to meet the expectations of the schools.

Further, "Author 2014" affirm that the two terms inclusive and integration are perceived to be synonymous in Lesotho. The Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy of 2018 "Author, 2018" however has clarified the difference between the two concepts. The policy defines inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It aspires for a conducive environment that best corresponds to learners' requirements and preferences ("Author, 2018"). Further, the policy clarifies that inclusive education involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of appropriate age range ("Author, 2018"). Integration is defined as "the process of placing persons with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions with the understanding that they can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions including existing contextual arrangements as well as the curricula provision and educational facilities" ("Author, 2018, p.1"). Ubuntu/Botho fits well with the inclusive education because its values of care, support, respect, social justice, solidarity and others can enhance inclusive practice.

Although GC provision is often omitted in inclusive education discourse, I firmly maintain that GC counselling is an indispensable component for the facilitation of inclusive education, and thus deserves cognitive and social space in inclusive education discourse. "Author 2014" supports the view that if the inclusive education model's effectiveness is discussed, the psychological dimension should also be considered. This paper

advocates for strengthening GC as a strategy for ensuring that the psychological dimension is attended to. For example, emotional difficulties in inclusive schools, poor self-image and other problematic behaviours such as bullying are of interest when discussing the appropriateness of G/C in inclusive schools.

Emotional difficulties in inclusive schools

Although negative emotions are generally reported to increase among the school-going population in recent years ("Author, 2016; Author, 2014"), research reveals that they are highly prevalent in inclusive schools ("Author et al. 2017; Author 2014; Author et al., 2019)". It is noted that learners with special education needs are psychologically and emotionally challenged ("Author, 2013; Author, 2016"). They are likely to fall behind academically since they may possess minimal urge to participate in learning and other activities intended by the inclusive education initiative. "Author 2012" identifies some of the challenges of learners with special needs as meeting personal needs, challenges in realizing life aspirations, high levels of ignorance, failure in some life endeavours, psychological stress and socio-economic problems. Besides, numerous studies have shown that children with learning disabilities often report lower global self-concept and imperfect specific academic self -concept than their peers without learning disabilities ("Author, 2010").

The human tendency of conditional positive regard for other people is a reality in inclusive schools. Learners are genuinely accepted if they meet generally perceived standards for participation in school activities. "Author et al., 2017" note that in some societies, people with disabilities tend to be less accepted by a majority of people who make discrediting statements about their attributes. Another study by "Author, 2015" found that children with special needs encountered difficulty in social interactions with regular class peers and teachers. They were often laughed at, or devalued in many ways during an interaction. "Author et al. 2020" also, note that one of the barriers to access for students with disabilities in mainstream schools is the negative attitude of typically developing peers. They further indicate that attitudes of children towards their peers with disabilities are positively correlated with the frequency of interacting with them during free play and activities. "Author et al 2020" believe that these attitudes can lead to avoidance of interactions with students with disabilities. Still, they can disrupt interactions, which can, in turn, cause low satisfaction from such interactions among people with disabilities. From these discussions, it can be deduced that negative attitude from normal learners and teachers can directly or indirectly trigger negative emotions of LSEN. Research shows that negative attitudes may be just as obstructive as physical barriers, limiting those with disabilities from participating fully in schools and communities "Author et al. 2012, p. 380". "Author et al., 2012" and "Author, et al., 2019" agree that learners with disabilities may experience low acceptance by peers, loneliness, rejection and bullying. "Author et al. 2019" add that such learners have less access to social support than their healthy peers. I concur with "Author et al. 2012" that this could badly result in declining academic performance, problematic behaviours and dropping out of school.

"Author, 2014" suggests that schools have a significant in creating an environment of acceptance and support for different people. Scholars indicate that social relationships play an essential role in mental health and well-being of all learners ("Author, et al., 2017; Author, 2014; Author, et al., 2019"). "Author et al. 2017" suggest there is the need to ensure high-quality relationships and availability of tailored support. The relationships with the close circle of people are regarded as

significant in increasing positive self-regard and emotional balance. "Author 2014" recommends social capital as a protective factor for positive emotions. He defines social capital as a network of social relations based on mutual support and faith in the other person, right ecological conditions, fighting discrimination and actively promoting health. This paper argues that through purposeful enhancement of GC, cognitive and behavioural strategies used to cope with stressful situations can be strengthened ("Author et al., 2019). GC can promote social and emotional adjustment-promoting mental health and coordination of emotion, activities and thoughts ("Author et al., 2019"). The inclusive education context may promote mutual and productive interconnections which can be used as assets for enhancing positive emotions. In the Lesotho context, where teachers are expected to provide GC to learners ("Author, 2012"), teachers have to understand that their behaviour, "their way of thinking, the theoretical background they follow, and their specific teaching practices are critical factors which can enhance or undermine the inclusive process" (Author, 2017, p. 643).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING AS A PILLAR FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Research sufficiently documented the significance of GC in inclusive education ("Author, 2019; Author et al. 2018; Author, 2016; Author, 2014"). GC is generally considered as the educational support service that assist all learners to participate in school activities ("Author, 2019"). It is an educational tool in shaping the orientation in a learner from negative ideas that are planted in them by their peers and other people in their environment ("Author et al. 2018"). Through GC, learners get proper adjustment guide that could help come in terms with reality and adjust to the existing situations. Several scholars ("Author 2019; Author et al. 2018") attest to the following benefits of GC:

1. GC helps learners realise their full potential.
2. It assists learners to establish some personal meaning of their behaviours and set goals and values for future behaviour.
3. Encourages client to develop adaptive skills to cope with everyday changes and challenges.
4. Encourages facilitative, co-operative peer interactions, and motivate learners to develop good interpersonal relationship.
5. Help learners cope with academic anxieties.
6. Equip learners with problem solving and decision making skills.
7. Fosters resiliency factors for learners and enable them develop positive self-image.
8. Assist the teachers, other school staff members and parents in understanding the needs and problems of learners.
9. Assures equitable access to educational opportunities.

The above mentioned benefits of GC in inclusive education are supported by "Author et al. 2019" that GC in inclusive schools is structured to help students achieve personal, social, emotional, learning and career independence. Learners receiving GC services get to know themselves better, understand their specific needs and their disorders. According to "Author et al. 2016" counselling is a process in which a counsellor helps an individual or individuals learn, understand themselves and their environment. It helps learners to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature and step up educationally, vocationally and socially. "Author et al. 2014" say GC is the sum total of activities and services that are designed to help individuals achieve self-understanding and self-direction. These can

help them to make adjustment to school, home and community. Understandably G/C can bring a positive change in learners' thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions, thereby promoting accepting, supportive and learner-friendly inclusive schools. In order for GC to achieve its goals, "Author et al. 2018" suggest that counsellors are expected to be friends with learners, listen to learners' complaints, short comings, and provide guidance. From the above discussion, the author deduct that GC is naturally humanistic since its purpose is to support human growth. Hence, this article proposes that GC enhancement in Lesotho schools should be underpinned by African Ubuntu philosophy that is also humanistic.

According to "Author, 2015", education should empower young people with skills that enhance their holistic development. He further states that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Lesotho has failed to integrate a life skills programme, catering for students' psychosocial development of students in its curricula. Also, "Author, 2015" notes that MOET first piloted the Guidance and Counselling syllabus in a few high schools in 2002 but never followed it up to be implemented by all schools. The author is cognizant of the fact that GC in Lesotho schools is not sufficiently utilized. Lesotho teachers' basic GC skills are not recognized as the best available assets to improve the state of GC in schools. This is evidenced by lack of structured GC service provision ("Author; 2014; Author, 2019"). The findings by "Author 2019"; "Author 2015"; "Author 2014" show that GC in Lesotho schools is random. Although teacher training institutions in Lesotho continuously train teachers in GC application in schools, there seem to be no follow up by the training institutions on how the acquired skills are applied in schools. Also, the MOET has never provided guidelines for GC implementation. The paradox is, the MOET unceasingly encourage that GC provision in Lesotho schools should be enhanced ("Author, 2009; Author, 2012"). This paper argues that with the recently legitimised inclusive education in Lesotho ("Author, 2018"), GC enhancement is more essential than before.

Essentially, "Author et al., 2016" write that GC services in schools shall develop, assess and improve educational programmes; enhance teaching and improve the teachers' competence, and reduce the cost for the children. GC serves empowerment purpose for all learners since, it helps schools to meet learners' psychosocial needs. Similarly, "Author et al., 2017" stipulate that GC enhances self-acceptance regardless of one's perceived weak points. It empowers learners towards realization of life aspirations. It also enhances emotional intelligence, positive self-regard, assertiveness and resilience. The outcome of strengthened GC should be "the enhancement of the whole child, not only educationally but also socially and emotionally" ("Author et al., 2011, p.55").

Ubuntu philosophy supports the enhancement of GC in inclusive education. Grounding the enhancement of GC in Ubuntu philosophy indicates understanding that African perspectives should underpin newly developed educational programmes in the African context. Knowledge construction and practices intended to bring a positive social change in Lesotho learners' psychosocial beings should no longer be completely informed and dominated by foreign perspectives. It is hard to disagree with "Author 2008" that "psychology's *next force* must spring from the philosophical underpinnings of humanistic psychology". "Author 2008" argues that it is time for a humanistic reformation that goes beyond a call for the opportunity to develop individual potentialities and self-actualization. In the quest for inclusive education, African schools need a unifying psychology that recognizes the value of Ubuntu philosophy in guiding the formulation of strategies for

facilitating inclusive education. Ubuntu-centred GC offers the opportunity for mutual actualization ("Author, 2008"), where all learners, regardless of their backgrounds, limitations and disabilities are supported to maximize their actualizing tendencies.

According to "Author et al. 2017", enhancement of GC guided by Ubuntu philosophy should be understood as a vehicle for knowledge construction needed for successful inclusion in education. Essentially, "Author, 2018" suggests that each education system ought to be based on a specific philosophy of education that drives it. Equally, "Author 2015" posits that knowledge construction located within African cultural value system is a dynamic and fluid process that involves Africans' lived experiences. In support, "Author, 2015" affirm that there is a need to challenge the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge systems that for a long time maintained superiority in knowledge production. Therefore, framing GC enhancement within philosophical viewpoints of Ubuntu is an effort to revive and restore the African Basotho modes of thinking concerning education and GC provision.

Ubuntu principles for grounding enhancement of G/C in the context of Inclusive Education

Ubuntu principles of respect, empathy and human dignity ("Author, 2015") allow the development of GC programmes cultivating the same principles in inclusive schools. This approach can re-connect Africans to their collective beliefs in regard to GC provision for children and youth, and revitalize a sense of collective responsibility in educating and guiding children and youth ("Author, 2015"). GC enhancement guided by Ubuntu philosophy can promote empathy, respect, unconditional acceptance for all learners, social justice and altruism as school ethos. The application of Ubuntu in GC suggests that during GC activities, teachers have to be creative in how they can infuse these values so that learners understand them and appreciate them as significant principles that can positively contribute to their personal, educational, social, psychological and vocational growth. Basically, teachers need to adopt these values as principles that guide their day to day interactions with learners, parents and other members of staff. Fundamentally, Ubuntu-oriented GC undertakings can cultivate teacher-learner relationships that value respect for all learners as humans. Thus, teachers become sensitive to learners' individual needs. When this is achieved, Lesotho schools would have preserved the Basotho philosophical statements of social justice, equality, equity, peace, participation, respect, mutual co-existence and inclusion ("Author, 2018; Author, 2009").

"Author 2015" and "Author 2017" agree that in Basotho indigenous education, respect for community life not only took precedence, but the elders educated children and youth for the common good of the community. This approach to life is still relevant for the current inclusive education agenda. Actually, "Author 2015, p.41" notes that the "spirit of humanness (Botho) promoted interdependency among people within a community: as such it made survival within impoverished circumstances less difficult". This approach to life that sustained African communities, still bears great significance in modern African communities and schools. Cultivation of the spirit of humanness in GC activities has the potential to promote and instil ethics of concern, love, acceptance, respect, tolerance and human dignity towards every learner.

CONCLUSION

This article has responded to the Lesotho Inclusive Education policy (2018) call that inclusive education providers should create a culture of collaboration in a landscape of mutual respect and equality

for all. The policy was formulated based on the principle of child friendly schools "Author, 2018". It aims to eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and lack of response to diversity in learning. The discussions and arguments raised in this article aligned with Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (2018) appeal that all MoET departments, together with all stakeholders view and value learner diversity as integral to the human coexistence. The policy also appeal to those involved in education that they should prevent marginalization and discrimination based on the special educational needs to reduce barriers to participation in learning. More pertinent to this article, the policy encourages the MoET departments to fulfil their responsibility to facilitate an inclusive culture within their individual education settings and be accountable through the programmes, practices and outcomes of the entire learning community.

The author responds to these requests by contributing a new approach to facilitation of inclusive education. The approach is informed by Lesotho philosophy of education that is derived from Basotho philosophical statements of justice, equality, peace, participatory democracy and co-existence. Thus Ubuntu principles of participation, solidarity, interdependence and connectedness can foster recognition of local knowledge and resources as valuable inputs for facilitating inclusive education initiative that benefits all. This implies that teacher counsellors need to work collaboratively and in solidarity with school administrations, parents and learners to develop necessary GC undertakings that support inclusive education. Operationalization of Ubuntu principles permit principals, teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders to realise their power as they participate in construction and re-construction of the knowledge necessary for transforming their learning ecologies, drawing from their experiences and perspectives. This can also raise a greater sense of empowerment among those involved. When people feel empowered, they become motivated to respond positively to inclusive education practice, thereby ensuring that diverse needs of all learners are catered for in an inclusive setting.

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Insights on the Relevance of Decolonised Education in African Higher Education Institutions and Challenges Posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

It is incontrovertible that most African higher education institutions (HEIs) strive for the decolonisation of education in its teaching, learning and research practices. This is envisaged as a transformative shift from the historical colonial cantered education, in Africa, to a type of education that drives and promotes African-centred epistemologies and practices. Hence, the demand for decolonised higher education is glaring in most African universities, prompting the authors of this paper to focus on this area. Qualitative in nature, this paper is located within the interpretivist research design. The population was all educators at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) Extracted from telephonic data, collected from NUL, this paper analysed the insights of 14 educators regarding the decolonisation of African higher education. Results revealed that 11 of the educators were enthusiastic about decolonisation while three were against it. Definitions of decolonisation of higher education subscribed by the educators were centred on detaching from Western paradigms and rely on local pedagogical practices and content. Challenges imposed by COVID-19 relate to failure to practice drama and community engagements. Findings regarding decolonisation issues are envisaged to shape the debates on decolonisation of education in HEIs and its relevance to remote learning. Results on challenges impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to this novel endeavour assist in paving the way forward so as to ensure that decolonisation of higher education cannot be negatively hampered by the pandemic. The study recommends that the decolonisation process should not be motivated by an intrinsic abhorrence of the colonial past since it may lead to compromising of university standards; rather it should be based on the need to uplift the education system thereby ensuring quality education.

Key words: decolonisation, higher education institutions, indigenous knowledge, COVID-19, transformation.

INTRODUCTION

This section looks at the definition of decolonisation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the background of the decolonisation of HEIs, the background of COVID-19 and the importance of decolonisation of HEIs.

What is Decolonisation of Higher Education Institutions?

Various definitions of decolonisation of higher education institutions abound[1]. This indicates that there are numerous dissenting voices advocating divergent pathways for the

decolonisation project. In defining decolonisation of higher education, Garuba (2015) focuses on the curriculum and therefore explains that the first approach is to augment new items to the existing curriculum. However, one can argue that this approach is endorsed by those who endeavour to uphold the status quo. The second approach suggested by Giruba (2015) is that of rethinking how the content to be studied is constituted and then restructured to bring about critical modifications. Thus, when deliberating on decolonisation and reconceptualisation of curriculum issues in Africa, there is need to contemplate on the two methodologies put forward by Giruba.

> Most scholars link decolonisation of education with isolation from Western ideas.

However, Mbembe (2016, p. 35) clarifies that decolonisation is about clearly defining 'what the centre is.' In this regard, Africa should be located at the centre. This seems accurate given that, since colonisation, Africans have been aligned with the imperialists' curriculum, placing it at the forefront. Mbele (2019) is straightforward; pointing out that the project of decolonisation denotes the thorough eradication of the colony, its equipment, vehicle and leftovers. This is a tough stance as compared to the one suggested by Giruba. Adding their voice on this matter; Stein and Andreotti (2016) elaborate that decolonisation can be largely understood as an umbrella term for varied ways to reject the significant but complex processes of racialisation and colonisation.

Background of Decolonisation of Higher Education Institutions

The need to decolonise HEIs came to being upon realising that colonial education endorsed and enforced the Eurocentric ideas among Africans and in the same vein supressed anything else African. Thus, one of the most destructive effects of colonialism was the subjugation of local knowledge and promotion of the Western knowledge as the supreme knowledge. Most African universities have not substantially transformed; hence, they continue to be grounded in colonial and Western epistemological traditions. By so doing, the colonialists have effectively instilled an inferiority complex in the Africans and this complex is currently ingrained in their minds. This explains why Said (1994:8) clarifies that Western European literature has for centuries portrayed the non-Western realm and people as mediocre and subsidiary. By so doing, it helped to authenticate colonialism and to ensure its long-term sustainability[2]. In a way, this was an attempt to suppressing a revolt by painting a gory image of what needed to be changed.

Colonial universities were glaringly Eurocentric, founded on the metropolitan universities from which they 'drew much of their faculty and curricular' (Zeleza, 2009, p. 114). This demonstrates that the issue of decolonising social and natural sciences in universities has been part of southern discourses for several decades (Ake, 1979; Wa Thiong'o, 1986; Chabal, 2012). It also reveals that Africa has a long history of actions of negation to colonial education and trying to attain curriculum transformation in particular (Motsa, 2017). Chile also offers a relevant example, where student uprisings forced a nationwide discussion on the fundamental obstacles within the Chilean education structure. Williams (2015) observes that the Chileans' call to end profit making in education, resulted in noteworthy educational reforms and reconsiderations of the connections between the education

system and the social and economic inequalities in Chile.

Another example is that reported by Filho and Collins (1998) of the student protests that ascended in Brazil between 1962 and the 1990s which gradually turned into struggles to transform the state and economy, ultimately contributing to the country's democratic transitions during the 1990s. This was an awakening call to Brazilian students during that period. The effectiveness of these student movements revoked the academic debates in the region, motivating ideas of a decolonial wake, which has been articulated in terms of transmuting how to approach certain issues, as well as second wave of decolonisation (Mignolo, 2009; Maldonado-Torres, 2011).

In South Africa, numerous curriculum reforms have been instigated since the 1990s and the policy goals formed during those years appeared to be overambitious. Truly so, as Lange (2017) notes, nothing substantial was modified in relation to the curriculum, for instance, methods of teaching, material to be taught and evaluation methods (Lange, 2017). Soon after the events of 2015, the decolonisation debate intensified and academic contributions continued to make demands about the abolishment of epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South African higher education, as exhibited by the works of Walker (2018), Webbstock (2017), Fumunyam (2017a, 2017b), Heleta (2016) and Le Grange (2016). In response to this, the protesting students called for a decolonised curriculum in order to end what they regarded to be epistemic violence, through eradicating "the heterosexual, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist values which have become so characteristic of the country's universities" (Le Grange, 2016, p. 2).

Molefe (2016:32) expounds that around 2015, South African students, together with a few progressive academics initiated a campaign to decolonise the higher education curriculum by bringing to an end, the domination of Western epistemological civilisations, pasts and records. It is imperative that the struggle continues taking its thrust given that Mbele (2019) cited that Africa now faces a new threat of Chinese colonisation. This clearly shows that the foreign agenda of colonising Africa is still ongoing. In this regard, it has simply been altered by assuming an Asian narrative. Thus, Africa needs to be on its guard, protecting its legacy and future. In Lesotho, the National University of Lesotho was founded by settler elites who viewed it as an emblem and transmitter of European civilisation in the Southern African colonies.

Background of COVID-19

The background of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) stretches back to December 2019 where it was first detected in Wuhan in China. It is now a pandemic that many countries globally are now grappling with. The COVID-19 pandemic, is a continuing pandemic caused by acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) WHO (2020a). The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January, and a pandemic on 11 March. COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease and over a million cases have been diagnosed globally. This has led to the closure of schools and universities, the National University of Lesotho included.

The importance of Decolonisation of Higher Education Institutions

The reason why African students embarked on protests demanding decolonisation of higher education was largely because they yearned for the

advantages associated with it. This has led many to emphasise the importance of decolonising the brain (Wa Thiong'o, 1986). This was a reasonable plan given that Africans had been brainwashed, hence new ideas had to be instilled in their minds for fresh mind-sets. Apart from that, these students were in pursuit of cognitive justice in higher education research and curricula (Sousa Santos, 2007). One other importance of the decolonisation of higher education cited by Mbele (2019) is that it has also fashioned a protracted resistance tradition of any group on earth, whose inspiration is tangible in the modern opposition struggles and projects, and has directly stimulated the advent of a novel generation of activists, majority of them being young black women, who are currently challenging old patriarchal, political and gender-stereotyped conducts of activism.

In explaining why decolonising knowledge is important and indispensable, Mignolo (2007) elucidates that decolonisation and decoloniality are about operating in the course of an idea of human civilisation which is not reliant upon or structured by the imposition of one model of society against those parallel to it, which in this case is colonialism, hence, that is where decolonisation of the mind ought to commence. In addition to this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) asserts that what decoloniality fundamentally addresses are the coloniality of knowledge, the colonialism of power and being. These areas of coloniality jointly strengthen each other and collectively produce the practice of colonialism.

One more advantage of decolonisation of higher education pointed out by (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) is that it tries to alter the location of reason away from the West, toward previously colonised epistemic sites in order to increase the legality or validity of what (Grosfoguel, 2007:213) terms "subaltern epistemic perspectives." In the same vein, Mignolo (2007) asserts that epistemic decolonisation "is necessary to make possible and move toward a truly intercultural communication; to an exchange of experiences and significations as the foundation of rationality" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 499).

Practical and specific instances of what epistemic decolonisation may involve comprise the arguments by Le Grange (2016) who champion for a curriculum founded on the philosophy of Ubuntu, distancing from views such as 'I think therefore I am' to 'I am because we are.' In this case, students are taught about togetherness and compassion, not selfishness and egocentricity. Stein and Andreotti (2016) add that these movements contested the shaping of racialised and indigenous people as objects of knowledge as well as searching for institutional recognition and support of themselves as subjects of knowledge. On the same vein, Ferguson (2012) observes that such movements did not have all their demands fulfilled, but to a greater extent, attained the institutionalisation of ethnic and women's studies programmes, as well as the creation of student cultural centres and culturally specific programming in universities. It is vital to note that currently, many of these centres, departments, programs, and institutes are finding it difficult to acquire adequate funds to run their decolonisation ventures.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The decolonisation of higher education discourse has placed a lot of focus on the manner in which higher education practices have always been influenced by various assumptions that are aligned to certain epistemological paradigms. The decolonisation of higher education debate has

also lay bare criticisms regarding the content taught in HEIs as well as pedagogic methods. Morreira (2017) also observed that tertiary students are not content with the curricular being utilised currently in higher education institutions. This paper therefore examines educators' perceptions on the meaning of decolonisation of higher education and how it should be implemented. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has had debilitating impacts on teaching and learning, inclusive of decolonisation of higher education endeavours. Therefore, challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic were looked at with the aim of forging a way forward so that decolonisation of higher education cannot be compromised by the pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative approach. A qualitative method was chosen because of its ability to capture the richness and diversity of the ways in which research participants ascribe and construct meaning. The research design adopted was a case study, using the case of the National University of Lesotho. Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Yin, 2009). Case studies are bounded by time and action and researchers gather detailed information using an assortment of data collection procedures, spread over a period of time (Yin, 2012, 2009; Stake, 1995). Qualitative in nature, this study is founded within the interpretivist paradigm. Hammersley (2013) holds that the interpretivist paradigm generates knowledge based on participants' interpretations of their world and the researcher discusses findings based on such interpretations. Thus, the researcher gets the participants' meanings through their interpretations of things around them. This paradigm was chosen therefore for its ability to generate thick descriptions of decolonisation issues from the NUL lecturers.

A total of 14 lecturers were purposively selected for this study. The eligibility criteria included the following: being a lecturer employed by NUL[3], having been a lecturer at a university for at least five years, having indicated that he or she is familiar with decolonisation of HEIs issues. In this regard, participants were selected because they had indicated that they were familiar with decolonisation of HEIs issues and they had been working as lecturers for a considerable amount of time, at least three years, making them capable of generating useful data for the study. University lecturers were deemed appropriate targets because Webbstock (2017), Jansen (2017a) and Heleta (2018) observed that lecturers are an essential part of the exercise to decolonise curriculum. These lecturers deal with curriculum issues year in and year out. All faculties[4] were of interest since practically all faculties have their different curricular. Data were collected utilising interview guides. The in-depth interviews were conducted over the phone in order to guard against COVID-19. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data and the major themes that came out were conceptualisation of decolonisation of the HEIs curriculum, implementation of decolonised curriculum and challenges caused by COVID-19.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Even though this study acknowledges that decolonisation of HEIs is a broad concept which entails some of the following: withdrawal of colonial names, removal of statues and symbols, curricula

transformation, overhauling of tertiary education funding models and enhancing insourcing of workforce by tertiary institutions, not all of these indicators of decolonisation were employed by this study. Thus, the insights of educators in HEIs into the decolonisation of higher education were looked at in terms of how NUL lecturers conceptualise decolonisation of HEIs and their applications of decolonisation principles to teaching and learning. Thus, this study focused on curriculum issues. Apart from definitions of HEIs, focus was also placed on NUL lecturers' perceptions about how the colonial curriculum should be transformed. Lastly, the discussion will zero on challenges related to decolonisation of HEIs amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 14 lecturers participated in the study; of which, nine were males while five were females. They were selected across the various NUL faculties using purposive sampling, based on their prior knowledge about decolonisation. All faculties were included bearing in mind that decolonisation of the curriculum is not necessarily a matter of interest to specific faculties but for the whole university. With regard to their biography, some of them earned their postgraduate certificates from South African universities; hence, they either experienced apartheid and/or the aftermath of apartheid first-hand.

Meanings of decolonising of Higher Education

A key theme emerging from the analysis is the conceptualisation of decolonising the curriculum. The lecturers had various meanings they attached to decolonisation of the curriculum. Their understanding of this issue was influenced by, among other things, their ages, background, gender, interests, areas of expertise, and conviction regarding colonialism. Out of the 14 lecturers, seven males and four female lecturers favoured decolonisation of the curricular and two males and one female were against it. With regard to age, 11 lecturers above the age of 40 favoured decolonisation while three who were below the age of 35 did not favour decolonisation. Some definitions articulated by lecturers show a clear resentment of the colonial curriculum. In particular, participant five had this to say on her understanding of decolonisation of HEIs:

> For me, decolonisation of HEIs entails the end of domination by whites and Western methods of learning. Hence, a transformed curriculum must be totally different from the old one (Participant five, April, 2020).

Participant five calls for a radical change in curriculum to a new one that is totally divorced from the colonial era so as to set the boundaries for a new era. This particular view seems to be informed by a very strong conviction that any continuation of the Western ways of operation in local HEIs would not have any semblance of change – but rather a perpetuation of the past. Hence, participant five may be justified to view decolonisation in that manner. In contrast, Shay (2016) submits that decolonisation of HEIs has to be a mixture of European paradigms in higher education and incorporation of other South African, African and global perspectives and epistemologies. Thus, Shay (2016) argues for an inclusive approach; which avoids a total discontinuity from the past, hence avoid throwing away those valuable aspects from the colonial era that enhances local communities without conflicting or degrading their indigenous knowledge, cultural and value systems.

As for participants nine and fourteen, the meaning of decolonisation lies in placing a lot of importance in the African continent.

> As an African, I view a decolonised curriculum as one that puts its attention on Africa. Are you not surprised that our own children hardly know anything about Africa? For example, with the influx of Chinese into this country now, I can tell you some university students here even think China is closer to Lesotho than Mozambique, Tanzania, DRC, etc. It shows something is just wrong with our curriculum (Participant nine, May, 2020).

> This thing about restructuring of the curriculum after colonisation refers to taking Africa as the reference point; meaning we have to consider African issues first before any other issues. I doubt if this cry by some politicians, of a United States of Africa, will ever see light of day if our education remains un-decolonised. I wish I would live forever to be proven wrong (Participant fourteen, May, 2020).

These two participants strongly believe that decolonisation of curriculum and reviewing the Pan-Africanism philosophy is very important to Africans and for driving the African agenda. They advocate for leaving behind Western ways and look for answers within the African continent, and believe a radical review of the curriculum might be an important starting point. This suggests that the reliance on curriculum designed by the West brews a dependence syndrome, which Africa will never be able to shake off if it continues on that path; and more over Africa may never be a united continent like other continents. The views of these participants resonates with Dreyer (2017) who opined that decolonisation of higher education calls for a need to challenge and unsettle dominant western knowledge systems so as to drive towards epistemic justice.

The issue of focusing on the content to be taught to students was highlighted by participant two.

> Content matters a lot. lt matters to me to continue seeing a European-centred curriculum being central, and being used to define what is considered as crucial knowledge in Lesotho. This is bad (Participant two, April, 2020).

The participant perceives content to be of great importance and holds the view that current educational content continues to be Eurocentric, which the participant deems problematic, especially after the political "decolonisation" of Lesotho, or African countries in general. Participant two prefers Sesotho content to replace Western content. Participant two agrees with all other participants cited above, however the researchers are more inclined towards Shay's earlier articulate submission (Shay 2016); and also holds the view that any changes need to be implemented if research proves anticipated outcomes that put local communities and Africa in a better socio-economic position will be attained. Again, the implementation must be subject to the availability of knowledge systems that advantageously replace those Western aspects deemed unfavourable. A wholesale change, for the sake of change or for the sake of wishing away a people's past associated with a particular unpleasant era might create some serious challenges.

Some of the participants look at decolonisation of higher education (HE) in terms of sources of material to be utilised for the courses taught in universities and other tertiary institutions. For instance, participant six highlighted issues to do with how course outlines should be designed:

> I get very much disturbed to see course outlines that indicate that students need

> to get their material from books written by Western authors only and yet we have books and research articles written or authored by Africans. Africans have written books in all fields, be it in the sciences or social sciences. Why not use books by African authors? In fact, those books by Western authors tend to be more expensive. As a result, our institutions don't even afford to stock copies in the libraries; not to mention our poor students. So, what do we want to achieve by promoting books that we can't even afford? (Participant six, April, 2020).

Participant six therefore defines decolonisation of the curriculum in terms of sources of material used to teach students. If the material or sources are foreign, then there is no decolonisation to talk about. This finding resonates with what Sayed, Motala and Hoffman (2017) observed that when lecturers put a strong weight on authors based at South African institutions, it indicates that decolonisation is now at work. Thus, modifying of course outlines; and replacing Western material with African material is one way of implementing decolonisation principles by lecturers at HEIs.

Another definition provided by another participant has to do with students being allowed to make a contribution in what they are going to be taught in a given course or programme:

> I define decolonisation of our HE system in terms of the amount of freedom given to students to have an input in the material being taught. If lecturers decide everything for the students, to me it is still the colonial system in place. You know; it is not in our culture to dictate to adults (Participant eleven, May, 2020).

Fataar (2018) observed that during the university students' protests in South Africa in 2016, university students suggested a complete overhaul of the curriculum. Participant eleven advocates for students' input in curriculum design. While this can indicate a change from the colonial system, one can argue that students might misuse that freedom or responsibility; for instance, by suggesting topics that are not challenging so that they may easily excel in their studies. Again, this proposal seems to suggest that students in HEIs, by virtue of being adults, are automatically aware of what other key stakeholders, like industry, expect a graduate to know when one leaves the institution. It is the researchers' view that such kind of assumptions cannot be sustained because while institutions are better placed to consult the key stakeholders and get a feel of their needs and expectations, certainly students are not in a position to do that – so their contributions might not be founded on some rational and informed basis.

While the world is driving towards a technologically driven education system, one participant surprisingly dismissed the use of technology. The participant asserted that his definition of a decolonised pedagogy is delivering of lectures utilising the African viewpoints and methods:

> A decolonised curriculum is the one that does not imitate the Western methods, disregarding our own ways of teaching students. For instance, the use of technology for me has more disadvantages than advantages and it distracts students (Participant one, April, 2020).

Even though the use of technology in teaching is fraught with challenges, doing away with technology completely might be too extreme a measure in defining decolonising HEIs. Currently, lecturers are

relying on technology to deliver their lectures to students to alleviate the impacts of the current closure of all educational institutions in Lesotho, and many other countries globally, occasioned by the marauding COVID-19 scourge. Participant one pointed out that decolonisation should not be compromised, hence, it is better for universities to remain closed until the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Suffice to say, the researchers were really taken aback by participant one's view of decolonisation of HE. In fact, the researchers hold a strong view that COVID-19 has brought to the fore the need for enhanced use of technology in education across the world. Contrary to the participants' views, Nyoni (2019) emphasises that when championing for the decolonial curriculum reform, African scholars ought not to bank on the mentally embedded conception of caged colonial mentality which places little importance on the multidimensional seismic modifications that weigh heavily on the social and political educational experiences of post-colonial African Beings.

Some of the participants define decolonisation of HEIs through the medium of communication employed by the institutions:

> As long as we still have African universities that allow the use of English as the official language; we cannot talk about decolonised HEIs. The same applies to some South African universities that prefer using Afrikaans; it shows the colonial system is still in place (Participant one, May, 2020).

> I describe decolonisation of higher education (HE) curriculum by its provision to use Sesotho as a medium of teaching and learning (Participant thirteen, April, 2020).

Those that are for the use of the local languages argue that students understand material better in their local language. They also associate officialising local languages at universities with a complete break from the colonial educational system. The use of English in this regard signifies a colonial mentality. However, it should be noted that universities are international institutions which incorporate diversity through enrolling international students and employ foreign lecturers.[i] The use of local languages will therefore disadvantage these foreign students and lecturers. More so, if such endeavours were to be implemented without careful considerations, there would be a danger of some very small countries, like Lesotho, finding itself isolated from the rest of the world due to language barrier. Morreira et al. (2020) highlight that there is need to conduct research focusing on those that are continuously excluded from knowledge production.

For participant four, African knowledge systems are more important than Western ones; hence, there is need to do away with Westernised knowledge:

> My understanding of a decolonised curriculum is to completely remove the Western perspective from the curriculum and then resort to our own African indigenous knowledge systems (Participant four, April, 2020).

These views are contrary to the findings established by Newfield and Bryne (2018). Using the South African Poetry Project as a case study, Newfield and Bryne (2018) observed that scraping of English could not materialise since the project was rooted in the discipline of English. For participant four, the focus is on the indigenous perspectives. Indeed, if it is feasible and advantageous to the Africans, doing away with Western knowledge would

show that African epistemological base is sound and would possibly allow Africa to be viewed with greater respect and recognition. Resultantly, it would signify that Africa also has the legitimate knowledge systems of its own, which would possibly go a long way in restoring the pride and self-confidence of Africans, which they were robbed of by the whole process of colonisation. However, an abrupt divorce from Western knowledge is a challenge given that the use of English has to continue.

Another participant was of the opinion that decolonisation of the curriculum must speak to matters related to marginalised people in society, amplifying their voices and making the world know about them.

> In my own opinion, a decolonised curriculum must show that it embraces all the cultures and all the people equally, regardless of gender, physical challenges, social class and so forth. For example, our own drama students need to present dramas in our Netherlands Hall, here, on vulnerable groups, educating the whole university about need for equality and the levels of inequality in this country (Participant seven, May, 2020).

> A decolonised curriculum must have sections that indicate lessons which emphasise the interaction of people of all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds within communities since we are training students for the community. Teaching theory, theory, theory, ummmm, to me, it is a colonial perspective (Participant ten, May, 2020).

These sentiments suggest that decolonisation can go a long way in fighting social injustices. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) holds that decolonisation will bring about African universities that are sites of social justice. The researchers view this point as quite valid. However, it may be achieved through active endeavours by local scholars who can conduct research on African issues, focusing on, for example, physically challenged people, marginalised cultures, gender issues and similar topics. Furthermore, the scholars ought to write books and articles that can then be used by lecturers when designing their teaching modules and even used by artists to make dramas as categorically suggested by the participant. It is worth noting that in this era of COVID-19, the inclusion of drama is likely to heighten the spread of COVID-19.

There were three lecturers who were not keen on decolonisation of the curriculum. Generally, they were of the view that there is nothing untoward about the status quo. To them, the issue of decolonisation of HEIs was just rhetoric by Africans who just want to prove to the Western world that new developments are taking place in Africa:

> Aaah, you know what, this noise that was happening in South Africa in 2016 about a free and decolonised higher education was just promulgated by opposition parties like the EFF who wanted political mileage. I do not think those people who talk about decolonisation in the education fraternity are serious at all (Participant three, April, 2020).

> I do not have much to say on this topic because I do not support decolonisation of tertiary institutions. Why should that happen yet everything we are doing in Africa originated from the West? (Participant eight, May, 2020).

> People just talk and talk about this thing of decolonisation but nothing comes of it. A lot of conferences have

> taken place on this topic but, look, we still teach material from the West. All the theories I teach my students originated from the West. If we abolish them, there is nothing to teach (Participant twelve, May, 2020).

These three participants were openly against the process of decolonising the curriculum. They raised very interesting views in support of the current scenario. They see lack of seriousness in the whole matter. For instance, participant twelve highlighted a lack of local theories to replace Western theories. This seems to be a formidable task which Newfield and Bryne (2018) describes as an insurmountable challenge. This brings to light the idea of lack of material to use when decolonising the curriculum. This is a huge hurdle which speaks of Africans having to develop their own systems first before changing the status quo. For instance, Africans ought to be more active in scholarly authorship and propound theories and laws in various fields of study with a special focus on the African context.

Implementation of Decolonisation of Higher Education Institutions

The study looked at ways to implement the decolonisation of higher education institutions (HEIs). NUL lecturers had divergent ideas on how this can be done. One of the participants points out that there is need to be careful of what sort of knowledge is delivered to university students:

> I think the best way to implement the decolonisation of the HEIs is to ensure that the curriculum is designed with local knowledge in mind and not to keep on teaching content full of Western ideas (Participant four, April, 2020).

These views reflect how to deal with the problem of Eurocentric knowledge. The focus here is on the content, prompting university lecturers to rethinking about what is supposed to be taught. The whole idea is doing away with Western perspectives, replacing them with African or local ones. However, the question is whether or not African knowledge will be adequate on its own. On this, Nyoni (2019) favour the mixture of Western and African knowledge systems.

As for participant nine, the transformation ought to commence with an overhaul of the staff complement such that universities do away with white and Indian lecturers and substitute them with black lecturers:

> First and foremost, there is need for hiring black lecturers, not whites and Indians so that blacks can bring about real transformation of the curriculum (Participant nine, May, 2020).

This method of decolonising the curriculum seems to be a hardliner position since it has racial connotations. A solution with racial tones is controversial since some might argue that it will be a matter of solving a problem but creating another one in the process. Barring white people from university teaching would just be indefensible discrimination. In fact, one may ask: *why would they not be allowed in universities and then allowed in all other sectors of work?* That is why Fataar (2018) cautions that the decolonisation of higher education debate should now turn to reflections about the terms of the knowledge and curriculum veracity.

Another way of implementing decolonisation of the curriculum suggested by participant eleven is to avail the

curriculum to as many students as possible, opening opportunities for black students:

> A decolonised pedagogy is one in which the curriculum has to be loosened somehow for students to excel in their studies at tertiary level. Again, to cater for large number of students not to put strict mechanisms which limit Africans in programmes of their choices. However, this may be difficult to achieve now due to COVID-19. (Participant eleven, May, 2020).

This is a clear case of opening up university education to the African child. However, if it is achieved by making the curriculum easier, it is a sure case of lowering standards at universities. This is not desirable given that it usually catch up with the graduates in the workplace since it brews incompetency. Furthermore, lowering entry requirements at universities so as to enrol many students tend to have similar consequences. These are populist methods which yield undesirable outcomes.

Participant six submits that decolonisation of the curriculum can be implemented through the removal of complicated literature books authored by Shakespeare as well as using the local language:

> As for me, another way to decolonise the curriculum, particularly for us in the humanities is for the scrapping of Western literature books such as Macbeth and William Shakespeare books which often give our students headaches (Participant six, April, 2020).

> NUL must implement decolonisation of the curriculum through adopting Sesotho as the official language. This is happening in other countries such as China, USA, France and others (Participant thirteen, May, 2020).

These sentiments speak of Africanising literature content within the curriculum. Apart from this, there is an element of shying away from challenging content in the curriculum as advocated by participant two as well. However, Motsa (2017) warns that transformation of the curricular cannot be achieved by instantaneously banning Shakespeare books at universities. This warning may be genuine given that such books have always provided students with sharp critical and analytical skills suitable for literature graduates. Finding replacements for such books might also be a challenge if hasty decisions are adopted.

The use of Sesotho as suggested by participant thirteen sounds like a radical move for a university to take. It would not be possible for NUL to embrace diversity once a local language is used for official business. It can also be argued that this will be setting up the graduates for failure in future because they might not be able to compete effectively in the global market.

According to participant fourteen, implementation of decolonisation at NUL should be done through opting for African knowledge only and material from the African continent:

> I would suggest some changes to be made in the curriculum so that the knowledge to be delivered by the lecturers is Africa-centred knowledge and not the usual Western knowledge (Participant fourteen, May, 2020).

The central tenet for the decolonisation of the curriculum here is the content to be taught, that it should be African oriented. This finding resonates with the one unearthed by Webbstock (2017) where other

participants viewed a decolonised curriculum as mainly what is taught, citing that module instructors need to indigenise or Africanise the syllabus so as to escalate its significance.

In line with that, participant two and fourteen also added that there is need to addressing decolonisation issues at the level of content, ensuring that African content replaces Western content:

> I recommend a curriculum that puts Africa first in terms of the content to be taught. Lecturers need to use local case studies and not those abroad. We cannot allow a curriculum that makes us teach about Bismarck of Germany, and Mao Tse-tung of China and not our own Patrice Lumumba of Congo and Nelson Mandela of South Africa (Participant two, April, 2020).

> One method of decolonising the curriculum design is to recommend books and research articles that have been written by Africans on African issues (Participant fourteen, May, April, 2020).

The issue is around content to be delivered to students, that it is has to resonate with African issues and not foreign issues. This therefore calls for African scholars to ensure that they publish books and research articles that will be utilised to get African content. Jansen (2017) observes that changes in the representation of curriculum knowledge also highlights that decolonisation of HEIs signifies a move towards an Africa-centred knowledge system. Students also criticise the nature of content they are being taught (Morreira, 2017). These criticisms are justified given that some of the content as well as pedagogic practices perpetuate exclusion of students and widens the attainment gap.

Other participants hold that the way to implement decolonisation of the curricular was to incorporate racial, cultural and gender issues within the curriculum:

> I want to emphasise that the curriculum of a decolonised university has to reflect changes in patriarchal and sexist issues. The new curriculum must remove gender inequalities in its content so that students receive new socialisation too during lectures (Participant seven, May, 2020).

> I am of the view that a decolonised curriculum must contain issues to do with the removal of racial traits. One other thing is that it must uplift marginalised cultures by calling people from the community to exhibit their culture at NUL Due to COVID-19, social distancing must be monitored (Participant ten, May, 2020).

The responses given by participant seven and ten above clearly show that these lecturers are both in the human or social sciences. This is because it is difficult to implement racial, cultural and gender transformations in the pure sciences. Participant ten mentioned one of the WHO (2020b) guidelines of observing social distancing. The transformations cited by these participants suggest the lecturers do not want course outlines or modules that are silent about such issues because it might perpetuate social inequalities.

One participant who seemed very fond of these decolonisation issues had this to say:

> The most important thing about a decolonised curriculum is the unity it must bring between lecturers and students. The curriculum must include teaching approaches that nurture these bonds between lecturers and students.

> A clear distinction must be shown between the colonial era and post-colonial period when one looks at teaching approaches used. Examples are organising excursions with students and practical activities during lectures (Participant ten, May, 2020).

Coming from a lecturer who exhibits exuberance in teaching students, it is understandable why the lecturer was suggesting that in a post-colonial era, students must be shown unity. This suggests that in the colonial period the approaches used were alienating lecturers from their students. Following these views, it calls upon lecturers to employ approaches that are free of alienation so that students learn in a conducive environment. These noble endeavours may be hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Tabatadze and Chachkhiani (2021) suggest that the implementation of emergency remote teaching requires educators to acquire context and need-based professional development.

Challenges posed by COVID-19

In almost all countries worldwide, COVID-19 caused the closure of all entities except essential services in what was termed a global lockdown. Lesotho instituted its lockdown from midnight 29 March 2020 to 21 April 2020. During that period, people were staying at home to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Given the views expressed by NUL lecturers on implementation of decolonisation issues, COVID-19 poses numerous challenges to the decolonisation of HEI curriculum. For instance, participant one alluded to the fact that technology signifies a colonial mentality where people believe anything foreign is better; thus called for local ways of teaching students. NUL students are scattered all over Lesotho and some students originate from other countries – including Eswatini, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Zimbabwe. In a scenario like this, there is no way lecturers can do away with Western methods of teaching. Taking advantage of technology, which participant one argues to be one of the Western things that need to be eradicated, NUL lecturers were able to continue teaching utilising the university's Thuto online facility. Thus, those who advocate for wholesale discarding of all the things viewed as Western ought to present convincing facts that there are fit-for-purpose substitutes to such facilities. One cannot just throw away something that works without giving a better alternative.

Participant eleven suggests that there is need to cater for large numbers of students when admitting students into the various programmes offered at NUL. Again, this is not feasible in the era of COVID-19 since lecture rooms must now accommodate a much less number of students due to social distancing guidelines put up by the WHO (2020b). This also speaks to increase in staff compliment as large classes must be split into smaller ones. The same applies to an idea thrown by participant two that drama students need to present dramas in Netherlands Hall. Social gatherings tend to heighten people's chances of contracting the coronavirus.

COVID-19 is also going to pose some challenges to participant ten's decolonisation strategy of hiring black lecturers and not whites so as to attain real transformation of the curriculum. Due to COVID-19, NUL cannot afford to engage in the process of firing staff and hiring others. Those to be hired might be coming from various countries and there is a possibility that they may bring coronavirus into Lesotho. The WHO (2020b) highlights that COVID-19 is

also spread by being in direct contact with an infected person. Decolonisation methods such as mingling with community members, inviting villages to showcase their culture and carrying out excursions with students put people at high risk of contracting COVID-19. Hence, such strategies are not feasible as long as the vaccine rollout in Africa has not enabled communities to reach herd immunity. Overall, universities can hardly implement these strategies without endangering the lives of both lecturers and students.

CONCLUSION

The decolonisation of HEIs is a broad concept. This study focused on curriculum issues. Insights of educators in HEIs into the decolonisation of higher education were studied in terms of how NUL lecturers conceptualise decolonisation of HEIs. The majority of NUL lecturers were enthusiastic about the decolonisation of the curriculum, especially those lecturers in the education, humanities and social sciences faculties. Some conceptualised the decolonisation of the curriculum as one that is completely detached from Western paradigms and using local indigenous knowledge systems and content signifying that Africa has its own epistemological foundations and systems. However, this detachment can be challenging if African universities do not have the material to replace Western knowledge with. Their definitions also took into consideration issues around language, technology, culture, race, marginalised groups and whatever they thought was of benefit to the students. While these definitions revealed a conviction with decolonisation issues for most lecturers, some of the definitions spoke of compromising of university standards.

Apart from definitions of HEIs, focus was also placed on NUL lecturers' perceptions about how the colonial curriculum should be transformed. Some of the participants suggested the decolonisation of the curriculum in terms of the use of African methods of teaching, stop copying the West, enrolling more black students, adopting Sesotho as the official language, hiring of blacks only, engaging with the villagers for cultural growth and partaking in excursions. Some of the strategies are likely to have financial implications to the university for them to be implemented. Hence, the chances for such methods to succeed are slim. The COVID-19 pandemic was found to be a major challenge for the implementation of some of the strategies. This is because some of these methods had potential to aid the spread the virus. Only three lecturers were against decolonisation of the curriculum citing the following three reasons: there is nothing wrong with the status quo; this issue is not a crucial issue and the absence of local content to replace the one from the West. Overall, decolonisation of the curriculum is a worthwhile process given that the colonial system was biased against blacks and was fraught with inequalities. However, decolonisation of higher education must not be over-simplified to the extent of taking it as simple matter of discarding everything that is viewed to be of Western origin. Such an approach could most probably be motivated by an intrinsic abhorrence of the colonial past rather than the need to uplift the education system.

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COVID-19 Crisis: Challenges of Online Learning in One University in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT

In 2020, COVID-19 crisis forced learning organisations, Lesotho universities included, to suspend their face-to-face teaching and migrate their learning activities online. This was a new way of learning to many students. The study reported in this paper investigated the challenges students in one Lesotho university were experiencing with online learning. Specifically, the study focused on the types of challenges the students were experiencing, (2) how the students dealt with these challenges and (3) the general implications. The study employed a qualitative approach in which telephone semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 12 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. The findings of this study suggest that the challenges that were experienced by the students were mainly influenced by their personal attributes, pedagogical issues and how the university supported them. The study concludes that the conditions under which online learning was offered in this university were not conducive to enhance effective student participation online; the students were not receiving quality learning; and others were even excluded from learning by the existing digital conditions. The study recommends that the University should invest more in the digital infrastructure, processes and techniques that would enhance students' experiences with online learning. The University should also find ways of assisting students with access to digital devices and making internet easily accessible to these students.

Keywords: COVID-19, Learning access, Learning experiences, Learning Management system, Learning platform, Online learning challenges, Online teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The study reported in this paper investigated the challenges of learning online that were experienced by the students in one university in Lesotho. Globally, 2020 education crisis came as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. Many learning institutions, universities included, were forced to suspend their face-to-face teaching and learning activities and opt for online learning. The university which was understudy decided to migrate most of teaching and learning courses to online learning management system (LMS). Before this, online learning was never officialised in this university. It was haphazard, rudimentary and practised in very few courses. Teaching and learning relied mostly on face-to-face mode of delivery. Deciding to migrate teaching and learning activities to online platforms was very drastic and should have imposed some challenges for teachers and students of this university. Thus, this study intended to establish the challenges encountered by learners when learning online; the strategies these learners used to solve some of the challenges; and the lessons learnt from the learners' experiences.

COVID-19 Crisis

COVID-19 crisis came as a result of corona virus which emerged in Wuhan in December 2019 (Keni, Alexander, Nayak, Mudgal & Nandakumar, 2020). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2020 records, by August 2020 the virus had spread to many countries around the world with the exception of only 10 countries that had not confirmed any case of COVID-19. Corona virus (CoV) is a large family of viruses known to cause illnesses ranging from common cold to acute respiratory tract infection (Koh & Cunningham, 2020). COVID-19 strand encompasses severe respiratory syndrome (SARS-COV) (Lu, Zhao, Li, Niu, Yang, Wu & Bi, 2020). Although how this virus ended up in human beings and making them their hosts is still being investigated, there are some authors like Lu, Barrett and Lu (2020) who believe that the contact of human being with camels, bats, mice, dogs and cats could have been responsible for the transmission. Other researchers, such as Schoeman and Fielding (2019) and Zheng (2020), associate this virus with 2018 fatal severe diarrhoea among pigs. COVID-19, which Rothan and Byrareddy (2020) labelled as the greatest threat to humankind, causes symptoms like fever, cough, diarrhoea and fatigue to humans. It is believed that since this virus was transmitted to human beings it has been spreading from human to human through body contact or coming in contact with objects on which this virus landed from humans. The rate at which the virus is spreading is unpreceded. By September 2020, this virus had infected around 25 million people and caused at least 900 thousand deaths (WHO, 2020). While many countries like Russia claimed to have developed a vaccine for this novel pandemic, the cure for this virus was yet to be tested and confirmed when this study was carried out.

In the absence of the cure for COVID-19 infection, and for the fear of uncontrollable spread of this pandemic, governments resorted to measures that were believed were capable of curbing the spread. These included the lockdowns of varying levels that restricted human movement and which were backed up by social distancing (of at least one metre apart), wearing of nose masks, use of sanitizers, and constant hands-washing with soap and running water (WHO, 2020). The lockdown and social distancing strategies curtailed some of the social activities which were viewed as potential super spreaders of the virus. Thus, any activities that involved gathering of large crowds or groups such as in sports, religious events and educational activities that required physical school attendance were suspended in many countries.

Advised by WHO, and in line with many countries' responses to COVID-19 crises, even before any COVID-19 case was registered in Lesotho, the government imposed measures that restricted human movement and physical contact and that forced people to wear nose masks in public spaces. The military and the police forces were deployed to the streets and public places to enforce these strategies. People were also encouraged to wash hands regularly with soup and water; and to constantly sanitize their living and working spaces. As a result of human movement and gathering restrictions, businesses, schools, churches and any spaces that could violate the restrictions were closed. Thus, all schools, and other learning institutions in Lesotho were shut down (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Learning institutions run on tight schedules: by the end of a school year or a programme teachers are expected to have covered prescribed syllabi for various levels of education, and learners to have acquired knowledge and skills that prepare them for the next level of education or the completion of a programme. Thus, the total shut down of schools and other learning institutions for COVID-19 crises created another crisis for these institutions which

work by deadlines. With the view that it would be difficult to cover the lost time, many institutions made a decision to migrate teaching and learning to online platforms. This sudden shift from the physical classroom to virtual classroom raised a concern to others such as Li and Lalani (2020), wondering how this shift was going to impact the worldwide education market.

LITERATURE REVIEW: ONLINE LEARNING

Traditionally, teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) activities happen in a classroom or a physical learning space where teachers and learners have face-to-face interaction. However, digital technologies have brought an alternative mode of delivering TLA activities, online learning. They have made online learning possible, allowing a learner to be taught, learn and be assessed on online without compromising the quality of education.

There are multiple benefits of online learning: it motivates learners and boosts their self-esteem (Aboderin, 2015; Arasaratnam-Smith & Northcote, 2015; Li & Lalani, 2020); it enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning and improves learner performance (Galván Casas, Catala, Carretero Hernández, Rodríguez-Jiménez, Fernández-Nieto, Rodríguez-Villa Lari García-Gavín, 2020); and it is capable of reaching students from afar and remote places, enabling them to participate effectively through various online tools such as chatrooms, video meeting, voting, and document sharing (Li & Lalani 2020). Because it is flexible and self-paced, it enhances students' access to learning and allows them to manage their own learning time. It has positive influence on learners' self-motivation that enhances their quality of participation in learning. It prepares learners for a knowledge-based society and "lifelong" learning opportunity by equipping them with strong digital and technical skills that are required by future labour markets. It promotes learners' leadership and communication skills through virtual communication and collaboration; and it exposes learners to a broader global perspective that facilitates their abilities to think critically about their responsibilities in their education and everyday life (Appana 2008, Dumford & Miller 2018, Miller, 2019).

Many factors can influence students' participation in online learning (Gulatee, Brown & Combes 2008, Montgomerie, Edwards & Thorn, 2016). These factors could be related to an organisation that provides online learning, a learner or a teacher. Factors that relate to the organisation and that can influence learner's participation in online learning include: (1) availability and quality of infrastructure and resources of the organisation, and learners' access to the institutional infrastructure and resources; (2) institutional provision of technical support to a learner; and (3) the preparation of a teacher and a learner for institutional cultural change by enforcing relevant discipline (Chere-Masopha 2011, Gulatee, Brown & Combes 2008, Montgomerie, Edwards & Thorn 2016). Learner-related factors are associated with students only, individually or collectively. They include student's: knowledge and skill, motivation, socio-economic and cultural background, and learning styles. Other factors are teacher-related and they could be personal or professional or both. They comprise teacher's: digital knowledge and skill, access to technology infrastructures and resources, attitude or motivation, peer support and personal discipline. All these factors can influence how both a learner and a teacher participate online (Wang, Mayer, Zhou & Lin, 2020). For example, where both a teacher and a learner do not have any barriers just outlined, learner's participation is likely to be meaningful and effective. Where a learner, a teacher or both are experiencing some challenges, learner's participation

could be affected negatively. Table1 summarises how learner-related factors and teacher-related factors interplay and affect learner participation on online learning.

Table 1 How teacher-learner related factors influence the success of online learning

Factors	**meaningful and successful learner participation**	**Poor learner participation**
Knowledge and skill	Teacher and learner have relevant knowledge and skills	A teacher, or a learner, or both have limited knowledge and skills;
Institutional support	A teacher and a learner have access to the technological infrastructure and related resources	A teacher, or a learner, or both have limited access to the technological infrastructure and related resources;
Attitudes or Motivation	A teacher and a learner have intrinsic and extrinsic motivation or positive attitude towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner, or both do not have intrinsic or extrinsic motivation or positive attitude towards online learning;
Support	A teacher and a learner have support geared towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner or both do not have any support geared towards online learning;
Personal discipline	A teacher and a learner are disciplined in terms of time and effort geared towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner or both not disciplined in terms of time and effort geared towards online learning;

Even though teachers' and students' challenges appear to be alike and linked, their influencing factors may differ. In relation to knowledge and skills, teachers require knowledge and skills that are advance and that enable them to design and implement online learning that assists students to participate successfully. Teachers' knowledge and skills should also enable them to design lessons that are interactive and that are likely to sustain students' motivation. On the other hand, students need knowledge and skills that make their access to learning and completion of all course requirements easy.

Learning online can pose several challenges to the students. These challenges can result from students' personal attributes, institutional technical support provided to the learner, and pedagogically related matters (Jokiaho, May, Specht & Stoyanov, 2018; Kumar, 2015; Wotto & Belanger, 2018). Personal attributes that can act as barriers to learner's participation in online learning could be technological knowledge and skill, self-discipline and self-motivation and attitude, learning style, and cultural and socio-economic background (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Shahmoradi, Changizi, Mehraeen, Bashiri, Jannat & Hosseini 2018, Kumar 2015, Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004).

Pedagogical challenges that can be experienced by learners can result from the failure of online teachers to explain and demonstrate some of the learning concepts or design learning in such a way that a learner has real classroom experience (Lu, Barrett & Lu, 2020). This situation can sometimes be a result of teacher's limited knowledge and skill or teaching subjects which are not compatible with online learning (Boaler 2016, Khirwadkar, Khan, Mgombelo, Ratkovic & Forbes 2020, Lu et al., 2020).

The availability and access to digital infrastructure and resources that are

provided by an organisation to support online learning can also influence learner's participation. For instance, the quality of internet connection (including the bandwidth) cause access disparity that disadvantages or favours different groups or individual learners (Kamer 2015, Kumar Basak et al. 2018).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

When Lesotho government imposed schools' lockdown as one of the responses to COVID-19 crisis, some learning institutions, including some universities, opted for online learning. Before this crisis, plans to migrate courses online were not mentioned anywhere in the planning documents such as the latest Strategic Plan document (2015-2020) of the university which was the focus of this study. According to this document (which was the most current when this study was carried out) the plan of this university was to offer programmes using a dual mode of learning, which were residential and open and distance (ODL). In the strategic plan document, under *Strategic Goal 2,* the university had outlined that it aimed at being: *'A university of choice [that provides] high quality educational experience and relevant scholarship'.* a list of planned targets which included to: (1) improve information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, (2) increase ICT resources; and (3) train teachers and learners to the use its own locally developed learning management system (LMS).

Under a list of achievements, this document indicated that 'volumes of teachers and learners' were using the university LMS (p. 24). The document further indicates that a helpdesk that is intended to assist teachers and learners with ICT related issues had been established in the university centre that deals with teaching and learning.

In support of the decision to migrate courses online because of COVID-19 Crisis, the university mobilized for more resources from their stakeholders that would support students' access to online learning. The most significant one was for this university to enter into a special arrangement with the internet providers (Vodacom and Econet) in Lesotho to zero-rate identified online educational websites and learning platforms which were considered key for teaching and learning in this University. The locally made university LMS was one of these platforms. Another successful effort was for this university, along with other universities in the country, to lobby and convince the government to support students' online learning. As a result, the Ministry of Education provided 550 Maluti as a top-up to a normal student stipend. Generally, the university efforts were directed at minimising the potential online challenges that students could experience.

However, and despite these efforts, it was not long after the university management announced its decision to migrate teaching and learning online that there was an outcry from both teachers and the students. This outcry even resulted in students boycotting classes, and demanding the management to reverse its decision and to instruct that teaching and learning to be delivered face-to-face as before. Both teachers and learners were very vocal about not wanting to teach or learn online using the university learning management system. There was an obvious standoff between the management and the teachers and the students about online learning. Each group had its own argument about how online learning in this university, particularly that was delivered through the university LMS, was affecting the quality of teaching and learning. The management argued that the LMS was working pretty well and it was capable of delivering effective teaching and learning. The teachers complained that the platform had many weaknesses and does not enable them to teach effectively. Students indicated that

they were not happy with the way they were participating in their learning since teaching and learning migrated online. However, students did not come upfront to outline the challenges they were experiencing with online learning. Knowing and documenting the experiences that the students had with online learning and associated challenges could perhaps assist this university to put more effort in support students to have better experiences with online learning. This is because, even though the university made the decision to migrate courses online because of COVID-19, these decisions were long overdue because online learning has now become the mode of choice for curriculum decision. As indicated in the literature, online learning promises ample benefits, some of which may be solutions to long standing educational problems. Thus, this study explored the students' experiences with online learning, challenges they were encountering and how they were dealing with these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach and methods that were used in this this study were influenced by a constructivist paradigm. According to this paradigm, people's view of the world is often influenced by their experiences (Creswell 2017, Kroeze 2012). Individuals give meaning to these experiences and use the meanings they assigned to their experiences to interpret life or a phenomenon (Creswell 2017, Kroeze 2012). For example, the standoff about online learning among the three groups, the university management, teachers and students, indicated that these three groups had contracting views about online learning. Using qualitative research approach can vividly bring out these different views and indicate how they had been shaped by their experiences.

Qualitative methods, particularly interviews and focus group discussions, enable people who are participating in a study to express their views and beliefs about their reality. These methods make it possible for a researcher to see and feel the world through the eyes of the researcher (O'Donoghue 2007). Again, this approach allows a researcher to study things in their natural settings, and make sense of the meaning the participants attach to their experiences (Creswell 2017, van Zyl 2014). Thus, using qualitative methods for this study was appropriate because the study was investigating the experiences of learners while still engaged in online learning. The in-depth investigation that is provided by these methods has enabled this study to capture data that include many aspects that are usually embedded in individuals' experiences. Some of this data is often overlooked by other methods. These aspects are often captured through the use of rich words and pictures that are able to capture vivid images of the events, feelings and emotions which would otherwise be lost if other methods are used. The approach also provides an opportunity for a researcher and the readers of this paper an opportunity to negotiate the meaning of online in the university investigated as assigned by the participants in this study. The detailed description of text-based data in which the participants explain their experiences in their own words make this negotiation possible (O'Donoghue 2007).

Population and Participants' Selection

The population of this study was undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Even though there was a directive from the university management that all teaching and learning activities be migrated online, some lecturers argued for their courses to continue to be delivered through face-to-face mode. Other lecturers opted to use one or a combination of face-to-face delivery modes and online resources such as *internet-based emails, WhatsApp, Google apps, Zoom* and the university learning management system. This study recruited students who were only engaged

in *the* university LMS. This was because this platform was endorsed for undergraduate teaching and learning by the University and it was zero-rated. Further, unlike other online platforms, teachers and students were given basic training on how to use this platform. Investigating students who were using only one platform would ensure uniformity and less differences in the experiences and challenges the students would have been exposed to. The study chose to engage students from *Teaching and Instructional Design* Course. There were about 122 students who were enrolled in this course. The lecturers of this course had migrated their teaching and learning activities on the university learning management system as directed by the management.

During recruitment, students' attributes such as geographical locations of their home residences, and willingness to participate were taken into account. The recruitment intended to be inclusive of students from rural areas where electricity and internet infrastructures were elementary and unstable, and peri-urban and urban areas where these infrastructures offered better services.

That the study was carried out during the national lockdown and human restriction because of COVID-19 crisis, a wide choice of selection of participants was restricted. Even though the purpose of the study was explained to these students, many of them were suspicious of this study because they were boycotting online classes. They feared that the data gathered would to be used against them. As a result, many refused to participate. Others who initially agreed to participate, just before the study took off, also dropped out for the same fear. Instead of 20 students which were initially targeted, only 12 students voluntarily decided to participate.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Initially the study intended to use a focus group discussion as a method of data collection. However, because COVID-19 rules and regulations that were imposed by Lesotho government that prohibited gatherings and restricted human movements (Ministry of Health, 2020) telephone semi-structured interview was chosen as an alternative method. These interviews, which were between 15 to 20 minutes, were recorded using a mobile phone. Data collected was transcribed, coded and analysed using a thematic analysis approach recommended by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove (2016). The model has four phases which are initialization, construction, rectification and finalization. The results that were generated from this analysis are presented and supported with extracts from the participants' responses.

In relation to ethical considerations, such procedures: as informing the potential participants about the study; seeking the participants' concern to participate; keeping participants' anonymity; and presenting the results in such a way that nothing is traced back to any participant, were taken into consideration.

RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that learners faced various challenges that resulted from personal-related factors, pedagogical factors and institutional factors.

Personal related factors

Literature indicate that the personal attributes of a learner can act as barriers to online participation be technological knowledge and skill, self-discipline and self-motivation and attitude, learning style, and cultural and socio-economic background (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Shahmoradi et al. 2018, Kumar 2015,

Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004). This study has also made the same findings as those in the literature.

Learners' limited knowledge and skill, motivation and attitude

The participants in this study indicated that their one of their major challenges for online learning is the limited knowledge they have. From their point of view, the knowledge they have does not allow them to navigate the learning management systems and carry their learning tasks effectively. For example, this is how one of the participant puts it:

> *Although I have done computer literacy course while I was doing first year, what I was taught then was not applicable now because the technology was not advanced like now where we have to use things like Thuto and other learning platforms such as zoom, Google Classroom. So this has posed a huge challenge for me, to the extent that I almost withdrawn from the school.*

In addition to this limited knowledge, self-motivation and attitude also appear to be in the way of participants' effective online learning participation. The motivation and attitude appear to be influenced partly by their limited knowledge and skills, access to personal digital devices and personal space. With regard to knowledge, in the participant quotation in page 10, the participant indicates that the knowledge and skill related struggle she had with online learning sometimes made her want to quit her studies.

Cultural and socio-economic background

Access to personal digital resources and learning spaces also appear to negatively affected how learners in this study participated. Many of them (9) indicated that because of their socio-economic background, they do not have access to personal digital resources and dedicated learning spaces. cultural and socio-economic background. They indicated that for ICT needs, they usually relied on the University digital resources. They explained that since the University had declared the migration of courses on line, the students were told to go home and the University Campus was locked down for students. As a result, students who did not own digital resources were left stranded and as a result, struggled to participate online. This is how one of these participants put it: *"I took two weeks without getting in touch with my lecturers because I had to source laptop since I have always relied on University computers"*. Dedicated learning spaces that would motivate an online learner (Dhawan 2020) emerged as one of the challenges that affected learner's participation on online learning. The participants indicated that learning from home was difficult for them because of the number of people in their household. They are not able to have dedicated space to learn as spaces are shared with other members of the household. This is how one participant put it:

> *I am staying with my parents and my siblings, two sisters and two brothers, so I share a sleeping room with my brothers. This where I also normally do my studies. It has not been easy for me because my mother can pop in in the middle of my lessons and assign me house chores like to fetch maize at the fields.*

In addition, to the problem of shared spaces in the household, this participant also indicate that he is also not able have dedicated time for reading. While at home these participants are expected to take part in the household chores. This has been also reported by Kwatubana and Ebrahim (2020) who pointed out that some social responsibilities of some learners in Southern African schools negatively affects how they learn.

Learning Styles

The participants learning habits appeared also to have influence on the participant motivation and attitude to learn online. The view of these students (5) was that they are used to learning in groups and consulting other students for support when they are on campus. According to them, that online learning had isolated them from their counterparts they were not as motivated to learn as when they learn through face-to-face mode. One of these students explained,

> *When we have face-to-face classes, we do not only have discussions during classes but even between classes. We have discussion groups in which we discuss theories, models or concepts. For other students, lecture-based learning is not enough. Many of us benefit significantly from discussions and we remain motivated to learn.*

According to these students, active engagement in discussions, peer support among themselves motivate them to learn. This has been supported by Gravett (2018) and Cusimano, Ting, Kwong, Van, Melle, MacDonald and Cline (2019) who observed that sometimes students also learn from their seniors who act more like mentors. These seniors are regarded as near-peer strongest as they are eager to share their knowledge with those less knowledgeable in their field of study. For example, one student in this study explained this by saying, "*I do not have vibe to study because these concepts are difficult when I work alone at home, since I do not have any senior student to consult"*. From the participants in this study were of the view that whoever made the decisions to migrate teaching and learning online had not deeply thought about these extended benefits of face-to face mode of learning.

Pedagogical related challenges

Learners in this study were also experiencing pedagogical challenges. They explained that how their teachers presented learning material online was not giving them any classroom experience. Their explanation was that many teachers had turned the University LMS as a platform for 'dumping' unexplained lecture notes and assignments. This has been observed by many scholars that one of the factors that can deter online learners is when teachers fail to explain and demonstrate difficult learning concepts and processes online (Boaler 2016, Khirwadkar, Khan, Mgombelo, Ratkovic & Forbes 2020; Lu et al. 2020).

Institutional support

According to the participants (9), the technical support from the university they had been receiving for online learning, such as being trained how to use the LMS had been of very little help for effective participation. This was because, as they explained, the training did not provide opportunities for hands-on practice. They were not able to acquire necessary skills from this training and, as a result, when they were away from other learners, or people who could assist them, they struggled to remember what they had been taught. When asked about other forms of support such as CTL helpdesk. Many students appeared to be ignorant of the existence of this facility. Students (2) who appeared to have some knowledge about this facility, their view was that helpdesk role was only to hold formal trainings for students and lecturers or assist technical stuff like resetting passwords. These students were not aware that they could consult the helpdesk for individual assistance. The rest of the participants did not know about this facility. Generally, the findings of this study also established that all the students did not think that the university was doing enough to support online learning, particularly by making digital infrastructure and resources available and accessible to ensure that no student was disadvantaged.

Students coping mechanisms

The students were asked how they were copying with the situations they had just described. All of them indicated that they were not copying at all, that is why they were boycotting their studies. They indicated that students who did not have digital knowledge and skill, personal devices and or access to the internet, relied on their friends or willing counterparts to assist them with downloading (learning materials such as notes and or prescribed resources from the internet and teacher feedback) or uploading (assignments). Otherwise they use internet cafes for this purpose. They further indicated that because the cafes are costly and that it is not every day they could seek help from their colleagues, they rely for some aspects of learning such as reading or listening to the recorded lectures they use their mobile phones. These participants indicated that even though the university campus was closed and they had been told to go home, many of them had not gone home. They had sought for temporary accommodation in the villages surrounding the campus. The reason being that they had an opportunity to 'snatch' the university internet from the other side of the fence. This is how one of them put it:

> *During the day, don't you see many student standing or sitting along the university fence, it is because we are accessing internet. We actually learnt this from people who stay in the villages surrounding the campus. So nobody goes home. We are all here as if the University is still open.*

Generally, the findings of this study confirm those that were established by other studies before this about online learning. These studies observed that different types of factors, personal, pedagogical or institutional, for example, have a great influence on how students participate online (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Kumar 2015, Kumar Basak et al. 2018, Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Shahmoradi et al. 2018, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004). Where these factors had been taken into account they can make online learning effective and provide enjoyable learner experiences. However, where planning failed to recognise the importance of these factors, as has been the case with the university which was studied, online learning could be ineffective and create a chaotic teaching and learning environments. The findings of this study contradicts Dhawan's observation (2020:7) that online learning has emerged as "a victor ludorum amidst this chaos" because in this study it appears to have caused havoc in some universities. Perhaps, Dhawan's observation was based on the universities which thoroughly planned and successfully implemented online learning.

Thus, unlike others who viewed online learning as a panacea for education ills as it has been viewed as a solution to address the COVID-19 crisis (Dhawan 2020), it should rather be viewed as an alternative way of delivering teaching and learning. A strategy that needs through planning and resources for its effectiveness to deliver quality education. Hasty and haphazard decision to migrate courses online, should be seen an ingredient for chaos that is likely to damage the quality teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the challenges of online learning that were experienced by students in one university. The study was carried out after the management of this university instructed teaching and learning activities to be migrated online. This was a drastic decision by the university whose teaching and learning activities had been mostly face-to-face. In this study, 12 undergraduate students from Faculty of Education were interviewed on the challenges they were encountering with online learning. The

challenges that were experienced by these students were influenced by factors which three categories which are personal-related, pedagogical and institutional. This study concludes that when the university embarked on online learning it had not thought deeply about how these factors would affect teaching and learning. As such, if they were considered during decision making it was in a very casual manner. Instead of solving teaching and learning issue during COVID-19 Crises, online learning has created chaos in teaching and learning and frustration for students to learn. However, Todorova and Bjorn-Andersen (2011) see these disastrous online learning as an opportunity for the universities to learn through their experiences and prepare better for the environmental disasters to come beyond COVID-19 pandemic. Dhawan's (2020) advises these learning institutions to have a high level of preparedness for online learning so that they can easily adapt during the future disasters and crises.

This study recommends that all learning institutions should think deeply about and plan thoroughly about online learning before making decision to use this mode of learning. First, they should not see online learning as something which can provide a quick fix for education crisis with very little planning. They should view planning for online learning more demanding than planning for face-to-face teaching. When thinking of online learning, all curriculum aspects that include the following should be considered: human aspect (teacher, learner and the support they will need), learning spaces (their availability and appropriateness for learning), and learning materials and strategies. Above all, in their planning, the institutions should view online learning as a strategy used to enhance teaching and learning and to achieve national educational goals, not as a quick fix for educational crisis. In this way, online learning can effectively serve as a panacea in the time of crisis (Dhawn 2020).

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Examining the role of instructional materials in the implementation of History 2166 syllabus in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' capacities to effectively deliver in the classroom can be strengthened if they have more access to instructional resources which facilitate the grasping of concepts by learners. The scarcity of instructional materials worsened by insufficient financial resources to fund the initiatives spelt the doom of earlier curriculum reforms. This paper used a phenomenological design to qualitatively explore the perceptions of History teachers on the role of instructional resources in the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform in Zimbabwe. The paper looks at the availability, use and impact of instructional resources on the instructional process during the implementation of the new syllabus. Five History teachers drawn from five secondary schools in the Glen View/ Mufakose district in the Harare Metropolitan province were purposively sampled. The participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews which were audio tapped, transcribed, coded and categorised into the major themes on the role of instructional materials in the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reforms. Findings from this study show that the scarcity of instructional resources played a part in making the teaching of the History 2166 syllabus almost an insurmountable feat. However, teachers had the obligation to be resourceful and innovative in order to ensure that learners were exposed to the best possible instructional practices. The apparent lack of the necessary instructional materials significantly contributed to the challenges encountered by the History 2166 syllabus which culminated in its withdrawal from the History classroom in 2000. This study concludes that instructional resources are a key factor in curriculum reform since the extent of their availability determines the success or failure of the implementation of a new syllabus.

Key words: History 2166 syllabus; implementation; instructional materials; syllabus reform

INTRODUCTION

Throughout syllabus reforms, instructional materials are considered as crucial tools for supporting instructional change (Seashore, 2015). Instructional materials refer to devices designed to support the learning process by assisting teachers in transmitting, organized knowledge skills and attitudes to the learners within an instructional situation (Chacha, 2018). Instructional materials also refer to resources obtained online, supplemental textbooks and activity books, and materials provided by colleagues or from other sources. Chacha (2018) notes that the scarcity of instructional materials worsened by the lack of sufficient financial resources spelt the doom of earlier curriculum reforms. The extent of availability of instructional materials for the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform in secondary schools affected the quality of education. During their implementation of curriculum guidelines teachers must evaluate the possibilities and constraints of their instructional materials to

select those tasks that are most appropriate for their learners (Edenfield, 2010). One major challenge to implementing the History 2166 syllabus was the lack of textbooks aligned with the new standards. As a result of the absence of texts aligned to the History 2166 syllabus and the inability to teach in more student-centered ways, some teachers were left feeling unsure of their own abilities to teach this new curriculum using new teaching strategies (Edenfield, 2010). Instructional materials play a very important role in the teaching and learning process since their appropriate use enhances the memory level of the students. At a time when education is getting widespread, oral teaching cannot be the key to successful pedagogy so the teacher has to use instructional materials to facilitate conceptualization and make the teaching and learning process interesting (Effiong, Ekpo, Igiri, 2015).

The influence of instructional materials in promoting learners' academic performance and teaching and learning in educational development is indisputable **(**Dhakal, **2017).** The materials teachers choose to use and how they use those materials to implement the curriculum influence their learners' learning opportunities (Edenfield, 2010). The use of instructional materials gives the learners opportunities to touch, smell or taste objects in the teaching and learning process. Knowledge and skill can be passed into learners with different types of relevant instructional materials. The use of instructional materials becomes very crucial in improving the overall quality of the learning experiences of learners especially during the implementation of new learning material **(**Dhakal, **2017)**. A common goal a teacher carries wherever he is, is to make lesson presentation vitally fresh, stimulating and testing for learners. This will help the teacher to individualize the learning method as well as the content and also working according to the learners' need. This goal can be reached most effectively through the use of instructional materials. The need to emphasis on the use and importance of instructional materials in any learning and teaching environment cannot be underestimated. For any learning to take place, the teacher has to make use of these materials that would enable him to teach effectively (Effiong, Ekpo, Igiri, 2015).

RELATED LITERATURE

Background of the History 2166 syllabus

The introduction of the History 2166 syllabus is regarded as the first curriculum reform at secondary school in independent Zimbabwe (Barnes, 2007). The main aims of this curriculum were to train learners to analyse history, interpret and evaluate it, detect bias in documents as well as books, understand points of view, weigh evidence and discover value judgements (Moyo, 2014). The teachers used the primary sources to develop skills required for the new Ordinary level history syllabus (Ndebele & Tshuma, 2014). The History 2166 syllabus was meant to transform the learning of history and it gradually removed the archaic approach of content regurgitation paving the way for the critical and in-depth scrutiny of historical information (Moyo, 2014). In spite of all its good intentions, the History 2166 syllabus proved to be very unpopular within the schools and it was removed from the History classroom in 2000 (Chitate, 2010).

The role of instructional materials in the classroom

Instructional materials and learning resources are associated with objects, persons or other aspects of the environment which can be used to impact, or help in instruction so as to make the learning objectives clearer and teaching easier (Dhakal, 2017).

According to Okobia (2011) the importance of using instructional materials in the classroom include making the subject matter more real, explicating difficult concepts, making the learner experience what is being learnt, helping to fire the imagination of the learners, preventing misconceptions as well as making learning interesting. Instructional materials greatly influence education quality and standards and they affect the teaching and learning process. This implies that the use of instructional materials is inevitable if effective teaching and learning must be achieved. It is said that one picture is equal to one thousand words. This agrees with the Chinese proverb which states that 'the thing which I hear, I may forget, the thing which I see, I may remember, the thing which I do, I cannot forget' (Dhakal, 2017). When instructional materials are properly used, they help to consolidate learning in the learner's mind.

The relationship between the curricular materials provided to a teacher and the tasks used in the classroom depends on the teacher's past experiences; contextual factors; the teacher's interpretation of the texts; the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about mathematics, pedagogy, and students; and how well the provided materials meet the teacher's needs and beliefs (Lloyd, 2008). Regardless of the materials provided by the school, the teacher is the ultimate decision-maker and curriculum developer in the classroom (Edenfield, 2010). Teachers do not merely implement the curriculum but they also develop, define and reinterpret it. The kind of learning that young people are subjected to largely depends on what teachers think, believe and do in the classroom (Edenfield, 2010). The introduction of reform ideas or instructional materials, even if one agrees with them, may not be able to overcome the images one has of teaching (Edenfield, 2010). During the process of trying to implement reforms, teachers often assimilate new ideas such as the use of new materials, class organization, and activities into their more familiar, traditional instruction (Lloyd, 2008), possibly as a way to maintain self-efficacy. This assimilation can lead to positive changes in teachers' identities since teachers willing to interact with innovative materials have an improved self-efficacy (Remillard, 2005).

Success in enacting reforms depends on teachers, who are at the front line of reform efforts. Their ability to create classroom interactions that foster learning is critical. Reform asks teachers to build on student understanding. This differs from telling or showing students what to do without consideration of their ideas and perceptions. It also differs from unguided "discovery" of concepts. Instead, reform recognizes that students come to class with their own conceptions and make their own meanings of classroom activities. The teacher's job is to guide and monitor their progress, designing instruction in response to student understanding (Seashore, 2015). However, questions remain about how to support teachers in implementing these curricula effectively. Studies of curricular implementation often focus on "fidelity" – curricular implementation in ways consistent with the designers' intentions (Collopy 2003). Remillard (2005) notes the distinction between intended and enacted instructional materials by pointing out that although some researchers focus on fidelity in implementation, others do not assume that fidelity between text and teaching is possible. Much of the research on teacher learning from instructional materials involve teachers' use of an instructional program for a sustained period of time, accompanied by professional development designed to support teachers in using the program.

Conceptual framework: the concept of curriculum implementation

Curriculum implementation refers to the unpacking of the officially approved syllabi, courses of study and subjects into practice (Chaudhary & Damani, 2015). The curriculum implementation stage is the most interactive part of the curriculum process and it takes place in the classroom through the mutually complimentary efforts of the teachers, learners, school administrators and parents (Ogar & Opoh, 2015). The application of physical facilities and the implementation of suitable instructional approaches is also incorporated. The bedrock of any society's political, economic, scientific and technological welfare arguably depends on the quality of its curriculum implementation (Ogar & Opoh, 2015). There are two critical players in the implementation process, inter alia, developers and users who should see the process together in the same way from the planning process to the implementation stage (Mupa, 2020).

For curriculum reform to be implemented successfully, there is a need for careful planning, as well as a focus on people, programmes and processes. In the context of the Zimbabwean curriculum, there is a glaring lack of implementation guide as evidenced by the lukewarm approach where the education authorities seem to abdicate responsibility to school leadership to run their own schools without getting relevant instructional materials from the government (Mupa, 2020). The implementation of a new curriculum should be tailor-made to suit the context it is given in a particular school. Some schools are in deprived contexts and find it very difficult to procure relevant and adequate resource materials like the relevant texts, computers, laboratories, among others. In some cases, school leadership will sit back waiting for the government to bring in such resources because some communities cannot manage to buy such gargets and also to construct the required laboratories (Mupa, 2020). The issue of having school leadership with the capacity to implement the curriculum is critical through the provision of adequate resources. Therefore, many learners may end up grasping very little or nothing at all from the concepts that are taught due to the lack of appropriate instructional resources. The implementation capacity of a new curriculum therefore largely depends on the availability of and access to human, financial, material, technological and logistical resources (Nafungo, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is part of a larger study that qualitatively explored the perspectives of History teachers on the History 2166 and 2167 syllabus reforms in Zimbabwe. This particular study used a phenomenological design to examine the role of instructional resources in the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus in Zimbabwe. Creswell & Poch (2018, p. 48) ascertain that "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories [and] hear their voices". Myers (2019) further adds that data collected under qualitative research can be useful in understanding people's behavior and actions, and the broader context within which they live and work. In order to collect the necessary data, a total of five History teachers drawn from five secondary schools in the Glen View/ Mufakose district in the Harare Metropolitan province were purposively sampled. The participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews which were audio tapped. The audio recorded interviews were transcribed, coded and categorised into meaningful major themes around teacher participation in the development and implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform. Follow-up telephonic interviews were used to seek clarification on issues that were not clear. The data collected was further analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research method which allows

the qualitative data collected in research to be analysed systematically and reliably so that generalisations can be made in relation to the categories of interest to the researcher (Hamad, et al., 2016). In order to deal with the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, we used a pilot study and refined the interview protocol for relevancy. All the selected participants signed the informed consent to illustrate their willingness to participate voluntarily in the study.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

This section is presented through the stories of teachers who took part in the teaching of the History 2166 syllabus. Pseudonyms were used for the teachers in the study.

Brief backgrounds of participants

Masara has 32 years of experience in teaching History. Her highest professional qualification is a Master of Education degree. In all her professional qualifications, she majored in the teaching of History. She taught the History 2166 syllabus right from its introduction until it was replaced.

Mapfumo has been teaching History for the past 26 years. His highest qualification is a Master's degree, specialising in teaching History. He taught the History 2166 syllabus for a very long period.

Murakani has been teaching History for the past 26 years. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor's degree in education with a specialisation in History. She also taught the History 2166 syllabus for a very long time.

Chituku has 26 years' experience as a History teacher. His highest qualification is a Master in Education degree specialising in the teaching of History. He taught the History 2166 syllabus for a considerable period of time.

Chitondo has been teaching History for the past 25 years. He holds a Diploma in Education. He taught the History 2166 syllabus from 1996 until it was replaced in 2000.

Availability, use and impact of instructional materials during the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform.

Instructional materials as the name suggests, are materials of visual, audio and audio - visual category that helps to make abstract concepts and ideas concrete during the teaching and learning process. They can be in print or electronic form. According to Collopy (2003), teachers' capacities to effectively deliver in the classroom can only be strengthened if they have more access to instructional resources.

We looked at the availability, use and impact of instructional materials during the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform. When asked about his experiences in the teaching of History 2166, Mapfumo indicated that when he began teaching the History 2166 syllabus in 1994, he was confronted by the acute shortage of text books to use in order to properly illustrate the concepts to learners.

> *The schools at which I taught were poorly equipped in terms of History text books. The few text books which were there were either torn and tattered or irrelevant.*

The ideal text books for the History 2166 syllabus were mostly available outside the country due to their foreign publishers. Mapfumo explained that such text books were authored by renowned scholars like Peter Morse, Hebert Peacock, Dennis Richards, David Thomson and were difficult

to access locally. The situation was pitiful at most schools since the funds to purchase the required text books were usually not available. Mapfumo had to go out of his way to improvise so that he could get the requisite texts usually through borrowing from teachers from neighbouring schools.

> *I remember when I taught at a school where History text books were as scarce as white elephants. I befriended the History teachers from the neighbouring boarding schools so that I could borrow their texts and other instructional materials which I then photocopied for use during my lessons. This material greatly helped since my learners could at least get familiar with sources in order to practice answering source-based questions.*

This is evidence of Mapfumo's resourcefulness as a History teacher which in the end helped him to illustrate the History 2166 syllabus concepts to his learners. Nevertheless, this did not overshadow the challenges that he encountered in looking for instructional resources.

This was corroborated by Chitondo who alluded to the fact that there was a serious shortage of instructional materials such as text books.

> *The scarcity of resources worsened the plight of History learners since the higher order skills demanded in the History 2166 syllabus became inaccessible for most learners at secondary school.*

This was Chitondo's first time to teach since he was coming from college with all the pedagogical theories that he had been equipped with by his lecturers. He was surprised to discover that his expectations were very different from the situation prevailing on the ground.

> *The school Head even said to me, "my friend you have to make do with what is available" but surprisingly, that which was available was close to nothing since there was not even a text book for me as the teacher to use. I then had to rely on my college lecture notes. I ended up buying some key texts to use in my lessons. Imagine a situation where 16 pupils could share one text book. At one time I almost cried.*

The evidence shows that the unavailability of instructional resources at some schools was really acute and History teachers faced challenges in imparting concepts to learners. Chitondo revealed that at first he was even afraid that he would be in

trouble if the History Education Officer (EO) would come and find him teaching without resources. He, however ended up getting used to the situation with the passage of time and somehow resigned to his fate and resolved to work with what was there. Nonetheless, he maintained his work ethics by striving to assist the learners to the best of his ability with the limited resources. He even gave up his own personal copies to the school since the pupils were so hungry for knowledge.

> *The situation was really pathetic and I was really a sorrowful man, but at the end of the day I said these pupils are innocent and just hungry for knowledge so let me help them because there was no need for me to expect someone to drop me a lifeline by offering me History texts. The pupils had so much hope that education would be their only gateway to success. I therefore felt naturally obliged to go an extra mile in order to support them to realise their dreams.*

Nonetheless, Chitondo was disappointed that despite all the efforts that he invested in preparing for lessons, at the end of the day the learners still struggled to grasp concepts due to the critical shortage of resources.

Chituku further pointed out that when he taught the History 2166 syllabus, it was not easy to fit the syllabus into the classroom activities because of lack of resources so he ended up dominating most lessons in order to cover up for the deficiency in instructional materials. He also said that he resorted to giving the learners piles of notes which were all supposed to be stored in their heads. Even when there was an improvement in the availability of materials, sometimes there was recourse to the old school of the teacher-centred approaches since teachers wanted to finish the syllabus which was too long.

> *Our major worry was the timetable versus the content coverage. The syllabus was too wide and you could not complete it yet all the sections were very key in the learner understanding historical concepts. Although the access to resources improved, the time factor was a problem.*

This shows how Chituku struggled to balance the time in order to complete the lengthy syllabus. Still, this could be solved by careful planning and timetabling. Chituku further faced challenges with regards to instructional resources necessary in the teaching and learning of the History 2166 syllabus since there were no computers which could be used to 'google up' for information to supplement the learners' needs. The schools where he taught were ill-equipped in terms of text books.

> *At some schools you found that there were no text books at all.*

He was, however, fortunate that he worked with very supportive experienced teachers. Still, he acknowledged that junior teachers faced challenges of instructional resources especially in schools where the senior teachers were uncooperative.

> *Some experienced teachers avoided working with junior teachers because they wanted to be the 'centres of information' and denied other teachers access to the meagre instructional materials. Junior teachers also faced challenges with the History 2166 syllabus since they could not pronounce some foreign names common in History topics, failed to interpret the syllabus and also struggled to get the relevant texts.*

In some schools, the teacher was the fountain of knowledge and learners exclusively relied on the teacher for their learning content. The chalk-talk and the dictation of notes were the dominant methods of teaching due to lack of resources. As the Head of Department (HOD) for History at his school, Chituku went out of his way to look for resources in order to facilitate the teaching of the subject. He said that he looked for texts and cartoons instrumental in the History 2166 syllabus in order to help his pupils practise the interpretation of cartoons and also networked with other History teachers from nearby schools to get past examination papers, cartoons and text books.

> *I would go an extra mile to source for instructional materials and network with other teachers who taught the subject at other schools.*

According to Masara, the History 2166 syllabus was relevant to the learners' classroom activities but the teachers had challenges of resources.

> *It was a very good syllabus that was prematurely introduced since teachers were ill-equipped in terms of resources and staff development. We needed appropriate media in order to adequately prepare the leaners for external examinations.*

The lack of instructional materials was worsened by the fact that most secondary schools could not afford the field trips needed to complement lessons.

> *We struggled to have field trips since our school was still growing and we did not have resources to spare and parents were equally not supportive. We also did not have the requisite text books which pupils would use when they were away from the teacher. Even the old*

> *text books that we had were not so essential since they did not have good practice questions and sources for the pupils. The questions in the books were not so challenging so they could not match those in the examinations.*

Masara further pointed out that one textbook by Muronda tried to bring up the pertinent issues but fell way short of expectations although there was an attempt to address the History 2166 syllabus requirements. Even in the common People Making History series, the practice questions were not up to the level required by the History 2166 syllabus.

Murakani also shared her experiences regarding the instructional materials needed to facilitate the teaching and learning of the History 2166 syllabus. Pupils really needed help in order for them to be objective when dealing with the highly abstract concepts in the History 2166 syllabus so the availability and adequacy of essential instructional materials was key in the successful implementation of the History 2166 syllabus. Asked to comment on the issue, Murakani pointed out that the History teachers could not find adequate instructional materials in order to facilitate the illustration of concepts to their learners. Asked on the level of preparedness for the new syllabus with regards to instructional materials, she revealed that:

> *When I was first assigned to teach the History 2166 syllabus, the essential text books were like white elephants! We hardly ever accessed them. So I ended up teaching without the recommended texts. The old textbooks that I used did not have information on the skills required by the new syllabus. They only helped me to 'load' the pupils with content since they had been written for the old content-based approach to teaching History as required by the old syllabi such as 2158 and 2160.*

The recommended texts, if available, would have been a useful resource since they contained cartoons, pictures and sources from which the examiners picked their examination questions. However, teachers had the obligation to be resourceful and innovative in the quest to ensure that the learners were exposed to the best possible instructional practices. From Murakani's submissions, the apparent lack of the necessary instructional materials significantly contributed to the challenges encountered by the History 2166 syllabus which culminated in its withdrawal from the History classroom in 2000.

Mapfumo had his best experiences teaching the History 2166 syllabus at a certain secondary school due to the abundance of instructional materials as well as the quality of students at the school.

> *The school was well equipped in terms of History texts and other instructional*

> *gadgets so both I and the learners extensively used them. I was given the freedom to exercise my expertise at this school. The calibre of the students that I was teaching was just excellent. They were so good that they made me read well in preparation for lessons because they were so sharp that they could ask you questions that you could struggle to answer so I would adequately prepare before going for lessons and would go there with a positive mind that I was going for a History lesson.*

In line with the current trends towards the popularisation in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning of History, Mapfumo observed that the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of History is now more pronounced in most secondary schools. When I asked him to elaborate, he added that,

> *There is proliferation of the use of gadgets such as MP4s, smart boards, projectors computers in most secondary schools in the district. This has helped to modernise teaching and learning in History thereby facilitating the grasping of concepts.*

Mapfumo acknowledged the assistance that he got from other teachers in the same subject who were very helpful in his professional development. He got resources from the more experienced teachers as well as teaching methods and this helped a lot in building his confidence.

> *I learnt quite a lot from other teachers since we were sharing resources and also practised team teaching. I remember someone teaching on the concept of the scramble for Africa when he brought eight sweets into the classroom then he put them on the table then went on to call five pupils to scramble for the sweets. A fight almost broke out as the pupils jostled for the sweets in a typical winner-take-all, law of the jungle style. I was very impressed by the way he illustrated the concept of the scramble for colonies in Africa.*

The scarcity of instructional resources played a part in making the teaching of the History 2166 syllabus almost an insurmountable feat. The situation was however mitigated by some resourceful teachers who went the extra distance to look for instructional resources for use in their

lessons thereby facilitating the grasping of concepts by the learners. In some cases resourceful teachers did not wait to get the ideal text books but used available resources as media. The nature of the History 2166 syllabus meant that a teacher had to be very resourceful in order to adequately illustrate concepts to the learners. Resourcefulness for History teachers meant gathering as many relevant texts and other learning materials as possible.

Masara indicated that she exposed her pupils to cartoons from those newspapers which posted political cartoons so that she would develop their skills of analysis and imagination.

> *For me and my learners that was a very good starting point so as to develop imagination and interpretation of facts. They looked at cartoons from different angles and that was what the syllabus wanted since there was no definite answer. In the end they also became very imaginative.*

From there on Masara began to appreciate the History 2166 syllabus more and began to emphasize more on skills than the content.

> *At times I would just give learners a topic to go and read then I would give them a picture on the same topic to comprehend over a particular theme. It motivated me and my learners and inspired us to aim higher. This was evidenced by the improvement in results in the external examinations.*

Her History learners began to understand and appreciate the subject. This shows that the History 2166 syllabus needed multivariate approaches and learners were supposed to look at the cartoons from different angles in order to come up with all possible answers. Masara came up with various activities for her pupils and this seemed to be the ideal teaching approach for the syllabus.

> *Source-based questions were eventful and thought-provoking, field trips and workshops were hard to come by due to financial constraints. In the end teacher clusters worked well since they brought uniformity since teachers worked together and shared experiences.*
> *Ultimately, it was progressive.*

From the prior discussion on the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus, it has become apparent that the teaching of the syllabus was heavily based on the availability, use and impact of instructional resources.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that instructional resources are a key factor in curriculum reform since the extent of their availability

determines the success of the implementation of a new syllabus. The History 2166 syllabus reform was plagued with mixed fortunes due to the apparent lack of adequate instructional materials for use by the teachers. The teacher as the authority in the classroom needs more than "chalk and talk" instructional methods since learning is also based on relevant instructional materials. The teacher is instrumental in evaluating, selecting, and using instructional materials that offer learners a variety of experiences for learning in a positive and supportive environment.

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Education stakeholders' perceptions regarding the adequacy, role and effectiveness of the tertiary education curriculum in the preparation of potential school heads in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of education stakeholders regarding the adequacy, role and effectiveness of the curriculum offered by tertiary education institutions in the preparation of potential school heads in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, individuals are appointed to the position of headship from the ranks of senior teachers, but without having undergone any specific school leadership preparation. In view of the role played by TEIs in the professional development of teachers, it would have been ideal for the curriculum to effectively prepare them for school leadership. The study employed a descriptive case study approach to collect and analyse data from three school inspectors, ten school heads, ten deputy heads and ten senior teachers. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. Documentary analysis of relevant documentary sources was also done. The findings indicate that although the TEI curriculum provides a basic grounding in the mastery of pedagogic skills, it lacks adequate content for the effective leadership preparation of potential school heads. The study recommends the need for TEIs to review the structure and content of curricula so that it incorporates aspects of school leadership that are responsive to the professional development needs of the 21st century school head.

Key words: effectiveness, curriculum, academic programmes, teacher education institutions, responsibilities, school heads

INTRODUCTION

The role of tertiary education institutions (TEIs) in school leadership preparation is widely acknowledged (Elsayed, Alfadda, Jeed, Afzaal & Al-haddad, 2020; Forde 2011; Ashu, 2014). The evidence base of school leadership development practices in several countries shows that TEIs have emerged to be a key element of the education value chain because of the central role they play in initial teacher education (ITE) and the professional development of school leaders (Magudu & Gumbo, 2018; Razzak, 2013). Literature also points to the role played by TEIs in the development of a teacher education curriculum that equips incumbents with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide effective school leadership (Ibrahim 2011; Razzak, 2013). The incorporation of aspects of leadership into the TEI curriculum is critically important if consideration is given to the fact that school heads assume such broad responsibilities as instructional leadership, day to day administration of the school, financial management, human resources management, asset management, accountability and implementation of policies (Johnson, 2016; Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008; Hallinger & Huber, 2012; Bush 2008). School heads might not be able to execute these functions if they are not effectively prepared in the course of their studies. The extent to which the TEI curriculum in Zimbabwe is effective in preparing potential school heads for sound school leadership is the focus of this study. In the study, TEIs refer to teachers' colleges and universities, hence an inquiry will be undertaken to determine if the TEI

curriculum, as reflected in the diploma and degree in education programmes currently being offered, effectively equips practising teachers with the knowledge and skills required for them to provide strong leadership once they are appointed to the position of headship.

Historical development of TEIs in Zimbabwe

The role of TEIs in teacher training in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the 1920s (Majoni, 2014) when teacher training was the responsibility of the colonial government and the missionary churches. Priority was initially given to the training of primary school teachers, while secondary school teacher training only began with the inception of Hillside Teachers' College in 1956 (http://www.hillsideteacherscollege.ac.zw/about/). The nature of teacher education was shaped by the philosophy and context of the colonial order in the then state of Rhodesia. Under the colonial education policy, teacher training sought to develop classroom practitioners with basic pedagogic skills required to facilitate the education of semi-literate Africans who would provide cheap labour for the development of the colony (Maravanyika, 1990; Zvobgo, 1981). Personnel who were appointed to lead schools played the role of *primus inter pares* (first teacher among equals), with the main responsibility of supervising the instructional process. Little regard was given to leadership training as the administration of schools was centralised. This could explain why incumbents were often referred to as 'head teachers' during the colonial era (Atkinson, 1982:83). The above nomenclature confirms Mulford's (2003) assertion that the content of a training programme is influenced by how authorities perceive the role of the school leader. Based on the preceding, it is apparent that the teacher education curriculum deliberately did not focus on management skills because such skills were deemed to be outside the ambit of the role of school heads then.

After the attainment of independence in 1980, the education system expanded rapidly following the introduction of the Education for All (EFA) policy (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011; UNESCO, 2001). This development resulted in the proliferation of mainly rural secondary schools and, consequently, a severe shortage of qualified school heads in the newly-established schools (CIET, 1999). The dearth of quality leadership in the Zimbabwean schools meant that TEIs had an obligation to provide in-service training for novice school heads.

Universities have also played a significant role in ITE and the professional development of school leaders in two ways. The University of Zimbabwe (UZ), for example, provides guidance to the policy and practice underlying teacher development in the teacher education colleges under its jurisdiction. Under the arrangement, all teachers' colleges are associate colleges of the UZ (Magudu & Gumbo, 2018). Secondly, most universities, including the UZ, offer degree programmes in education management and subject specialisation at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The extent to which the curriculum has been effective in preparing teachers for school leadership has been subject to debate. Darling-Hammond, La Pointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen (2007) assert that graduates of degree-awarding courses often face the challenge of transferring their theoretical knowledge into the real school situation, as the curriculum does not provide adequate practical experience in school leadership.

TEIs and the professional development of school leaders

The role of TEIs within the education value chain can best be understood within the context of the policy, process and practice that define professional learning in ITE and school leadership development

(Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). According to Darling-Hammond et al (2007), teachers' colleges and universities have a mandate to provide effective academic programmes that enable the professional development of school leaders in line with set professional standards. This is largely because, as Chong and Ho (2009) assert, the quality of teacher education is a critical determinant of successful learner outcomes. Literature states that TEI academic programmes must comprise certain features that define effective leadership preparation programmes (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Machekina, 2016). According to Bell et al. (2006), an effective programme must align with the state's ideological perceptions and national values to ensure that the purpose of education is achieved. In corroboration of the above view, Mathibe (2007) also postulates that an effective professional development programme should be integrated with the goals of education. Machekhina (2016) also proffers the view that leadership programmes must be responsive to the ever-changing global context, technological advancement and the incessant educational reforms affecting education systems. This implies that the quality and effectiveness of academic programmes offered by TEIs can only be guaranteed if the design and content of the curriculum ensures the transfer of knowledge, skills and competencies that are required for school heads to effectively lead the 21st century school (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008).

A third feature of effective leadership preparation programmes is that the selection of training objectives, content and instructional approaches must address the responsibilities that school heads are expected to perform (Vacancy Announcement Notice – Internal Circular Minute No.32, 2014; UNESCO, 2009). In addition, the curriculum must be informed by a comprehensive training needs assessment (TNA) (Parshiadis & Brauckmann, 2009; Hussain & Zamair, 2011). A TNA provides the necessary evidence base of the real performance challenges that school heads encounter. Literature identifies such challenges as leading and managing staff (Becioglu & Widly, 2015), resource mobilisation, budgeting and management of finances, community relations (Suleiman, 2015; Ng, 2015) and policy implementation (Hobson, Brown, Ashby, Keys, Sharp & Benefield, 2003). Based on the above, it is apparent that TEIs must collaborate with education policy makers and schools to enable them to incorporate aspects of school leadership into the TEI curriculum in order to prepare potential school heads for leadership.

Lastly, effective academic programmes ought to be a blend of theory with practice-based activities such as simulation, role play and case studies, so that learners are able to engage in action learning through participation (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010). This view is corroborated by Walker, Bryant, Bryant and Moosung (2013) who cite workplace learning and field experience as critical components of the instructional process that expose learners to real school leadership practice under the support of mentors and coaches. An examination of the programmes offered by teachers' colleges and universities is very critical in coming up with a determination of the extent to which they are effective in the professional development of school heads.

Teacher Education Colleges

In Zimbabwe, teachers' colleges offer the Diploma in Education as a teaching qualification. According to Mavhunga, Mavundutse and Mamvuto (2008), the programme consists of four components which are Theory of Education, the Main Subjects, Teaching Practice, and Professional Studies. The composition of the curriculum clearly shows that the curriculum prioritises an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and the pedagogic skills necessary for effective

teaching. The component of Professional Studies could potentially cover aspects of school leadership but, in reality, it focuses on such issues as teaching methodologies, classroom communication and classroom organisation. This attests to the observation that the teacher education curriculum hardly prepares student teachers for school leadership.

Teaching Practice (TP) is the other key component of the teacher education curriculum. This is an apprenticeship-based mode of learning which entails the placement of student teachers within schools for them to gain teaching experience under the tutelage of experienced mentors (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Although TP exposes student teachers to pedagogical experience, such experience hardly provides them with practical orientation on school administrative matters. This implies that the focus of the teacher education curriculum is towards preparing student teachers for classroom practice rather than school leadership.

The utility of teachers' colleges could be further enhanced if the institutions offered additional courses on school leadership outside of the formal tuition programmes that they offer. Currently, teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe are not involved in any school leadership development programmes, yet research indicates that TEIs can hugely contribute towards the professional development of school heads through the provision of workshops, conferences and short courses (Mathibe, 2007).

Universities

Universities are at the apex of the education value chain in any education system (Oncer, 2018). Empirical evidence attests to the crucial role played by universities in ITE and school leadership preparation (Pont et al., 2008; Johnson, 2016; Jensen, 2016). The Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) Honours degree is the flagship academic programme offered to students pursuing a career in teaching. The degree is either offered with a specialisation in education leadership or with subject specialisations (Mapolisa & Muyengwa, 2012). The Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) is the other professional qualification that is offered to university graduates who intend to pursue a career in education. Holders of diplomas in education, obtained from teachers' colleges, are also capable of upgrading themselves by studying for degree programmes at universities. This arrangement suggests the prevalence of a spiral curriculum within the TEIs, spanning from teachers' colleges to universities, in which students progress from simple to complex ideas in teacher education and school leadership. The attainment of a relevant first degree, and in some instances with a PGDE qualification, is the minimum qualification for entry into the post of school head. In this regard, it is common expectation that a programme deemed to be the basic qualification for entry into headship must effectively equip incumbents with the knowledge and skills required for school leadership. Although the universities offer Master of Education degree programmes, these were not included within the scope of this study because focus was mainly on the first degree, which is a requirement for promotion to the post of school head.

The mode of instructional delivery that has traditionally been used by universities is classroom-based instruction (Walker et al., 2013), and Open Distance Learning (ODL) that is offered by Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) (Mapolisa et al., 2012). Johnson (2016) argues that university academic programmes are mainly theory-based and, therefore, do not adequately prepare students for effective school leadership because they are disconnected from the practical and contextual realities of the school system. In view of the above defects,

scholars have called for the reformation of university academic programmes (Steyn, 2008; Forde 2011). Beyer (2009) suggests that university programmes must focus on the student's mastery of organisational management, leadership theory and administrative practices that constitute the day-to-day responsibilities of the school head. Zhang and Brundrett (2010) also cite field experience as an important aspect of practical learning for school leaders that must be included in academic programmes to integrate theory with practice.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The study sought to examine the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the TEI curriculum in the preparation of potential school heads in Zimbabwe. There is increased awareness of the critical role played by TEIs in the professional development of school leaders. In an education system in which school heads are promoted from the ranks of senior teachers, there is a risk that individuals are simply thrust into their new roles and left to grapple with their roles on the basis of trial and error. This has invoked interest in this researcher to interrogate and answer the following research question: 'What do stakeholders say about the effectiveness of the TEI curriculum in the preparation of potential school heads for school leadership?' There is very little research that has been undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of TEIs in the preparation of potential school heads (Pont et al., 2008) hence this study shall contribute significantly to the scanty knowledge base on the subject.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Etienne Wenger's social Constructivist Theory of learning. The theory posits that learning is a social process in which knowledge, skills and attitudes are constructed within a given social context (Wenger, 2000). The major tenet of the social learning theory is the notion of the community of practice (CoP), an age-old phenomenon in which people involved in a common practice interact within their communities to share knowledge and expertise (Wenger, 2000). Members within a specific community define the knowledge and the real competencies that characterise a particular profession and share ideas amongst themselves. The theory is relevant to this study as it provides a conceptual understanding of the psychology of learning underlying TEI programmes and the leadership preparation of school heads.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the qualitative research methodology to examine the perceptions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of TEIs in the leadership preparation of potential school heads. Qualitative research is a form of naturalistic inquiry that seeks to interrogate a certain phenomenon from the viewpoint of individuals within a given social context (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the qualitative research approach was deemed to be appropriate because it enabled the researcher to investigate the problem from the perspective of the participants. Johnson (2016) asserts that an assessment of the effectiveness of educational leadership preparation programmes can be done optimally if the perceptions of those who participated in the programmes are interrogated.

The multiple case study strategy was used to explore the perceptions of selected participants drawn from ten selected school sites. Creswell (2013) defines a case study as a strategy of inquiry that investigates a specific phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach was preferred because it allowed the researcher to undertake a comprehensive study of the phenomenon within a limited geographical area for the purpose of generalising empirical findings to a broader context. The multiple case study design was selected to

cater for the different sub-categories of participants (school inspectors, school heads, deputy heads and senior teachers) who would provide evidence during the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

The population for this study consisted of school inspectors, school heads, deputy heads and senior teachers. Cohen et al (2011) refers to a population as a group of elements or cases, in the form of individuals or objects, which conform to specific criteria and to whom the researcher intends to generalise the research results. The sample for this study comprised thirty-four participants who were purposively sampled from ten selected secondary schools and one district education office in one district of Zimbabwe. Kombo and Tromp (2009) assert that purposive sampling is used to target participants who have an in-depth knowledge of the issues being investigated. The maximum variation sampling approach was used together with purposive sampling to select different categories of participants ranging from senior teachers, deputy heads, beginning school heads, practising school heads to school inspectors. This was mainly done to select participants with diverse backgrounds and perceptions regarding the subject under study.

To maintain the privacy of participants, the researcher assigned identity codes, from A to J, to schools that were selected to be part of the research sample. School heads, deputy heads and senior teachers were then identified according to the nomenclature of their professional category and the code of the school from which they were selected. Participants in the category of School Inspector were ascribed letters A to C to ensure ease of individual identification.

Permission to undertake research was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). Prospective participants were furnished with information regarding the purpose of the study for them to make informed decisions. Data were collected using individual interviews (school heads and school inspectors) and focus group interviews (for deputy heads and senior teachers). The open-ended interviews enabled the researcher to adapt the order and frame of questions in line with the participants' responses, thereby giving the researcher the flexibility to follow up on issues raised during the discussions. Besides individual interviews and focus group discussions, the study also employed document analysis as a method of research. According to Glenn (2009), documents play a central role in qualitative research as they provide the researcher with an opportunity to review topical data that can then be examined and interpreted to generate meaning, understanding and in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under study. In this study, content analysis of the content of academic programmes such as the Diploma in Education and the B.Ed (Honours) degree from one secondary teachers' college and three universities within the province, respectively, was done to determine whether the programmes had components of school leadership that could prepare potential school heads for school leadership. The use of document analysis alongside other previously mentioned research methods provided the researcher with an opportunity to triangulate data from the multiple sources as a way of ensuring its credibility.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data generated from the study sought to assess participants' perceptions regarding the extent to which the TEI curriculum prepared beginning school heads for effective school leadership. Two themes emerged from the discussions, *viz:* responsibilities of school heads and the effectiveness of content of TEI curricula in the professional development of school heads. In respect of the second theme, two sub-themes further emerged. The first sub-theme focused on the category of teachers'

colleges, while the second sub-theme related to universities.

Responsibilities of school heads

This theme examined participants' perceptions regarding the responsibilities of school heads. An examination of participants' views regarding the job description of the post of school head was necessary as it provided insight into the domains of competencies that are and ought to be incorporated within the content of TEI curricula. According to Pont et al. (2008), the job description can be used as a framework for the selection of content of leadership preparation programmes for school heads.

The following statement can sum up the views of the participants regarding the role of school heads:

The responsibilities of heads … are guided by their job description... (School Inspector A)

School Head D identified *accountability* as a major responsibility. The participant insinuated that school heads needed to be accountable to education authorities on matters regarding the school, public funds as well as the welfare of students and teachers. School Head F also cited *the issue of policy implementation* as the other responsibility of school heads. In this regard, school heads were supposed to develop the craft literacy and competence required to implement policy. Participants also cited other responsibilities such as *the general planning of all activities* (Deputy Head I), t*he day to day running of the school, supervision of the staff* (School Head J), community relations (School Inspector A), marketing the school (School Inspector B) and budgeting (Senior Teacher D-1). Deputy Head F also identified the role played by school heads in the management of school assets such as ...*facilities, the classroom blocks, the special rooms as well as the grounds and the teachers' houses*.

The above views imply that school heads are mainly responsible for the general administration of the school, accountability, financial management, human resources management, asset management, implementation of policies, community relations, marketing the school, and instructional leadership. One wonders whether the TEI curriculum equips aspiring and practising school heads with the requisite skills to effectively execute these responsibilities.

Effectiveness of the TEI curriculum in the preparation of potential school heads

This theme focused on participants' views regarding the extent to which the content of TEI curricula effectively prepared teachers for school leadership. The views of participants were categorised under two sub-themes: teachers' colleges and universities.

Teachers' colleges

Under this sub-theme, participants' broadly viewed training in teachers' colleges as an elementary step that provided the ...*fundamentals of teaching* (School Head C). This view was also echoed by Deputy Head D who stated that ... *teacher education gave us the foundation from where to start.*

The findings indicate that participants acknowledged the role of teachers' colleges in providing teachers with the basic professional grounding in instructional leadership that is fundamental to the development of an effective school leader. Pont et al. (2008), who contend that school heads require a strong pedagogic background for them to provide sound instructional leadership, support the views promulgated above. Although the curriculum in teachers' colleges was revered for the elementary roles they played in teacher development, some participants expressed concern that it did not include components of school leadership.

According to School Head J ...teacher *training does not include much on leadership* (as) *...much of the emphasis is on the child but not on leadership***.** School Inspector A also proposed that, ... *at college level, they are supposed to teach them leadership styles since everyone who is going to be trained as a teacher has room to be promoted to the post of school head***.** School Head H also corroborated the above views by stating that ...the *training that I got at college was mainly to see me teach and make sure that pupils pass.* According to the participant's view, there exists a gap in teacher training as the curriculum does not *...encompass the idea of educational management in terms of managing schools*. In the participant's view ...the *teacher training programme should somehow include leadership training,* to avoid a situation where... *the teacher suddenly finds himself or herself in a leadership position but without any skills from college*. Deputy Head J aptly stated that *...teacher training* does not cover *...all the expertise which is needed in the management of schools* as it focuses *...more on how to build a teacher in the classroom rather* than *a teacher as an administrator.*

The above findings imply that the content of the Diploma in Education programme hardly provides student teachers with the requisite grounding in aspects of school leadership as it mainly focuses on the professional preparation of classroom practitioners. Yet Beyer (2009) contends that the effective preparation of school leaders must incorporate leadership and management theory into school leadership preparation programmes so as to impart a knowledge base of management skills among aspiring school leaders.

In terms of the effectiveness of the TP component to leadership preparation, documentary analysis revealed that the school-based experiences mainly focused on the mastery of pedagogic approaches and classroom practice in general rather than school administration. The impression that one gets from the above is that teachers' colleges provide little preparation for school leadership as they prioritise the inculcation of pedagogic skills.

Universities

This sub-theme sought to examine participants' views about the effectiveness of university degree programmes in preparing potential school heads. School Inspector A stated that she was *...not happy with teacher training at universities* as the programmes did not adequately prepare novice school heads for effective school leadership. She further stated that she had *...tried to make reference to quite a number of course outlines from the various tertiary institutions* and had realised that students graduated without a deep understanding of the professional skills required for the day-to-day administration of the school. The participant's views resonate with those of the other participants, who indicated that the content of degree programmes was not responsive to the real training needs of school heads.

Participants also indicated that academic programmes were simply prescribed by TEIs without the collaboration of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and schools in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Effective programmes must be responsive to nationally-acceptable performance standards and the evidence base of the training needs of school heads (Bell et al., 2006; Hussain et al., 2011). School Inspector A, who stated that *...there should be strong partnership between the ministry* ... and the tertiary institutions emphasised the need for collaboration. The above excerpt implies that MoPSE, TEIs and schools have a shared responsibility to develop programmes that are custom-built to address the contextual challenges faced by school heads. Such collaboration could help to standardise the content of degree programmes across all institutions by identifying the minimum body of

knowledge that must be covered under these programmes. The current situation is that the content of degree programmes offered within universities varies across institutions. This discordance could imply that there is no standards framework that guides the academic programmes.

The other shortcoming of the academic programmes that was identified by participants related to their over-reliance on classroom-based instruction which tends to focus more on the theoretical perspectives rather than the practical aspects of school management. Studies have shown that contact sessions are not effective because they are mainly theory-based and lack practical components that expose learners to real school experiences (Steyn, 2008). A review of the programmes revealed that the content and instructional strategies that were used did not incorporate practice-based learning approaches that could enable learners to develop problem-solving skills. Jensen (2016) contends that problem-based learning helps to connect the preparation of school leaders to real administrative practices expected in schools. This implies that effective programmes ought to integrate theory with such practical activities as role play, simulations and case studies as espoused by Steyn (2008). Studies by Davis and Darlington-Hammond (2012 in Johnson 2016) confirm that school leaders who underwent training in educational leadership preparation programmes that had aspects of practical applications, problem-based learning and field-based learning were highly effective.

Mentoring and coaching are some of the experiential learning approaches that have proven to be effective in providing on-the-job training to novice school heads within the school site (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). These approaches entail the pairing of inexperienced school heads with their experienced peers so that the former are able to develop the requisite skills and experiences through site-based learning (Preis, Grogan, Sherman & Beatty, 2007). A review of the instructional strategies used in the degree programmes clearly showed that field- based experiential learning was not a part of the process of instruction. Yet the importance of doing ...*some fieldwork*, particularly ...going *into schools studying various situations together and trying to come up with solutions* was highlighted by School Head H as central to the professional development of school heads within the real school situation. In view of the multiplicity of roles that school heads are expected to play, it is evident that they require multi-tasking skills and these can only be developed through site-based experiential learning under the guidance of mentors. This shows the compelling need for TEIs to incorporate field-based learning into the academic programmes.

Given the fact that teachers' colleges are associate institutions of the UZ, it is important that the curriculum content taught across the two institutions be structured in a spiral form to ensure learner progression from simple concepts of school leadership at diploma level to complex ones at degree level. This content restructuring is quite important, especially if consideration is given to the fact that holders of diplomas are eligible to enrol to study for a bachelor's degree as a way of professional upgrading. Such an arrangement provides TEIs with an opportunity to initiate the teaching of concepts of school leadership at an early stage of teacher development.

The discordance between the content of academic programmes within universities and the professional development needs of novice school heads clearly shows that academic staff is detached from the realities of the school system. The mismatch exists because there is a lack of meaningful collaboration between TEIs and schools in terms of research on school leadership. According to School Inspector A, lecturers often showed signs of ...*deficiency* in their understanding of the education ...*policy system* and the

contextual realities underlying school leadership. As a way of resolving the problem of incompetence among academic staff, she suggested that the …*Ministry (MoPSE) people facilitate (a workshop for the) lecturers.* The process of reorienting academic staff within TEIs is necessary so that they are kept abreast of the contextual realities of the school system and policy developments that have shaped the role of school leaders in the 21st century.

A review of the content of the B. Ed (Honours) degrees and the Post Graduate Diploma in Education from three purposively selected universities was undertaken to determine whether the content of degree programmes included components of the skills and knowledge required to prepare students for effective school leadership. The analysis indicated that the evidence base of the job description did not inform the content of degree programmes and the real training needs of school heads. Literature asserts that effective professional development programmes ought to be constructed based on expectations of the national agenda (Bell & Stevenson, 2006), school heads' responsibilities (Pont et al., 2008) and the real contextual challenges faced by school heads (Hussain & Zamair, 2011). Research has shown that academic programmes that are responsive to the challenges encountered by novice school heads must address such key areas as instructional leadership, financial management, policy implementation, assets management, staffing, student discipline, computer literacy, community relations and documentation (Mapolisa, Ncube, Tshabalala & Khosa, 2014; Tshabalala, Muranda & Gazimbe, 2014; Sulemain, 2015; Johnson, 2016; Bush, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The focus of the study was on examining the effectiveness of the TEI curriculum in the professional development of potential school heads. The study's findings indicate that TEI programmes do not effectively prepare novice school heads for the role of school leadership. Although the programmes provide a basic grounding in the mastery of pedagogic skills, they do not impart the requisite technical skills that enable school heads to execute their responsibilities effectively. Based on the above, there is a need for TEIs to review the structure and content of academic programmes so that they are purpose-built to respond to the professional development needs of the 21st century school head.

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First-year Student Experience of Orientation Week at a university in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this cross-sectional quantitative study was to assess the orientation experience of first-year students at a university campus in Mpumalanga. The study is informed by Tinto's (1997) student integration model that suggests that students' success is mainly influenced by the degree to which the university integrates the students into its academic and social systems. Participants were recruited from first-year students who had gone through a full-week orientation programme at the university. A questionnaire with 23 items on a Likert scale was used to collect data. The responses of 177 participants were analysed using principal component analysis (PCA). The principal components that emerged were health and wellbeing, academic development, student leadership, academic orientation, residence life and living and learning at the university. Further, multiple regression results showed that perceptions of health and wellbeing, academic development, student leadership and residence life significantly predicted living and learning at the university. It can therefore be concluded that these aspects had an influence on students, making it likely that they further influence a positive attitude and commitment on the part of the students. The study recommends that student integration activities at university should be extended even beyond orientation week, so that students are continuously supported in their learning.

Key words: orientation week, adaptation, first-year students, South Africa, student success.

INTRODUCTION

It is a South African standard and a global practice for universities to provide orientation to first-year students. An orientation week or similar period is set aside to enable first-year students to find their way in a new learning institution in higher education. The first-year experience during orientation is a transitional phase in which students strive to strike a balance between high school life and university life. High school norms and values are challenged by the diverse and complex operating systems of a university. In a new university, new buildings are mushrooming, cranes are lifting heavy objects, excavators are busy digging and builders mingle with students at refreshment outlets and new bathrooms that are not marked whether they are for males, females, people with a disability, or gender-neutral people. Orientation week attracts media attention in South African universities and parents become anxious about their children starting a new life away from the home environment. In the same way, their children in university can be concerned about being reported to parents and education sponsors for uncouth behaviour and other undesirable activities. However, some students enjoy media coverage and report good stories to parents and financial sponsors about their experience during the orientation

week. This study assessed first-year students' orientation experience at a new university in South Africa with particular reference to life on campus, academic orientation, library experience, financial aid experience, student leadership experience, health and safety experience and residence life experience.

Life on campus experience

Life on campus during orientation week is exciting. First-year students meet new people of different races, religions, ethnic groups and social classes. Everyone looks busy and generally looks for entertainment. Culture shock occurs when first-year students have first-hand experience of what they used to read about university students. When international students and local students mingle during cultural expositions and other social events that promote diversity, culture clash or cultural conflict is bound to happen, as some cultural practices are perceived as violating human rights (Mubangizi, 2012). Culture shock happens when there is cultural conflict and it is characterised by anxiety that results from loss of familiar cues, the breakdown of interpersonal communication, and an identity crisis (Shioshvili, 2012). Physical or emotional discomfort is experienced as the student tries to adjust to campus life through interacting with people from various ethnic groups and different cultural orientations (Shioshvili, 2012). The student is challenged by cultural beliefs and artwork that display historical events, traditional or religious beliefs, HIV and AIDS campaigns, new HIV prevention technologies, foods eaten by certain groups of people, racial and ethnic bias utterances, feminist activism and sexual orientation campaigns.

During orientation, students embark on experiential learning guided tours in which they visit places of interest to learn more about other cultures or new places (Long, Akande, Purdy & Nakano, 2008). It is common for students to fight on the bus and to abuse alcohol and drugs during orientation. During the first-year experience, which is a transitional phase between high school life and university life, some of the students taste and learn to drink various types of liquor and sweetened alcoholic beverages and some try drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, opiates, inhalants, stimulants, Ecstasy, and club drugs (Derefinko, Charnigo, Peters, Adams, Milich & Lynam, 2016). The use of alcohol and drugs expose students to HIV and AIDS. Partying and heavy episodic drinking are common activities among university students during orientation week. At this time, tents are pitched over the open spaces, loud music blasted to entertain the crowd and some of the students dancing, walking up and down aimlessly, sitting around a table or lying on the lawn. Playing music is a preferred leisure activity among the youth and it is associated with emotion regulation and social connection (Papinczak, Dingle, Stoyanov, Hides & Zelenko, 2015). Some students choose to smoke cigarettes and cigars in designated places or to smoke hubbly bubbly as a group enjoying life on campus together sharing stories and new experiences in a new university environment.

Academic orientation experience

During orientation week, students visit faculties and schools in the faculty. They meet with lecturers in charge of academic programmes and they are shown facilities that aid teaching and learning. These include operating theatres, surgical equipment,

mechanised equipment, laboratories, computer rooms, study rooms, workshops, art galleries, music studios, museums and related facilities that are used by lecturers and students as learning media or learning technology. First-year students also gain understanding of the difference between high school teaching and university lecturing. Apart from academics who lecture in the faculty of education, most academics who teach at universities are not well grounded in pedagogical skills (Boyd & Harris, 2010). In contrast, teachers in primary and high schools are trained to be professional teachers (Boyd & Harris, 2010). However, at primary and secondary school level, teachers are mostly trained in didactics, while at university lecturers are expected to be more like facilitators of learning. In didactics, the teacher takes a leading role in the student's learning; however, at university, the students are expected to be self-directed learners who are largely responsible for their own learning while lecturers serve as facilitators. This has serious implications in terms of students coming from high school to university. Thus, an academic orientation programme provides an opportunity to re-orient students' learning dispositions and approaches in accordance with the expectations of learning in higher education.

Academic orientation involves taking students through university academic policies, which include entrance requirements and how they relate to study requirements. Policies and procedures on passing criteria, appeals procedure for those who fail, repeat conditions and the exclusion criteria are explained during orientation week. There is a high exclusion rate among first-year students in South Africa (Letseka & Maile, 2008). Faculties and schools provide policies and regulations governing undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. They provide information relating to grades that are required to proceed to the next level at undergraduate level, as there is no automatic promotion from first year to final year. Students are made aware that there are restrictions to higher degrees' admission in South African universities and abroad (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2015).

Library experience

The university library is an integral part of academic life at any university the world over. Top universities in the world have the world's best libraries as well. Libraries support research, teaching and learning, which are core functions that define academic life (Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013). Modern university libraries have digital collections, archives, historical papers, institutional repositories, e-books, e-journals, library intranet, interlibrary loans and spacious reading rooms with computers that have access to the internet and Wi-Fi. Librarians help develop academic literacy skills and competences among first-year students during orientation week by helping them understand the library notation, which includes technical language and symbols used by libraries internationally. First-year students are exposed to the catalogue and how to request books and journals online. Librarians induct first-year students on the sound use of information and communication (ICT) technology to retrieve and store information as well as supporting research (Saleem, Shabana & Batcha, 2013). Students are exposed to electronic resources, including past examination papers in the library that are used to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Librarians play a critical role in

helping students understand the essence of academic integrity including academic offences, such as plagiarism and its undesirable consequences. For instance, students are failed, punished by lowering the mark awarded or expelled from the university for plagiarism after a disciplinary hearing (Adam, Anderson & Spronken-Smith, 2017). To mitigate this problem, librarians, in partnership with academic support staff, orient first-year students to sound academic conventions through writing skills workshops and group training sessions, so that they experience success (Cleary & Sayers, 2017).

Financial aid experience

Sound financial discipline and austerity is key to student success at university. Many students entering university experience challenges regarding personal finance, especially when they are exposed to relatively large sums of money for the first time in their lives. Guidance on financial discipline remains a critical aspect of first-year experience that should commence with orientation. During orientation week, financial institutions visit universities to advertise financial products offered to students. They offer student loans and personal loans, some of which become instantly available in the student's bank account once the application is approved. It is argued that student loans need to be utilised in a way that is effective and efficient (Woodhall, 2004). Independent organisations that provide bursaries to students and companies that offer scholarships to students would give out flyers, t-shirts, caps and other marketing regalia during orientation week. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) offers bursaries to students from low-income households. First-year students often display financial independence when they go on a spending spree in town and at home buying cell phones, television sets, radios, computers, and other middle-class gadgets. Some of the first-year students experience financial freedom for the first time and start to help parents. Some use the money to pay for their siblings' school fees, renovate houses, buy cars or motorbikes, and some give money to parents to build a cheap flat or small house and demolish the family shack. Community members realise that when a child goes to university, he/she earns an income and stops being entirely dependent on parents (Wangegnge-Ouma, 2010). The student could support parents financially if he/she is on a scholarship funded by multinational companies that cover most of the costs encountered at the university. International corporations provide student finance with the prospect of employing the student after graduation and some provide vacation employment to cushion the student from financial hardships. Student funding develops organisational capacity and it is a form of investment in youth talent for the future survival of organisations (Mawer, 2017). It is argued that higher education funding contributes to transformation in South Africa, as students would have access to financial resources irrespective of race, gender, or social class (Wangegnge-Ouma, 2010).

Student leadership experience

For some of the first-year students, it is a first-time experience in a learning institution to come face-to-face with eloquent, boastful and ranting student leaders who show little respect for the president of a country, minister of education, vice-

chancellor of a university, chairman of university council and other people in society who occupy influential positions. Sometimes student leaders coax first-year students to participate in violent protests. Some student leaders and university students display high levels of hooliganism during orientation week (Savides, 2016). The Student Representative Council (SRC) represents the interests of university students, and its members appear in the governance structure and decision-making bodies of the university (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013). First-year students are free to join political associations on campus that are affiliated to political parties in the country. Political violence among university students is common during orientation week (Areff, 2015). There are clubs and societies advertise to recruit members during orientation week. There are vibrant sports and recreation clubs that attract student membership. In South Africa and overseas, sport occupies a central position in university life; There are university teams that compete nationally in various championships (Kelly & Dixon, 2011). Some of the societies are based on regional development, activism for the support of a noble cause, or prevention of an undesirable situation (Cleeve et al., 2016). Leaders of clubs and societies recruit first-year students during orientation week. Student leaders encourage first-year students to participate in leadership and advocacy training for the promotion of student rights and human rights on campus and globally (Long, Lee, Federico, Battaglia, Wong, & Earnest, 2011). It is not uncommon for first-year students to take up leadership roles for the first time in their lives and gain leadership qualities and confidence through helping diverse groups of students and visitors on campus under the guidance of student leaders.

Health and safety experience

Healthy and safety is an important precondition for successful learning at university by students at any level of study. Universities ensure that first-year students visit the university clinic for advice on infectious diseases, new HIV-prevention technologies, general health and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Students receive information on contraception and use of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and unwanted pregnancy. The 15 − 24 age group is the most vulnerable group to HIV infection in South Africa (Bekker, Johnson, Wallace & Hosek, 2015). During orientation, students visit the university security office and learn about escort service if they need security help and protection from abusers. Sometimes, relations between campus security and students can be strained when the police are called in by campus controllers to quell violence or to arrest student suspects. Students are uncomfortable with armed campus security guards and university guards are scared of students with guns and dangerous objects (Birnbaum, 2013). Individual counselling is offered to students in distress and career guidance is provided to students who are not sure about what they want to study and achieve in life. Some students quit their studies after realising that they made wrong choices, while some change degree programmes during the orientation week (Trotter & Cove, 2005).

Residence life experience

Residence life experience is an important predictor of successful study at university. There has been a shift from treating university residences as hostels or dormitories where students relax and sleep

after study to treating them as extended learning spaces. This brings to the fore the concept of living and learning, where learning is conceptualised as not only happening in the four walls of the classroom, but also in the residences. The first-year experience in university residence is that of communal life. First-year students in many universities are allocated shared rooms. The reason given by residence personnel is that students need to learn how to share space and live with others in harmony, irrespective of gender, race, religion, social class, disability, sexual orientation or political affiliation. The orientation week experience in residence could cause difficulties for students who studied in private schools without the experience of sharing bathroom facilities and limited living space. The room space can be small and some of the roommates could leave clothes lying on the floor and some invite friends and chat till late. The noise in residences during orientation week causes sleep deficiency and that ultimately affects learning (Brown, Qin, & Esmail, 2017). During orientation week, residence staff encourage first-year students to form learning networks in residences. Students in residences form learning communities in which students studying related disciplines form a learning group. It has been demonstrated that students who join learning communities tend to perform better than students who learn on their own in residence and off-campus (Hobbins, Eisenbach, Jacobs & Ritchie, 2017). South African universities support study groups in residences and some provide extra-tuition on weekends. Student leaders in residence could make the life of first-year students difficult when they force them to participate in initiation activities that are performed to welcome the newcomers and to socialise them into the way of life of a university student in South Africa. Universities in South Africa regard initiation in residence as a violation of a student's human rights and the use of coercion is against the law. Initiation could cause physical and psychological harm as the tasks performed could be demanding and humiliating (De Klerk, 2013). However, some of the students participate voluntarily and regard initiation in residence as a rite of passage from high school "childhood" to university "adulthood".

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Tinto's (1997) student integration model, which explains students' retention and success behaviours while at university. The theory starts from the premise that for students to persist with their studies and experience success, the university need to integrate them well within its academic and social systems. Successful integration leads to positive institutional experiences and attitude that in turn improves commitment to shared goals and eventually leads to retention and success in one's studies (Luescher-Mamashela and Moja, 2014). Conversely, poor experiences will reduce the student's commitment and could even prompt him/her to drop out (Manaan, 2007). According to Tinto (1997), the institution should strive to fulfil both the academic integration and social integration needs of the student so as to scaffold their learning. The student integration model therefore suggests that for institutions of higher learning to have high retention rates they should set conditions that will give students experiences that will increase their commitment to their studies for them to be successful.

The week-long first-year student orientation programme that is offered by the university under study is meant to integrate students thoroughly into the academic and social aspects of university life as a precondition for success. The programme comprises a suite of programmes, activities and initiatives that are developed and implemented by stakeholders from many divisions and units across the university. These stakeholders include the academic support services, student affairs, finance, counselling unit, academic literacy unit amongst others. This approach is informed by Tinto's (2014) observation that institutional student success requires intentional, structured and systematic proactive action that is coordinated in nature and involving many people across the campus.

All activities planned for orientation are meant to provide support to the students and this is informed by Tinto's (2014:115) view that "access without support is not opportunity". Student goals and intentions are set at the beginning of a process, hence this orientation for first-year students. Although social and academic integration continue after orientation, the integration that is nurtured during orientation is vital, as it sets the foundation that influences future goals, attitudes and approaches to their studies.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to assess factors that influenced the orientation week experience of first-year students in a new university.

Hypotheses

1. The orientation week questionnaire will demonstrate 23 clear factors, each clustered around the 23 items of the questionnaire.
2. Principal component factors will influence a student`s life on campus.

METHOD

Research design

This was a cross-sectional quantitative study in which data were collected from participants at one time. This design was preferred since it allowed the study to be conducted in a relatively fast and inexpensive manner.

Participants and sampling

Participants were purposively sampled from a group of first-year students who were recruited at a new university in the Mpumalanga Province. The inclusion criterion was that every participant should have undergone the week-long university orientation programme. This was considered important, since participants were required to comment on any aspect of the orientation programme. The responses of 177 participants were used in this study.

Instruments

A 23-item questionnaire was used to measure participants' experience of the orientation week on a 4-point Likert scale. A rating of "1" indicated that the student did not benefit from the orientation experience and a rating of "4" indicated that the experience was quite beneficial.

Procedure

Participants voluntarily participated in the study to evaluate their orientation experience. The questionnaire was administered to participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

Principal components analysis (PCA) was used to analyse data. It was a suitable technique to reduce the number of factors that explained variation in the observed variables.

Ethical consideration

Participation was voluntary and no names of participants appeared on the questionnaire. Data were analysed as archival data without participants' names. The study was cleared by the university's ethics committee.

RESULTS

Principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted, with varimax rotation. This type of rotation maximises the variance between different factors, and is especially useful for dimensions that are correlated. Principal components analysis reduces the number of factors on a scale and only principal components will remain. In this study, the 23 survey items were designed to tap the orientation experiences of a single cohort of first-year students. The items were very likely to be inter-related. Only factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted. The principal components that emerged in this study explained a total variance of 61.16%.

Table 1 shows the loadings of each item on the three factors yielded by the PCA.

Table 1 outlines drug abuse, infectious diseases and student finance loaded on Factor 1, which explained 32.13% of the total variance. Factor 1 was interpreted as health and wellbeing. Academic literacy, academic integrity, transition from high school to university, graduate attributes and values, and study skills and time management loaded on Factor 2, which accounted for 6.13% of the variance. Factor 2 was interpreted as academic development. Clubs and societies, sports and recreation, and senior students' guidance loaded on Factor 3, which explained 8.22% of the variance. Factor 3 was interpreted as student leadership. Two factors - guided tours and sessions with course coordinators -loaded on Factor 4 and explained 5.42% of the variance. Factor 4 was interpreted as academic orientation. Residence-based activities and career counselling loaded on Factor 5 and explained 4.73% of the variance. Factor 5 was interpreted as residence life. Last, living and learning at the university loaded on its own separate factor (Factor 6), and explained 4.53% of the variance. Thus, Factor 6 was interpreted as living and learning at the university.

Table 1: Principal components analysis results

Principal Component Analysis of the Orientation Questionnaire						
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Drug use and abuse	.82					
Infectious diseases	.80					
Student finance	.67					
Clubs and societies			.73			
Sports and recreation			.63			

Senior students` guidance			.70			
Residence-based activities						
Academic literacy		.73				
Academic Integrity		.60				
Transition from high school to university		.66				
Graduate attributes and values		.63				
Study skills and time management		.66				
Guided tours				.79		
Sessions with course coordinators				.61		
Residence-based activities					.77	
Career counselling					.73	
Living and learning at the university						.76

Multiple regression was conducted to assess the association between the identified factors and studying at the university. The independent variables, health and wellbeing, student leadership, academic development and residence life predicted the dependent variable, living and learning at the university. However, academic orientation involving guided tours and sessions with course coordinators did not predict living and learning at the university.

Beta coefficients for each of the predictor variables showed a significant relationship with the dependent variable. Table 2 illustrates the results.

Table 2: Multiple regression results

Factor	β	*T*	*P*
Health and wellbeing	.26	2.88	.005**
Academic development	.24	2.49	.015*
Student leadership	.48	3.42	.001**
Academic orientation	.01	.59	.560
Residence life	.21	2.14	.036*

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

Health and wellbeing among first-year university students is a critical factor in student attrition. Sexually transmitted infections, alcohol and drug abuse, insecurity, financial problems and HIV affect

university students in South Africa. It would be expected that first-year students in this study showed greater awareness about health and wellbeing (Bekker et al., 2015). Students who are in and out of hospital for the greater part of the academic year are more likely to get poor grades, while some opt to drop out (Harvey & Luckman, 2014). Health and wellbeing predicted participants' perceptions of living and learning at the university, as previous studies show a connection between health and academic success (Bruffaerts et al., 2017).

Academic development in this study included an orientation week experience that focused on academic literacy, academic integrity, managing the transitional phase, cultivation of graduate attributes and values, study skills and time management. It was shown in this study that academic development was beneficial to participants. A change of attitude during orientation to fit in with the university culture of learning is associated with graduation success (Letseka & Maile, 2008). Academic development predicted living and learning at the university. Students who adjust well and adapt to the prevailing university environment tend to like their studies and enjoy university life (Flynn & MacLeod , 2015).

Student leadership experience had a significant influence on participants during the orientation week. The Student Representative Council (SRC) members including the SRC President have an overarching influence on first-year students and the student community in general in South Africa. Students follow advice they are given by SRC and take action when instructed to do by the student leaders. University students in South Africa tend to listen more to student leaders about their welfare than they would listen to university authorities (Areff, 2015). The findings of this study show the need to actively involve student leaders in the management of the orientation week in universities, as they have a significant influence on first-year students during orientation week (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013).

Academic orientation included guided tours and sessions with course coordinators. This experiential learning and interaction with academics who manage learning programmes was exciting to students. Previous studies indicate that university students like outdoor experience (Long et al., 2008). Even though academic orientation emerged as a principal component factor, it did not predict living and learning at the university.

Residence life experience had a significance influence on participants' understanding of communal life (Brown et al., 2017). Residence life predicted living and learning at the university. In South Africa, students who fail to live harmoniously with others and those who feel that the residence environment is hostile are more likely to move out of residence (Munyuki & Vincent, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Supporting students during their first year of study is not only important, but key to their success. This study has assessed how a first-year orientation programme at one university in Mpumalanga had a significant effect on students' learning experiences.

Consistent with the existing literature, the study revealed that a well-coordinated, systematic and meaningful orientation programme integrates students into the

university's academic and social systems and is strongly regarded as a strong predictor for their success. The study also established that independent variables such as health, well-being, academic support services and residence life had strong impact on the quality of student learning and success. It is therefore critical that universities invest significant time and effort in researching the effective planning, implementation and evaluation of orientation programmes for their students. Further research could focus on adaptation processes that a student goes through after their first week of stay at the university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that universities should carefully plan the conceptualisation, implementation and evaluation of orientation programmes, as these provide a strong integrative role that students need to succeed in their studies. It is also important that supportive initiatives introduced at orientation stage be continued throughout the year, so that students are supported in their transition from high school to university.

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The Impact of Financial Aid Services in the Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

During the apartheid era, most learners after their matric did not have access to institutions of higher learning due to lack of funding and sponsors to pay for their tuition fees. Financial aid services are very much important in today's century and their role is inevitable. Such financial aid services amongst others include the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), Services Seta, Bank Seta and National Skills Funds (NSF) to name a few. Currently, a large number of learners can enroll with various universities and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges of their choice after matric, inclusive of students from poor backgrounds, due to the availability of financial aid services. In most cases, these financial aid services differ and are provided by both public and private institutions including government agencies. The purpose of this article was to assess the impact of financial aid services in institutions of higher learning in South Africa on students from various backgrounds at the University of X. The paper adopted a quantitative research methodology whereby 101 closed-ended questionnaires were completed by students to promote the credibility of the results and prevent biasness. The study comprised first-year students from various faculties who voluntarily participated. Therefore, the findings conclude that financial aid services are still playing a huge role in students from various backgrounds as the majority of students rely on them, to shape their future.

Keywords: Bursaries, Financial aid services, Institutions of higher learning, Students, South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, student's access to various institutions of higher learning has increased and resulted in increased access for students from different family conditions, including first-generation students (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Center on Higher Education, 2010; Bailey & Dynarski, 2011). South Africa's total number of student's access to institutions of higher learning in 1994 was approximately 425 000 (CHE, 2010), and in 2013 it was reported that the enrolment had increased to just under one million students (CHE, 2015). The increased enrolment of African students in tertiary education shows increasing access for students from economically and educationally disadvantaged groups. In light of this, institutions of higher learning need to understand the full impact of the conditions of poverty under which students live and come from, think and learn while enrolled for various degree programmes and how such conditions affect their academic progress (Marklein, 2009). On a lighter note, access to tertiary education for students from poor backgrounds is an opportunity to change their socio-economic status at a personal and family level. But this becomes difficult to

achieve when their economic conditions impact their ability to achieve academic success. Without adequate financial resources available in institutions of higher learning, students' experiences of poverty may be only marginally alleviated, which merely extends and in effect reproduces systemic conditions of poverty (Machika & Johnson, 2014). Lack of financial capacity is one of the problems confronting institutions of higher learning to fund all students. Generally, universities are largely dominated by students from disadvantaged background. Majority of the students rely on NSFAS as the major sponsor. However, lack of financial aid services will in one way or the other disadvantage prospective student from enrolling with universities of their choice. Financial aid services should not be viewed lightly but as a service that plays a role in relieving students especially the ones from disadvantaged families. Thus, this paper assesses the impact of financial aid services in institutions of higher learning in South Africa using the University of X as a case study. In pursuit of all this, the paper begins with the clarification of the goals of the study followed by a literature review, presentation of the methodology adopted and data presentation and analysis of findings.

Theory of Socialist Economics of Education

This study is premised on the theory of Socialist Economics of Education, a theory that was pioneered by a French writer and historian called Louis Blanc. The theory emphasizes the need to assemble an economy that redistributes income from the rich to the poor to create equality of well-being (Selowsky, 1979). The theory in this context seeks to emphasize the positive impact of financial aid services within institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The article uses the theory to explain and answer why financial aid services are of paramount importance and their impact on students from impoverished backgrounds. According to the Socialist Economics of Education theory, bursary allocation can help enhance equity in access to universities across the country. For argument sake, if education were offered without financial aid services only those who are from privileged families would enrol and be retained at institutions of higher learning. Under such circumstances, inequalities would be visible (Njeru & Orodho, 2003). In this particular study, if the recipients are identified impartially based on their parentage and socio-economic status, the Lorenz curve will not show a lot of sagging, an implication of retention of students. However, in the event of partiality in the allocation of bursaries, the sagging will be distinct; implying the presence of drop out of students, consistency and adequacy of funds allocation can help in retention of students from various backgrounds. The enhanced retention of students on the other hand helps redistribute income and to raise the incomes of the poor. As a result, equitable society is created in this regard. Therefore, the article concludes that the contribution of financial aid services in society is inevitable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of financial aid services in institutions of higher learning on students from various backgrounds

Student's impoverished backgrounds and the lack of enough funding have consistently been identified as some of the contributing factors to student academic failure and progression difficulties (Africa, 2005; Letseka & Maile, 2008; CHE, 2010). The Presidential Task Team (PTT) on higher education funding (2016) deliberated on the pressure of persistent underfunding of higher education in the context of increasing enrolment growth which leads to most institutions passing an increasing burden of costs onto students through high annual fee

increases (CHE, 2016:6). Hayward & Ncayiyana (2014) emphasised that while some academic institutions, even in more developed nations, are confronted with financial problems, such challenges are more keenly felt in Africa than in more developed countries. The expansion has placed unprecedented strain on the national fiscus and its ability to meet multiple demands such as health care, housing and social welfare. Moreover, when institutions of higher learning rely on their income, without assistance, the majority of guardians are unable to support a dependent at university (regarding tuition and related accommodation and living costs) (CHE, 2016). The previous wave of student protests over fees in South Africa (#FeesMustFall), and the societal debates around higher education funding (ButlerAdam, 2015), highlighted the consequences of increasing costs of higher education in the contexts of declining employment opportunities. The majority of students from low socio-economic status families seek tertiary education as a strategy to disrupt blockages to intergenerational mobility and progression (Blanden & Macmillan, 2014). Therefore, this will not be possible without financial aid services from the government and the private sector.

The impact of financial aid services on students' knowledge, skills development and success

According to Kirkham & Ringelstein (2008:40), financial aid services have some motivating influence on student academic progress. Simply because bursaries such as Funza Lushaka and others in the engineering field sometimes guarantee job opportunities after completion of studies. Therefore, this could be a motivating factor for students to perform well at a tertiary level. (Astin, 1984; Mallette & Cabrera, 1991) accentuated that the level of student involvement in academic activities is positively correlated with financial support services at university. The more students are involved in activities at the lecture or tutorial sessions the greater their acquisition of knowledge, development of relevant skills and the likelihood of passing at university (Kirkham & Ringelstein, 2008). Whilst students' academic success can be disturbed by various factors (Mushtag, 2012) another obstacle is funding, which impacts student's experiences and serves as an obstacle to academic success (Soria, Weiner & Lu, 2014). Dynarski (2008) discovered that financial aid services often reduce the dropout rate. Simple lines such as "We can't afford to send you to that university" or "You can only enrol at that university provided you get a bursary" can have a serious impact on which institutions students seriously consider (Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1998). This is in line with Jackson (1978) who argued that many students fail to consider or needlessly eliminate colleges and universities that might have been good choices for them because they think they cannot afford to attend such universities.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

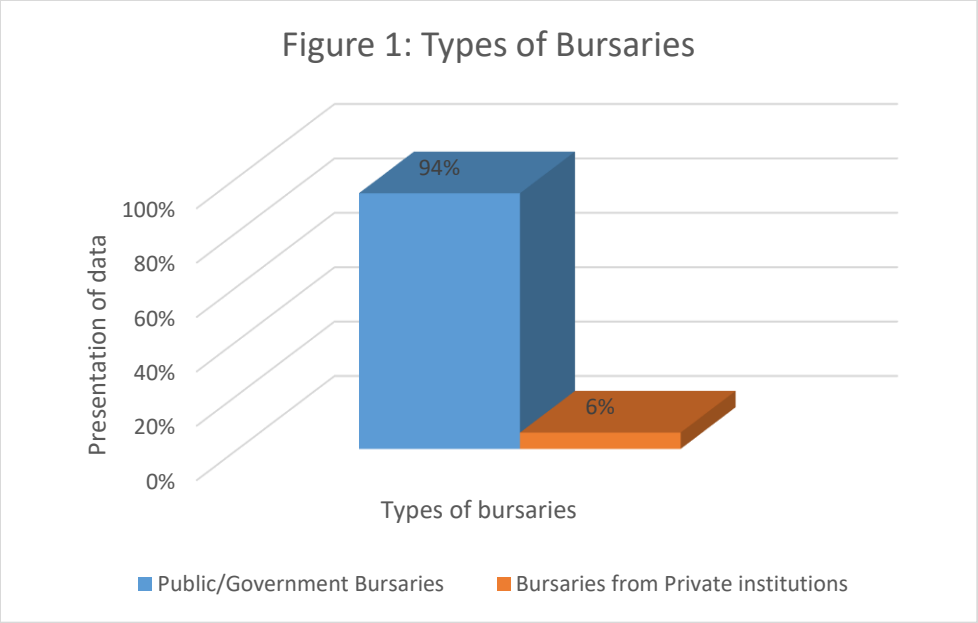
The study employed a quantitative research methodology, whereby questionnaires designed within the Likert rating scales were utilized to collect primary data to understand the impact of financial aid services at institutions of higher learning on students from various background. The methodological rationale was derived from Leedy & Ormod (2005:179), wherein a quantitative method is defined as a situation where the researcher uses survey research design to gather information, which is not limited to opinions, attitude and experiences of the participants (Leedy & Ormod, 2005: 183). Generally, the quantitative method uses instruments or tools such as closed-ended questionnaires with a Likert rating scale to

obtain numerical indices that are in line with the characteristics of the quantitative research. The numerical values are then summarized and interpreted as findings of the study (McMilan & Schumacher, 2006:178). Thus, the questionnaire used the 5 points Likert scale ranging from "1 strongly agree" to "5 strongly disagree". Secondary data was also collected using dissertations and journal articles. MacMillan & Schumacher (2001) distinct a population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of the research. In this study, the population included first-year students from various degree programs at the University of X who were using bursaries either from the private or public sector.

Due to the nature and scope of the study, a purposive sampling strategy was used to select the target population from the student population. MacMillan & Schumacher (2001) the smaller group or the subset is the sample. On the other hand, Morake, Monobe & Dingwe (2011) sees a sampling as a group that is selected from the population and is thus less than the population, while remaining as representative as possible. Purposive sampling is a technique whereby the researcher relies on his expert judgement to select units that are representative of the population (Burger & Silima, 2006:663). The sample selection favours certain students and is purposive in that the researcher chooses the participants for the study assuming that participants have information that is related to the topic under investigation. Lastly, the sample size comprised of hundred and one (101) students that are using financial aid services from various faculties within the premises of the University of X. As a result, analysis of data in this study was done according to the research questions. The study analysed quantitative data collected using Microsoft Excel software. Microsoft Excel software was used for data capturing and analysis. The data are presented in percentages and numbers using tables, pie charts and graphs below.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

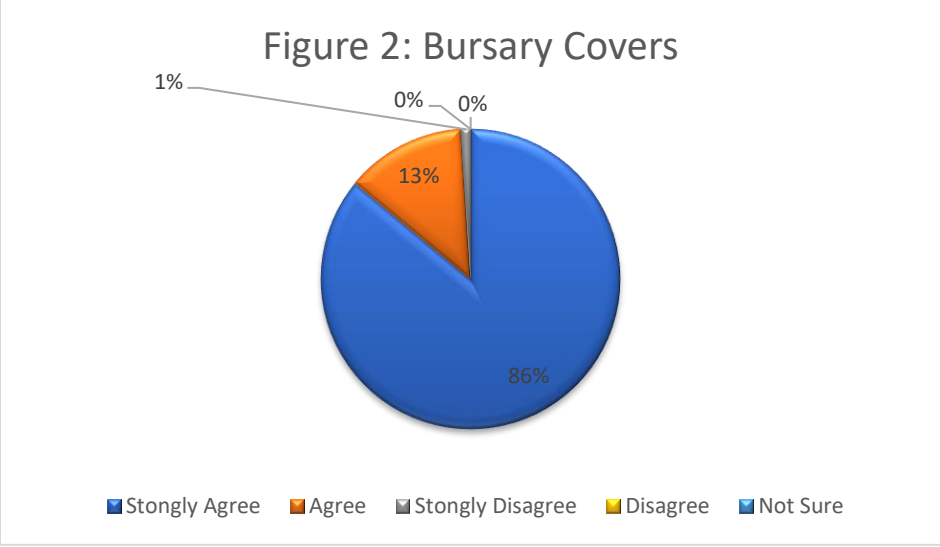
Having adopted a purposive sampling technique to select participants, the sample comprised 60% of female and 40% of male participants. The gender profile suggests that females dominated the study in terms of representation. The participants consisted of first-year students who were using private and government bursaries.



Respondents in Figure 1 were allowed to indicate the type of bursaries they are using. The majority (94%) of the respondents uses government bursaries such as (NSFAS, NSF and SETAs) while the minority (6%) uses funding from private institutions. Generally, the majority of the students use NSFAS. Therefore, it can then be argued that institutions of higher learning in South Africa largely depend on NSFAS and other government bursaries in ensuring that students from various backgrounds are allowed to enrol and have a better future.

Does your bursary cover tuition fees, accommodation, meals and book allowance?

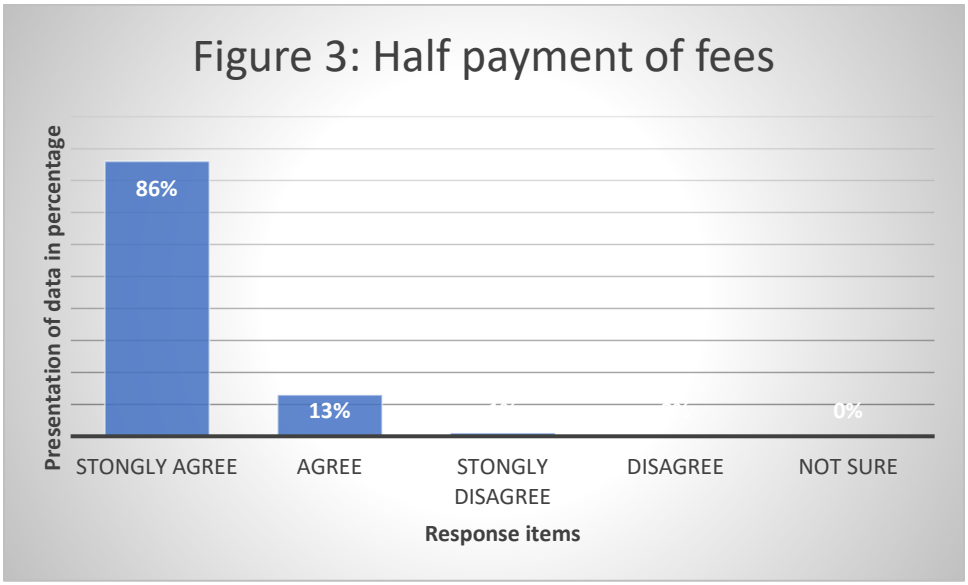
The pie chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents concerning the bursary covers.



If all bursaries could cover up tuition fees, accommodation, meals and book allowance the majority of students would not struggle with financial assistance throughout their university enrollment. There is a general agreement that the bursaries that students are using cover up tuition fees, accommodation, meals and book allowance. According to Figure 2, the majority (59%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their bursaries cover up all their costs, while (24%) of the respondents agreed that their bursary covers all their costs and (9%) strongly disagreed that their bursary does not cover all their costs. While minority (4%) of the respondents were either not sure as to whether their bursary does cover-up, accommodation, tuition fees, meals and book allowance or do not have a bursary at all. However, (4%) of the respondents disagreed that the bursary does not cover all their costs. It can be stated that the majority of the respondents are using bursaries that cover their tuition fees, accommodation, meals and book allowance.

Would you be able to pay half of the number of your fees?

The graph chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to half payment of fees.

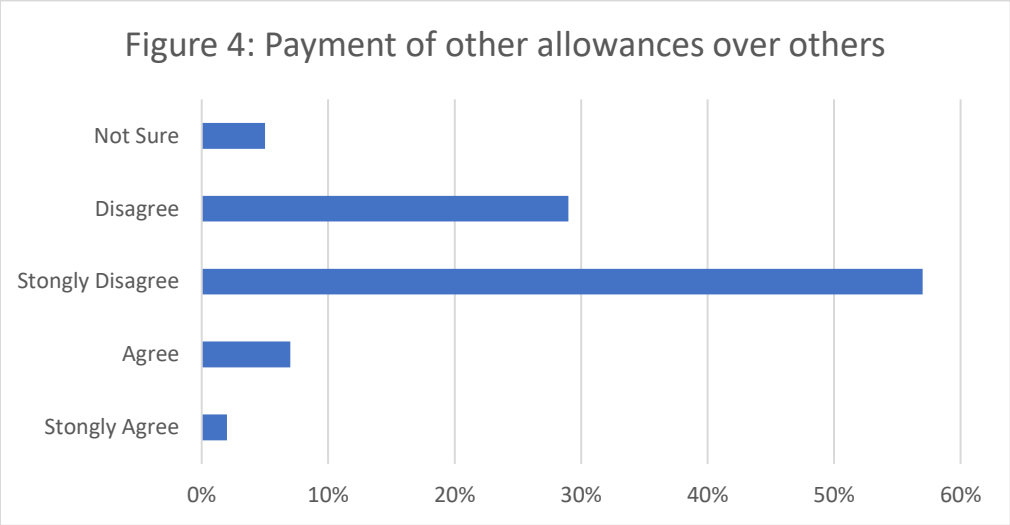


The significance of financial aid services can be determined by checking the size of the impact the bursary can have on students if such bursaries were to meet students halfway. Some bursaries do not cover up all costs that students can incur during their enrollment. Therefore, the affected students will have no choice but to pay the remaining balance on their own. This study probed the chances of students being able to pay half of their tuition fees and other costs on their own, in case the sponsor decides to pay half of the amount. Based on Figure 3 most of the students recorded a total of (63%) strongly disagree while (24%) disagree. There is a trend that indicates a variety of responses among participants. On the other hand, (10%) of respondents were not sure and (2%) of the respondents agreed that they will be able to pay half of their fees

if the bursary scheme pays half. Furthermore, there were differences in terms of responses. For instance, (1%) of the respondents recorded strongly agree. The differences in the findings by the way is not very important, this can be attributed to inequality in terms of affordability. Based on these findings it can therefore be affirmed that if sponsors decide to pay half of the amount of their tuition fees majority of the students will not be able to pay the rest of the balance.

Would you mind if the bursary could pay your fees, accommodation and do not provide you with a food allowance?

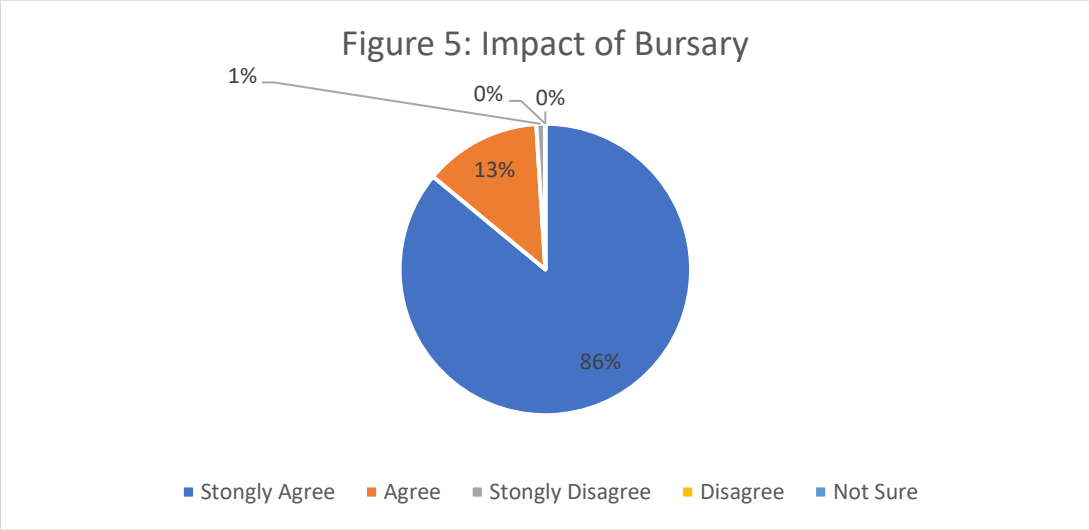
The graph below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to bursary paying some of the allowances.



Literature shows that some students struggle to have food while pursuing their studies at various institutions of higher learning. For students to be stress-free they need to have meals daily. This study probed the possibility of students being able to cope if their bursaries could pay for their tuition fees and accommodation without providing them with meal allowance. Figure 4 presents a statistical analysis of the findings. In terms of Figure 4, the majority (57%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and (29%) disagreed with the question while (5%) of them were not sure. Although there might be a general agreement that students would not be able to afford meals, other respondents have shown a different view. On the other hand, (7%) agreed and (2%) of them strongly agreed. Based on the findings it can be affirmed that the majority of the respondents would not afford to buy meals for themselves even if the sponsor can decide to pay their tuition fees and accommodation only. Empirically, this has been a challenge at the University of X from 2000 to 2015 whereby NSFAS used to pay only half of the fees for first-year undergraduate students. This was even followed by a National strike or student uprising with the theme "#Feemustfall" in 2015 respectively. The students were unhappy about the distribution and allocation of funds.

Does the bursary have a positive impact in making you become the person you want to be in future?

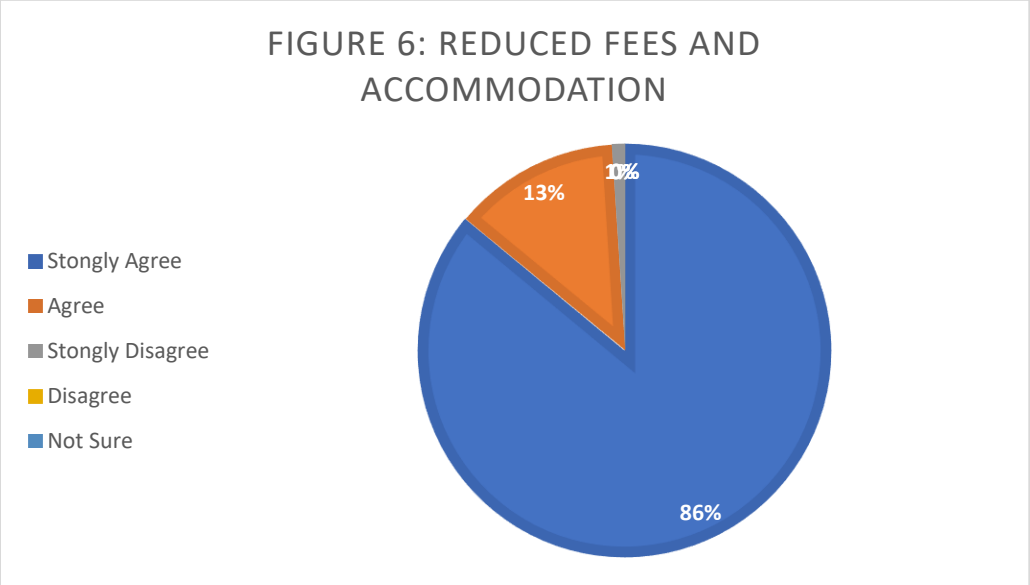
The pie chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to the impact of the bursary.



Financial aid services play a significant role in all institutions of higher learning. Breier (2010) indicated that despite general assumption on the impact of adequate financial assistance on academic success, the phenomenon of student success should not simplistically be related to financial assistance alone, but requires a more nuanced understanding of other factors such as environmental and social circumstances that contribute to student success. This study probed the impact of bursaries in making students become what they want to be in future. The aim was to solicit data on the impact of bursaries as they contribute to academic success. In terms of Figure 5, (65%) of the participants strongly agreed and (28%) agree that bursaries have a positive impact on their future. Furthermore, (3%) disagree and (3%) were not sure whether bursary has a positive impact on their future. However, 1% strongly disagreed that the bursary has a positive impact on their future. However, there is a general assumption that bursaries are important for a student's success. Based on the information above, it can then be affirmed that financial aid services appear to be crucial as they contribute to student's success. The results indicate that there is a consensus on the impact of bursaries on student's academic success.

If your tuition fees and accommodation could be reduced by 50%, would you be able to pay the remaining balance?

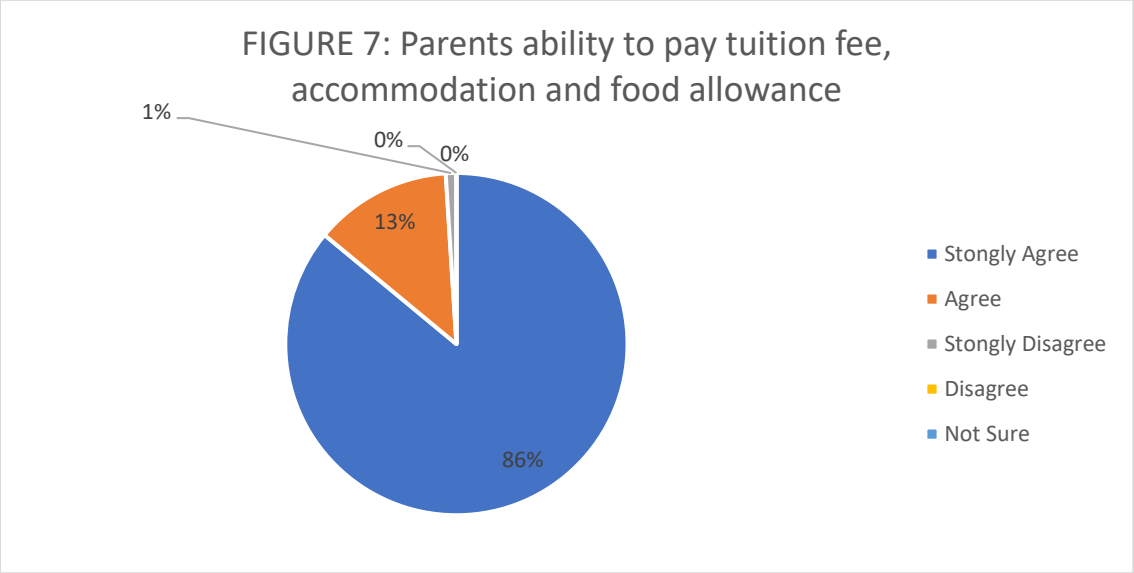
The graph below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to reduced fees and accommodation by 50 per cent.



Numerous challenges are inhibiting various families to pay tuition fees and other expenses for their children while at university. The study probed the possibility of students being able to pay the remaining balance in case their tuition and accommodation could be reduced by 50%. Generally, the findings in Figure 6 indicate that students that formed the sample in this study will not be able to pay the remaining balance even if their fees be reduced by 50%. Figure 6 indicates that a total of (58%) strongly disagreed and (21%) disagreed, while (16%) were unsure. Furthermore, (3%) agreed and (2%) strongly agreed. Financial aid services are important in supporting students from various backgrounds. The findings indicate that majority of students fully rely on financial aid services and therefore their role is inevitable.

Suppose you did not have the bursary, were your parents going to be able to pay your tuition fees, accommodation and food allowance?

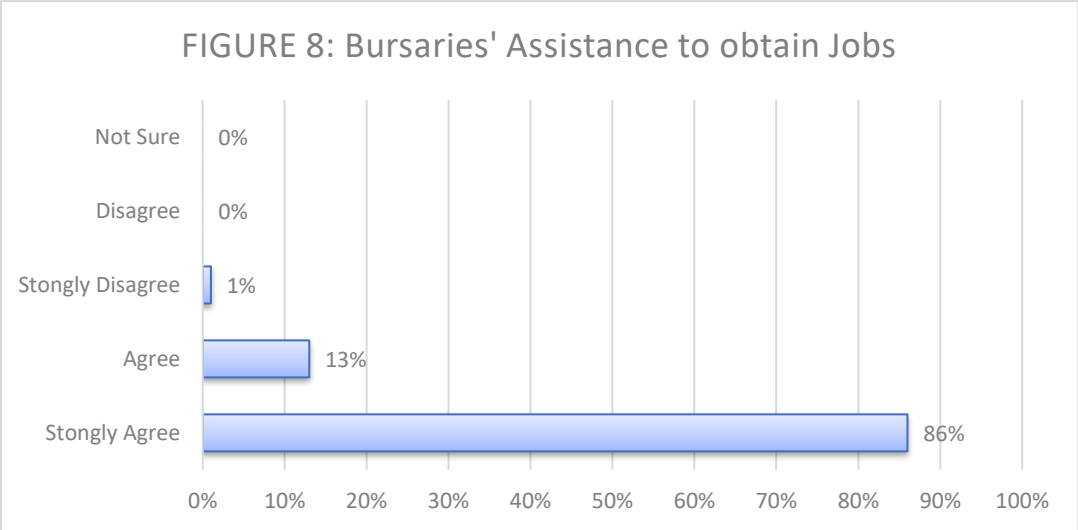
The pie chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to the parents' ability to pay for fees.



Not all students were going to be able to pay their tuition fees, accommodation and food even if they could not have received a sponsor. This study probed the chances of students being able to pay all the expenses if they could not have received financial assistance. In terms of Figure 7, the results as per the respondents' responses indicate that (81%) strongly disagreed and (12%) disagreed. Although, (4%) claimed that they are not sure and (2%) agreed and (1%) strongly agreed. It can thus be concluded that generally, students would not be able to pay tuition fees, accommodation and monthly grocery.

Can bursaries assist students to secure jobs in future?

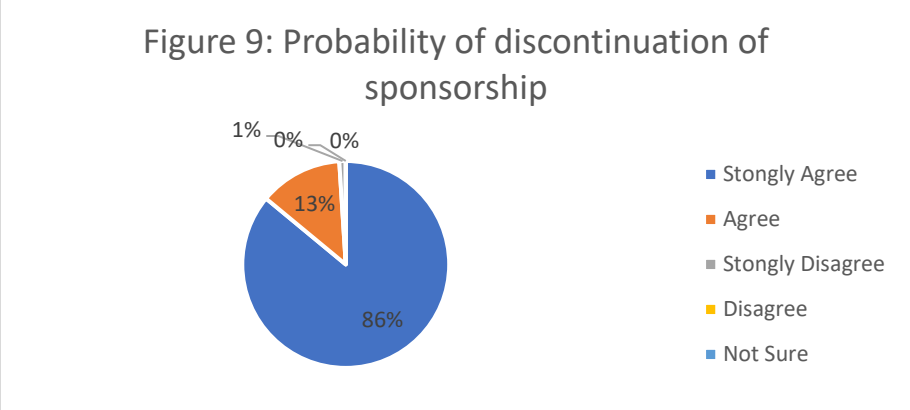
The graph below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to bursaries' assistance to secure jobs.



Some bursaries often offer jobs to their beneficiaries upon completion of their studies. Based on the findings in Figure 8, (37%) of the sampled participants agreed and (37%) strongly agreed, while (23%) of the participants were not sure. Arguably, (4%) disagreed and while (1%) of them strongly disagreed with the question. The findings showed a slightly different trend because some bursaries offer the privilege of providing students with jobs upon completion. This finding might be because financial aid services differ in nature. It can therefore be concluded that some bursaries can assist bursary holders to get employment. Therefore, this depends on the conditions of each bursary a student is using at that time.

If the sponsor decides not to fund you anymore, would you still be able to pay for your studies?

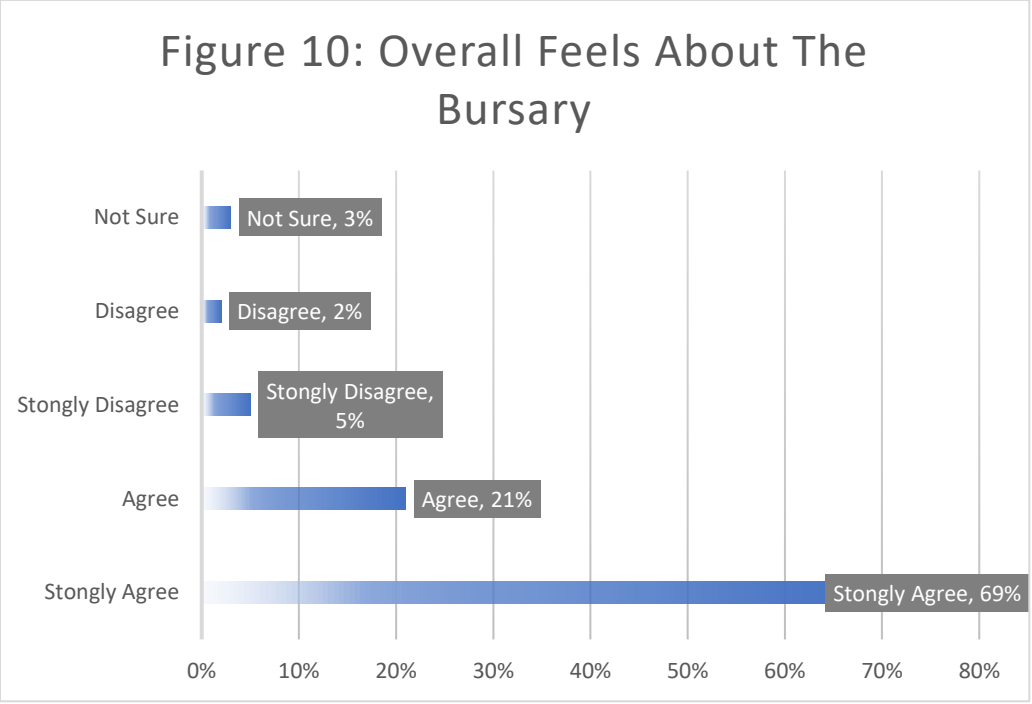
The pie chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to the discontinuation of the sponsorship.



There is no doubt that some students will not have financial challenges if their sponsor decides not to fund them anymore. The majority of the students come from impoverished families and therefore they would likely be affected if their sponsors decide not to withdraw from assisting them. This study probed the possibility of students being able to pay for their studies in case they lose sponsors. This study sought to establish the impact such a decision can have on each beneficiary. The results in Figure 9 indicate that (66%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and (25%) disagreed. While on the other hand (7%) were unsure and (2%) agreed that they will still be able to. However, none (0%) of the respondents strongly agreed. These findings indicate that if sponsors can decide to withdraw from assisting students, the majority of the students will be negatively affected by the decision. Therefore, financial aid services are necessary for students to enrol at various institutions of higher learning.

How do you feel about the bursary you have been awarded?

The graph below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to their feels about the bursaries they hold.

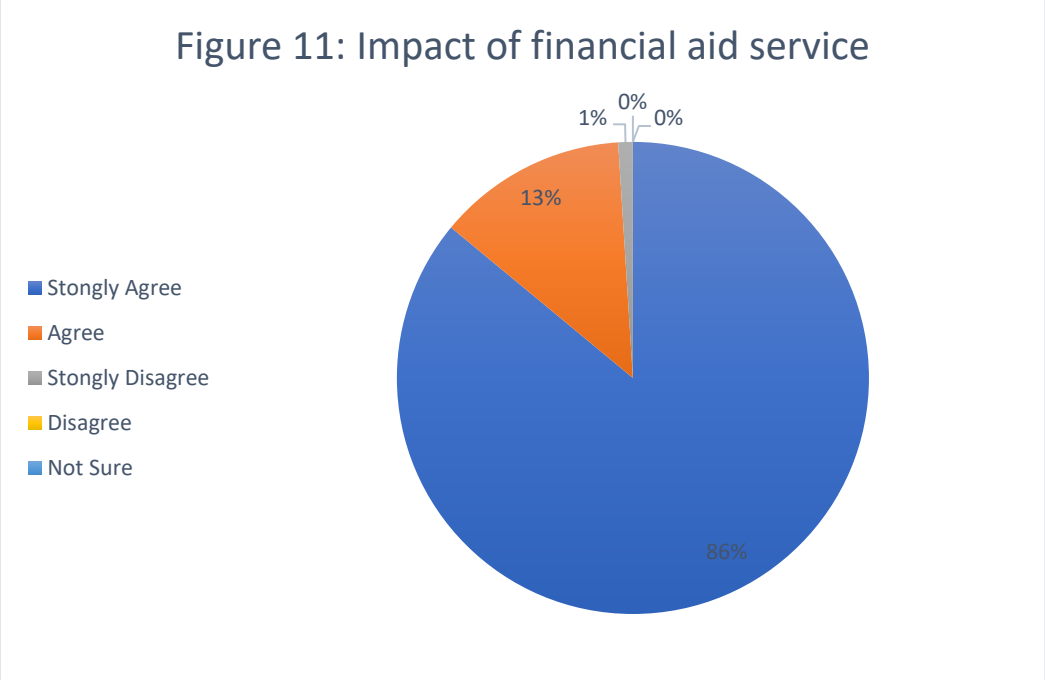


Financial aid services should not be viewed lightly but as a service that plays a role in the well-being of each student especially the ones from disadvantaged families. When bursaries were first introduced, the purpose was to address socio-economic challenges confronting students and universities as inherited from the apartheid era. In the past, students were funding their studies. This study probed whether the bursary holders are fully satisfied and their overall feeling about the bursary. The findings in Figure 10 indicate that (69%) of the respondents strongly agreed and (21%) agreed. However, (3%) of the sampled population were not sure. Only (5%) of the

respondents strongly disagreed, while (2%) disagreed. Although there are different frequencies in terms of responses, it is important to acknowledge that the bursary holders have a positive feeling regarding their sponsors. Therefore, this can encourage beneficiaries to progress because they do not have any financial challenges to worry about.

Are financial aid services relieving parents from financial stress?

The pie chart below illustrates the statistical analysis of the respondents with regards to the impact of financial aid services.



At times parents can find themselves in distress because of not having financial resources to pay tuition fees for their children at the tertiary level. There is a general agreement that the majority of households cannot afford to pay tuition fees. In Figure 11, the majority (86%) of the respondents strongly agreed and (13%) agreed that financial aid service plays a pivotal role. While on the other hand, (1%) strongly disagreed and none disagreed with (0%). Furthermore, (0%) recorded not sure. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents claim that bursaries relieve parents from financial distress. This can be caused by parents not being able to sponsor their children due to low level of income and other factors such as poverty.

DISCUSSION

Fundi (2019) affirmed that in South Africa, universities and TVET colleges are extending a helping hand to assist students who possess the potential to study further but do not necessarily have the means. It further affirms that indeed financial aid service is available for TVET and universities. They are offering different methods of financial aid services to financially needy students. Internal and external university funding are different forms in which universities work to provide financial assistance.

Fundi (2019) further asserted that financial aid services differ from other funding options in that it takes many forms: loans, bursaries, scholarships. In essence, it is any funding that assists students in being able to pay for their higher education. Lastly, Fundi (2019) indicated that all financial aid services normally favour previously disadvantaged students who come from the poor family background but at the same time show great potential. Student poverty and the lack of financial aid services have consistently been identified as the main issues for student academic failure and progression difficulties (Africa, 2005; Letseka & Maile, 2008; CHE, 2010). However, bursaries contribute to the individual's success shortly. This study probed the impact of bursaries in offering beneficiaries an opportunity to make it in life. It can finally be affirmed that financial aid helps students and their families pay for higher education. This financial assistance covers educational expenses including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. There are several types of financial aid, including grants and scholarships, work-study and loans. Financial aid awards may include a combination of the various types of aid.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

During the data collection process in the field, participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Even the questionnaire cover page also assured respondents anonymity and confidentiality. The researchers informed the participants about the significance of conducting the research and also made it clear that no individual is forced to participate during the course of the completion of the questionnaires. Therefore, participants were free to withdraw from participating if ever they felt unsafe to complete the questionnaire. The researchers made assurance to students and the sampled institution that no name of the participants will be disclosed, including the name of the university. The researchers refer to the university sampled in this study as "University of X".

CONCLUSION

This article undertook to understand the impact of financial aid services at institutions of higher learning using the University of X as a case study. It was discovered through an empirical analysis that most students especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds are confronted with dilemmas to pay for their studies. Additionally, it was also discovered that the majority of the students would not have been able to afford meals monthly had it not been for the financial aid services from the government and private institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The article acknowledges the significance of financial aid services at institutions of higher learning to ensure that students from various backgrounds can register and shape their future. The study, therefore, recommends the government to invest more particularly in students from impoverished backgrounds with a view of increasing enrollment within the university premises. Therefore, the government budget that is allocated to institutions of higher learning must be increased on yearly basis considering the number of enrollment each university is taking. This will enable prospective matriculants from poor families to register with any university of their choice. The study further recommends the prioritization of students (inclusive of orphans) and those from impoverished families to be given first preference when awarding financial aid services. The study established that majority of the students' population fully rely on bursaries for tuition

fees, accommodation and meals allowance. Because of all this, financial aid services are crucial. Lastly, private institutions are also encouraged to award bursaries in an attempt to assist less privileged students. Consequently, this will make a positive impact on parents and students who cannot afford to pay on their own.

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