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Editorial

Journal of Education and Vocational Research (JEVR) provides an avenue for quality research in the ever-changing fields of Education and Vocational Research and related disciplines. Work submitted for publication consideration should not be limited by any narrow conceptualization of education and vocational research but comprises interdisciplinary and multi-facet approaches to education and vocational theories and practices as well as general transformations in the fields. The scope of the JEVR includes: subjects of educational technology, educational administration, educational planning, measurement and evaluation in education, developmental psychology, special education, distance learning, vocational education, technology-based learning, environmental education, business education, educational psychology, physical education, innovation, vocational training, knowledge management. Author(s) should declare that work submitted to the journal is original, not under consideration for publication by another journal and that all listed authors approve its submission to JEVR. It is JEVR policy to welcome submissions for consideration, which are original, and not under consideration for publication by another journal at the same time. Author (s) can submit: Research Paper, Conceptual Paper, Case Studies and Book Review. The current issue of JEVR comprises of papers of scholars from UK, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria and Sri Lanka. Customer experience monitoring, understanding postgraduate student preferences for university choice, reinventing appropriate strategies for curriculum development and implementation in technical vocational education and training, generational differences in work values and its impact on workplace conflicts of operational level employees, and influence of information communication technology (ICT) integration on teaching and learning are some of the major practices and concepts examined in these studies. Journal received research submission related to all aspects of major themes and tracks. All the submitted papers were first assessed by the editorial team for relevance and originality of the work and blindly peer-reviewed by the external reviewers depending on the subject matter of the paper. After the rigorous peer-review process, the submitted papers were selected based on originality, significance, and clarity for the purpose. The current issue will, therefore, be a unique offer, where scholars will be able to appreciate the latest results in their field of expertise and to acquire additional knowledge in other relevant fields.

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PAPERS

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Customer Experience Monitoring: A Study of Zambian Banks

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Abstract: The fast growing level of competitiveness and fundamental amendments in the world of business especially in the banking sector nowadays are pushing banks to implement a customer-based strategy in explaining its performance. Consequently, this study seeks to develop and empirically test customer experience monitory and evaluation and also to study the influences of service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the Zambian banking industry. A survey was conducted with banking customers on many validated questions, based on which we got 107 valid responses. The data was processed to produce the valuable results and Quantitative Data Analysis (QDA), via simple regression analysis and ANOVA. The findings and analysis of data shows that quality of service provided and customer satisfaction are important when monitoring the experience of customers based on the effects of quality of service and customer loyalty and their returns thereafter. Based on the data analyzed, the study concluded that customer experience has positive impact on customer loyalty and banks must ensure that their customer walk out with good experience by monitoring this periodically to adapt or adjust to current trends. The study also observed a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The theoretical and managerial implications of the study confirmed the theoretical framework. Consequently, the following recommendations were contrived: staffs of financial institutions should create a friendly environment with their customers. The Bank's environment should be conducive, attractive, decent and enabling enough to psychologically assure their customer of the best of service. Also, there should be a routine high quality of service delivered to customers and their views sorted routinely. This may help boost and also add to the value of experience of customers, thus their total satisfaction on the Bank's service.

Keywords: *Customer Experience Monitoring; customer experience evaluation; customer satisfaction; customer loyalty; banking industry; regression analysis; Zambia.*

1. Introduction

The current business environment in the banking sector is, undoubtedly, experiencing a very tense competitiveness, evolving thereby becoming more challenging than before. With the rapid growth of multidimensional demand and challenges of globalization (Awolusi, 2019; Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014), various organizations are under pressure to modify their systems and products in a way to improve the quality of service so as to remain competitive in the industry (Yasin et al., 2004). Customer service is seen as an integral part of any stage of industry especially in the banking sector and this defines the organization's future development. The fast advancement in technological system related to internet is leading to fundamental changes by which various businesses interact both internal and external world. This also applies to the way an organization relates with its customer. The relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty differ in different services industries.

The attributes of these fundamental factors have been very difficult to identify since services. By nature, are intangible (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Hong, Goo et al., 2004). Furthermore, due to the intangible nature of services received by customers, it is difficult for institutions to analyze the various expectations of customers, how a customer perceives and evaluates the desired outcome of the service quality, which brings about some level of loyalty to this firm (Messarra, 2014; Zeithaml, 1981; Nguyen and Leblanc, 2002). As a customer evaluates their level of experience, hence their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an organization, by evaluating the service quality and experience (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016; Awolusi, 2013a; Awolusi, 2013b; Smith and Houston, 1982). To a large extent, the issue of greatest priority today has to do with understanding and accepting the influence of customers' experience on organizational performance (Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

All institutions are customer centered, and thus driven by customers' demands, hence the saying the customer is always right. Based on the difference in preference, it is equally becoming more challenging to satisfy (meet their various expectation), thus retain the loyalty of all customers. According to a research carried out by Oliver (2009), it suggests that both service quality and customer experience are two distinct but related constructs. This is particularly true for the services industry, where an increased in the level of customer satisfaction may bring about profit maximization and improved financial results and trust of customers. Consequently, many studies suggested that customer experience or satisfaction should be the basic principle of all service organizations (Asikhia & Awolusi, 2015; Awolusi, 2013b; Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Oliver, 2009). As once mentioned by Sakthivel et al. in 2005 that customer loyalty and experience have proven to be, undoubtedly, the major determinant for long term development and financial performance of a company (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Jones and Sasser, 1995), also customers serve as the final judges to adjudicate the quality level of a product and services offered, thus their experience (satisfaction or dissatisfaction). It is therefore worth mentioning that any fundamental improvements in quality can bring positive outcomes for a company especially in the service industry. When a firm in the service industry understands this fact that a continuous improvement of quality of service affects the experience of customers, it would help them in the better allocation of both material and human resources needed.

To attain better quality in response to clients' expectations and demands (Awolusi & Atiku, 2019; Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Chandler & Torbert, 2003). Consequently, this study mainly focuses on such processes and improvements in customer experience monitoring through the quality of service rendered consumers and also to examines the extent by which customers experience affect customer loyalty; as well as, the relationship between customer experience and quality of service provided. This study was therefore conducted in a service industry (bank) by gathering practical data and information from customers in order to make an informed conclusion on how to monitor and improve customer experience (Deshpande, 2016; Hay, 2004). To give credence to the purpose of the study, leading local banks in Zambia were studied. National Savings and Credit Bank of Zambia, also NSCB or NatSave, is a bank in Zambia. The headquarters of NSCB is on Cairo Road in Lusaka. NSCB is a state-owned company, and therefore reports directly to the Minister of Finance and based on the National Savings and Credit Act (No. 24, Chapter 5 of the Zambian Laws). It is the largest bank in Zambia and has branches all over the country, albeit far from comprehensive. Founded with a social mandate, NSCB aims to provide banking services at reasonable prices throughout the country, especially in remote areas of the country. To a large extent, for the teaming majority of Zambians, the NSCB is the only access to payments, loans and accounts.

Conversely, the NSCB is one of the avenues through which the government mobilizes the assets of its citizens as investment capital. The NSCB differs from the state-dominated NCBZ (National Commercial Bank of Zambia) mainly in its customer base and business segment. First and foremost, ZNCB is a commercial bank and NSCB is primarily a bank. Following the passage of time, the NSCB is increasingly offering so-called microcredits , loans for people who could not come to them until now, because they were too poor and too simple. UBA Zambia Bank Limited is a subsidiary of United Bank for Africa Plc, one of Africa's leading financial service provider, which offers universal banking to over seven million customers across over 700 branches in about 20 African countries. With its presence in London, New York, and Paris. The bank also have assets worth over $20bn, UBA is known to be a partner for banking services for Africans and African related businesses globally. In particular, owing to the intangible nature of service provided and the difference in wants of customers, customer experience is very essential in the competitive service industry (Deshpande, 2016; Oliver, 2009). Thus, such decisions affect the customer base either by attracting or dropping customers. The disparity of customers' expectations and the service providers' decisions causes a great loss to the latter because their profit and revenue level is literally seen to be directly related to the number of their clients and their loyalty with the organization, thus their experience with the organization will be of great benefit.

Aim and Objectives of the Study: The aim of this study was to test the influence of customers experience monitoring on their loyalty to an organization. This was achieved by investigating the link between quality of service and customer experience and the ways in which service firms (Zambian banks) may improve and manage their processes of delivering quality standards to their customers. However, the specific objectives are, as follows:

- To analyze the effect of service quality on customer experience in Zambian banks

- To analyze the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in Zambian banks
- To test the influence of service quality on customer loyalty in Zambian banks
- And finally, to evaluate the effect of customer experience on customer loyalty in Zambian banks

Based on the above aim and objectives, the following research questions were sought:

- What is the influence of service quality on customer experience in Zambian banks?
- To what extent is the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction in Zambian banks
- To what extent is the influence of service quality on customer loyalty in Zambian banks
- How do customer experience affects customer loyalty in Zambian banks?

The research mainly focuses on the service industry whereas the banking sector (Zambian Banks) is selected as a case study. Qualitative methodology will be used for this research project. Interviews will, therefore, be conducted amongst managers who are involved in developing banking policies and procedures in the improvement of quality of service. The hospitality industry is a vast industry in which banking sector is chosen to conduct this research. This study will be developed and to test empirically the influence of customer experience on quality of service and customer loyalty in banking sector in Zambia and to evaluate their interrelationships in the service industry, thus a number of Zambian Banks were used as a case study by carrying out a questionnaire amongst the Banks' customers so as to provide a general significance to the study. Although this research is centered on the banking sector, however, the findings of this research may be used by other service industry players for the improvement and development of new services for profit (Deshpande, 2016; Hay, 2004).

This management is also important because it seeks to develop and empirically test customer experience monitory and evaluation and also to study the influences of service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the Zambian banking industry. This study seems to be one of the few studies, in the context of a developing economy and Zambia in particular (Deshpande, 2016). This is on the premise that the ever increasing level of competitiveness and fundamental amendments in the world of business especially in the banking sector nowadays are pushing firms and for that matter banks to implement a customer-based strategy (Deshpande, 2016; Hay, 2004). These strategies are expected to prove the importance of customer experience monitoring constructs such as customer experience and satisfaction, quality of service, and customer loyalty in explaining a bank's performance. The theoretical and managerial implications of the study is also expected to justify the importance of the study, by confirming the theoretical framework, while the proposed hypotheses would be tested to confirm the plausibility of the study and accuracy of data and also to serve as bases for further studies.

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Reviews: A number research works as well as theories, which are related to the topic under discussion are presented and tackled by different authors, so in our quest to find answers to the research questions and also to achieve the aim/purpose of this study. We started by reviewing various literature and also to explain the various factors related to the study. This is to enable us analyze the effect of service quality on customer experience by establishing a relationship between these constructs. The relationship between the above constructs has been discussed by using Olivers and Mcdougall's service quality models. In addition, it outlines the improvement mechanisms in delivering quality services to customers in the service industry. A theoretical model of the study is reviewed at the last part of this chapter.

Defining Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty: The concept of customer experience (satisfaction or dissatisfaction) has gained prominence and a great deal of attention of different stakeholders such as students, researchers and academicians for several years given that primary source of profit of almost all companies operating in the market is obtained through their clientele (Tam, 2004). Churchill and Surprenant (1982) define customer experience as the outcome of buying, repurchasing behavior arising from the customer's association of the utility and the overall costs of purchase in relation to the expected consequences (Deshpande, 2016; Hay, 2004). Customer experience can be explained as an emotive state that serves as response after evaluating a particular product or service or after interacting with one's service

provider (Koshy, 2005; Westbrook, 1981). This concept throws light on the statement that dissatisfaction or satisfaction is dogged via a cognitive process of associating.

What customers gives out to get a service and what comes out or is received in response (utility) (Koshy, 2005; Tam, 2004). By monitoring customer's experience, it facilitates the measurement of how a particular service or product provided by a company meets the customer's expectation and also how the customer feels during and after the provision this service. This is, therefore, an important performance indicator. Typically, in the service industry the monitoring and examining of the level of customers experience periodically necessary in order to maintain their clientele by using diverse scales (such as likert), to measure the level of customer experience which is mostly based on their emotional feeling that results from their encounter with their service provider or service provided (Peterson and Wilson, 1992). Inasmuch as customer experience is mostly present in consumer's perception of the attributes of a service or product, which relates to the specific or group of individuals. Therefore, different customers usually have different opinions and expressions at different or same period of time on the same service or its provider (Ueltschy et al., 2007; Koshy, 2005).

Generally, customer loyalty can be defined as the connection or link between a customer with the service provider or with a particular product that is determined through the customer's attitude, repurchasing behavior, and financial performance (Ezenwakwelu, 2017). With a subjective and broader nature of customer loyalty, various constructs have been proposed as representative in different studies. Yee, Yeung, and Cheng (2010) identified that a customer attitude or background, level of satisfaction and service quality have a relatively great influence on customer loyalty in a high-contact service industry, for instance, in the banking sector. In the service industry, the concept of quality holds the main position. Consequently, it could hypothesis (Hypothesis 1) as follows: The relationship between a customer and a service provider is directly related and influenced by customer experience which is also related to the quality of service provided (Kramer, 2008; Kramer, 2007; Sureshchandar et al., 2002). It is, therefore, not surprising to understand that the level of quality services is an important phenomenon in strategic planning in the services industry (Khamalah and Lingaraj, 2007).

Service Quality: In this section, we will take an extensive look at service quality since we have been able to establish in our previous sections the importance or role of quality in the service industry. As customers recount their experience on a particular provider or company based on the type of its service as compared to other providers of similar service (comparative advantage) (Kramer, 2008; Kramer, 2007). We have, therefore, found it necessary to breakdown the term service quality and the role it plays or relates with customer experience which culminates to the retention or establishment of their loyalty with a particular company in the service industry. Quality is defined largely as superiority or excellence (Leonard & Marquardt, 2010; Zeithaml, 1988; Teas, 1993; Brady and Cronin, 2001). Earlier researchers suggest that customers do not perceive quality as a one-dimensional but multidimensional concept. However, there is still no a clear cut agreement on how to examine, measure or evaluate the quality of service (Leonard & Marquardt, 2010; Cornin and Taylor, 1992). Due to lack of clear cut definition or consensus based on different points of view quality of service is mostly debated by various researchers in the service industry. With a great reference to earlier studies, Parasuraman et al. (1985), for instance, proposed three areas or themes of service quality:

- The complication in the evaluation and comparison of the quality of intangible goods.
- Service quality is a discernment which results from the actual performance of a service, as against consumer expectations or their physical interaction with the service provider.
- The examination of quality cannot solely be focused results received from the service.

But, however, this involves the evaluation of service delivery processes. Furthermore, the gap model for service quality given by Parasuraman, operationalized service quality as a gap between performance and expectation of customers; this is termed, SERVQUAL (Leonard & Marquardt, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to Zeithaml et al. (1988), SERVQUAL consists of five quality attributes: Responsiveness, Empathy, Tangibles, Assurance, and Reliability (Akinyemi, 2014; Messarra, 2014). Research reveals that the process of delivery high quality services often results in various measurable benefits such as profit, cost savings, and market share. It is therefore imperative for service firms, academician and researchers to understand the nature of service quality and how it must be achieved in firms (Akinyemi,

2014; Messarra, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1988). The role of banks in an economy is very important and to every nation it can be described as the backbone or lifeblood of the development of nations and modern business. This is often believed to have a dramatic influence on switching and loyalty intensions (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014).

Evolution and Importance of Banks and Financial Service: The term bank can be traced to an old Italian word "banca" or better still from a French word "banque" both of which mean bench or money table for exchanges. This term is derived from an ancient European practice when coins of various countries were exhibited on benches or tables for exchange or lending purposes. The functions and activities of banks have, thus, been expanding and evolving as technology improves day by day and also with the growth in the industry. One of the major functions of banks is to serve as an executor of the monetary function as a medium of exchange and help by mobilizing savings of people. Also, banks help in safeguarding money and valuables such as gold and they also help in the fight against inflation through the central Banks monetary policies. Banks provide loans, credit, and the payment for services, such as salaries, rent, different kinds of bills, taxes etc. With technological advancement which has made internet connection possible, the role of banks has developed broadly to include automated services and internet banking which seek to provide banking service to customers remotely. This has widened the spectrum of banking services available to clientele and has made banking more convenient for customers. However, these expanded services cannot do away with the certain aspects of banking or role of the banker entirely which may include money deposits for profit by lending it out again (Akinyemi, 2014; Messarra, 2014). Currently in Zambia, the regulatory and legal policies comprise of the Bank of Zambia Act, Banking and Financial Services Act, the Prohibition and Prevention of Money Laundering Act. This model explains the relationship between quality and satisfaction. It posits the influence of relational and core quality and expected value on customer satisfaction.

Periodically, Risk Management Guidelines are issued and updated by the Central Bank of Zambia in order to provide minimum standards which must be observed by commercial banks in the area of risk management. As a role of the Central Bank, it continues to revise these guidelines on regular basis to ensure that current challenges facing the country in the banking sector are addressed. Generally, a considerable number of developments have been recorded in the Zambia economy and for that matter the financial sector especially, following the liberalization of the economy in the early 1990's. These developments include amongst others the proliferation of banks and non-bank financial institutions, which have accounted for necessity in reviewing the supervisory policies and also the legal and regulatory frameworks in order put them in line with the liberalized financial environment. Modern technological advancement has given rise to a new type of banking, dubbed online banking. This sector provides internet based banking but most traditional banks have adopted and some have decided to expand their operations in this sphere other than opening new branches. Some other banks and financial institutions have emerged whose activities complement that of banks, however, their operations vary greatly. Savings banks as well as savings and loan associations, which are sometimes referred to as thrift institutions, serve as the second largest group of depository institutions; these institutions, unlike the traditional banks, were established as community-based institutions to finance mortgages for people and also they cater mostly cater for the savings and lending needs of their customers among other services.

Theoretical Reviews: Many previous studies have described the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction, using different theories (Zeithmal, 1996, 1988; Leonard and Sasser, 1982; Tam, 2004). These theories defined the importance and role of service quality, and its consequential influence on customer satisfaction. The quality of service, in addition to other factors could also positively affect the level customer satisfaction (Tam, 2004). However, it is also important to state that quality is not the only determinant of customer satisfaction, as other important factors that could potentially influence both constructs has also been described by previous studies (Moher, 1982; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Sureschandar et al., 2002). To provide a better understanding of the effects of quality on customer satisfaction, the theoretical model, depicting the relationship between the two constructs, has been adapted from Oliver's (1993) satisfaction and service quality model (Oliver, 1993). Oliver's model, as used in this study, was further tested and validated by previous studies (Oliver, 1993; Spreng and Mackoy, 1996). Specifically, this model gives specifications to the influence on perceived performance and expectations on overall satisfaction and service quality (Oliver's 1993). Another important model relevant to this study is Mcdougall & Levesque's (2000)

model. Usually, the first three phases of customer experience monitoring are referred as attitudinal loyalty which mostly dependent on customers' experiences with their service providers (overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction). This process of evolvement in customer experience monitoring especially customer loyalty which is confirmed by Pan, Sheng and Xie (2012), a meta-analysis about the antecedents of customer loyalty by carrying out a meta-analysis.

The authors also found theoretical and empirical evidences supporting that customer satisfaction, trust, commitment and loyalty program memberships have positive influences on customer loyalty and this must be monitored carefully. This study attempts to evaluate the relationships between customer loyalty and other constructs which are popular in service provider, especially in banking industry (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014:23). Based on the various reviewed models, the theoretical underpinning this study was deduced from existing theories within organization and economic theories (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014). Consequently, the following theories were adapted in this study: market power theory, transaction cost economics, and resource-based theory (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014). The market power theory is particularly related to the ever increasing level of competition in the banking industry. The theory specifically, concerned with the ways in which banks can improve their level of competitive success, which is the ultimate goal of customer experience monitoring (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014), by creating a stronger position in their market. Transaction cost analysis theory simply holds an assumption that customer experience monitoring strategies are executed in order to lower the transaction costs of banking operations. Lastly, the resource-based view theory suggests that for a bank to enjoy sustainable competitive advantages, valuable firm resources are usually scarce, imperfectly imitable, and must be lacking in direct substitutes (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014).

Empirical Reviews: The various reviewed empirical studies reveals that service quality and customer satisfaction are important antecedents of customer loyalty and customer satisfaction mediates the effects of service quality on customer loyalty (Spreng & Singh, 1993: 4). These findings suggest that there are non-linear relationships between three constructs and emphasize the need to treat customer loyalty management, as a process which includes many different factors interacting with one another (Akinyemi, 2014; Spreng & Singh, 1993: 3). In this study, one of the objectives is to empirically test this relationship. Therefore, the following hypotheses were offered:
Hypothesis 1: In the banking industry, overall level of customer loyalty is invariably related to customer experience.
Hypothesis 2: In the banking industry, overall the quality of service provider is variably related to customer experience (satisfaction or dissatisfaction).

Customer Experience and Loyalty Monitoring: Customer loyalty is referred as the final consequences of the overall and total experience which customers have with a company (Akinyemi, 2014; Ezenwakwelu, 2017). Customer experience can lead to customer loyalty because people tend to be rational and trust so they might have a tendency to reduce risk and stay with the service providers which they already had good experience with. Actually, customer experience has been suggested to be an antecedent of loyalty in service context in previous studies (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014; Spreng & Singh, 1993: 3). Most of the above studies confirmed a positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty; in which customer experience is usually the mediating variable. Other important studies alluding to the positive sentiments were also reviewed in this study (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014). Consequently, the following hypotheses were also raised:
Hypothesis 3: Customer experience is the variably related of customer loyalty.
Hypothesis 4: Overall customer experience is the antecedent of customer loyalty.

Factors Effecting Service Quality and Satisfaction: For service providers, to achieve the goal of satisfying the clientele thus leaving them with the best of experience, an important motive of customer loyalty, repeated business or interaction with a customer (Ezenwakwelu, 2017). In as much as quality is very important and plays a big role with regards to customer experience and customer loyalty, however, quality cannot be seen as the only important variable that influences customer experience. Other factors reviewed in previous literatures are: performance, expectations, desires and price (Akinyemi, 2014; Mohr, 1982).

Closing Gaps between Banks' Perception and Customer Perceptions of Quality: Though providers of tangible goods have described and measured quality with increasing levels of precision (Parasuraman et al., 1985:34). It is difficult to describe quality according to the marketers of services. Reason is, services cannot be seen, touched and measured before its actual delivery to the customer. There is, therefore, a gap which exists between provider's perceptions and consumer perceptions about service quality and delivery (Parasuraman et al., 1985: 25). These gaps are the main hurdles in delivering high quality performance by employee. A company must identify and deal with these gaps by means of examination and reexamination of its operational standards. Industry players may not always understand what consumers expect from them at a particular time and what levels of performance they need to meet service quality standards.

This kind of situation brings about a lot of flaws and gaps which affects consumer perceptions or experience of quality (Akinyemi, 2014; Mohr, 1982; Parasuraman et al., 1985: 29). After the importance and factors affecting the relationships between service quality, customer loyalty and customer experience were discussed and further establishing their interrelationship, it provides that how firms can improve their quality standards in order to retain the customers by giving the best of experience. (Suggestions as to ways of improvements are described at three levels. Different theories by various authors such as Leonard, Parasuraman & Zeithmal 1994; Pfeffer et al., 1995 and Parasuraman et al., 1985 were reviewed. Various literatures reviewed revealed that the difference between service quality and satisfaction could be probably due to the adoption of varied standards of comparison by different scholars (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Parasuraman et al., 1988)).

In summary, different researchers stated that the standard of comparison to form satisfaction depends on customer's feelings regarding their predictive anticipation or expectations (what will come out) which may result from the various advertisement about the product, the received or perceived service quality (real utility) defined by customers after using the product, and also is seem as a result of comparing the utility to other products (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Generally, after reviewing the works of different authors, we came up with about 5 constructs and consider it very imperative as distinct concepts there is a great need to analyze the constructs through further research to understand enlighten or shed more light by answering the research questions of this study. For this purpose, customer experiences with service quality models (McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996) were reviewed.

3. Methodology

Research Approach: Research is a systematic examination or process of investigation used to find the answers for certain pressing questions, thus by making an enquiry into certain phenomena. Methodology can be defined as a system of rules, norms, principles or concepts that can explicitly be used by building on certain phenomena, upon which the research is based and against which the claims for knowledge are usually evaluated (Nachamias et al., 1996: 234). Research projects are usually conducted based on theory which is extracted from in-depth literature and empirical studies which help in the interpretation, collection and analyses of the data. Briefly, Qualitative Approach interprets, collects, analyzes and evaluates data by studying the behavioral traits of people, thus behavior of people, the way they act and response to certain phenomena (Creswell, 1994). Philosophically, this approach can be classified as an inductive method of enquiries or studies in which interviews, questionnaire are conducted to gather the views of people and which are latter interpreted and analyzed as data and conclusion is drawn (Garson, 2001).

Qualitative research approach is partially statistical and is mostly conducted to make enquiry into the motivations and reasons of certain situations in a qualitative way (Creswell, 1994). According to Svensson (2003) the quantitative research approach is best approach in the investigation of the perceptions and problem of any study and to discover abstract traits/phenomena amongst people (the hidden values, feelings, attitudes and motivations). It also makes use of deductive approach in philosophy; the focus is on testing the theories related to the topic by analyzing and collecting the data (Creswell, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2007). Consequently, a survey research design was adopted. A theoretical data was collected through literature review whereas practical data was collected through questionnaire/interviews. The key purpose of questionnaire/interviews was to understand the how to improve customer experience through the delivery of quality service and vice versa and perception of industry about the monitoring of their customer

experience and the benefits that accrue from it. Lastly, content analysis was carried out based on data collected through the literature review and the questionnaire/ interviews.

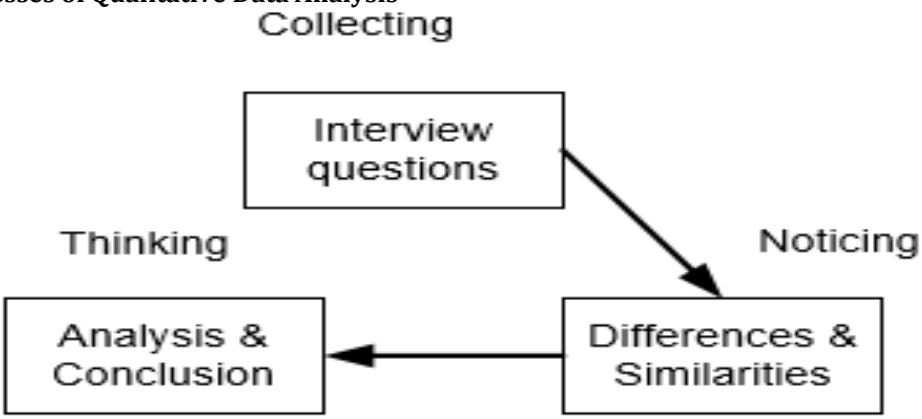
Data Collection and Design: Interview/questionnaire method was used as a source of collecting the primary data in this study, whereas secondary data was collected through the literature review. To validate or relate the constructs established from literature review the topic was further thoroughly studied in banking industry in Zambia by conducting interviews/questionnaire. Interview and questionnaire are commonly and often used method of investigation and examination in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Telephonic and one-on-one interviews were carried out with professionals from the industry (specifically from the Banks). A total of 4 managerial interviews were conducted amongst staffs of National Saving and Credit Bank and other banks in order to broaden the scope of our study and also to enable us give a general conclusion given that different banks have different ideologies. The questionnaire was also conducted amongst the customers of different Banks in Zambia. The questionnaire and interview was carried out concurrently given that not every customer of the said Banks can read and write in English. The interview questions were scrutinized and carefully designed after studying the available literature on service quality, customer loyalty, and customer experience and with the help of previous literatures (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

The questionnaire was reviewed, proofread and checked by research supervisor of this study to ensure the relevance and quality of questions (validity and reliability of items) (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Since English language is the official national language in Zambia the questionnaire was carefully designed and mainly written accordingly. However, given the fact that not every Zambian can communicate in English, the questionnaire was in certain moments translated orally into the native languages for customers (citizens of Zambia) to build their understanding. This was done in order to get a cross sectional data on both literate and illiterate population. We also tried to interview some customers of various international banks just to support our argument (for the purpose of emphasizes) and also to get an overview of customers' behavior in Zambia. There were total of 34 questions and approximately 10 to 20 minutes maximum was required to fill the questionnaire or take the interview. Both closed ended and open ended questions were used in the questionnaire. The interview guide started with general biographic information, about the respondent age, gender, profession and experience. The questionnaire was subsequently divided into three categories.

In the first category, the first question was divided into 6 sections. The questions related to the relationship amongst customer experience, customer loyalty, service quality, service delivery and, hence, the factors affecting these constructs were asked. In the second category, questions (basic) related to usage of various services and how frequent customers consult their banking service providers as well as steps for improvements were asked. The questionnaire is attached as an appendix. Also, questions in the rest of sections were developed accordingly on the following topical areas to facilitate in getting answers to the research question. During face to face or telephonic interview, discussions are done through indirect or direct communications without any disruption and also with much room for further discussion or explanation. While on the other hand information and complications in the questions can further be explained or examined (Wolcott, 2009) as in our case the translation for natives of Zambia. Thus interviews are a simpler means of collecting information and it is more feasible and convenient way for both parties, as they mutually exchange, communicate and evaluate the information (Wolcott, 2009; Saunders et al., 2006).

Data Presentation and Analysis: The data would be extracted, deduced, processed and evaluated to produce the needed results. A data processing method Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) was used to process the data collected. Qualitative Data Analysis is a range of processes, methods and procedures which are applied on the collected data which further puts it into some form of understanding, examination, interpretation and explanation of people (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) of this study was anchored on three pillars: noticing, collecting and thinking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seidel, 1998). This source model is also described as a symphony of noticing, collecting and thinking (Seidel, 1998). The three steps of the Qualitative Data Analysis process are illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Processes of Qualitative Data Analysis



As shown in figure1, the information is first "Collected" through interviews by asking different questions that are related to customer experience constructs. Also, staffs of the Banks were questioned on how customer experience monitoring was relevant to the bank and their ideology in that regard. During the interview, respondents were encouraged to share few practical situations, observations and their individual experiences in the context of this research work, in an attempt to gather optimal information from our respondents (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Secondly, there comes the observation of similarities and differences dubbed "Noticed" between the two main banks picked for this study. It was therefore observed (noticed) that the two Banks (NSCB and UBA Bank) have different ideologies, missions, approaches, but they are both striving for the same goal, which is "Serving the customer". Lastly, after having collected the data and undertaken a careful observation then leads to "Think". This is about how the information collected could be linked with the relevant theories used or applied in this research study in order to create analysis and draw meaningful conclusion. Consequently, after painstakingly reading the data, the analysis was done based on the QDA and its related two types of content analysis: relational and conceptual analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Validity and Reliability: There are two factors validity and reliability which must be considered by a qualitative researcher in the adjudication of the quality of the study, designing the research and analyzing the results (Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018; Eze & Awolusi, 2018; Patton, 2002: 123). Therefore in ensuring the validity of this study the research purpose and approaches were thoroughly designed, analyzed and studied. The data was collected by carrying out interviews and questionnaire where necessary in two service sector Banks both in Zambia. To keep the validity of the research, interview and questionnaire questions were developed based on the existing literature and theories in relevance with the topic of the research. The reliability of the study is considered high because all the information is gathered mainly from interviews/questionnaire and relevant theories, that was pre-validated via both face (the various questions were certified well by the research's supervisor) and content validity (certified fit by five experts on customer's experience). The respondents (from the Banks) are all senior managers with vast working experience and knowledge in the service industry, whereas the various respondents (customers) are respected clients of the Banks with large investments. The research work was conducted by following a proper structural process at each stage for a better understanding (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

In this section, we provide a detail review of two aspects of this study. The first aspect presents the data collected through the interview/questionnaire on the Banks and the interviewees (staff of the Banks as well as their customers). The second aspect focused on discussions of the findings deduced from the respondents in relation with service quality, customer experience and customer loyalty, their interrelationship.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	52	48,6	48,6	48,6
Female	55	51,4	51,4	100,0
Total	107	100,0	100,0	

Source: Author's Computation, 2017

Table 1 represents the data collected through the interview and then presents distribution of respondents by sex; male or female. It can be seen that out of a total number of 107 respondents, 52 were males while 55 were females. In percentage terms about 49% of the respondents were males and the remaining 51% being females. The computation therefore concludes that most of our respondents are females. Furthermore, other demographic analysis can be summarized as follows: about 35% of the respondents fall between the ages of 16-25 years. However, it is not surprising that a majority of the respondents (56%) fall within the age bracket of 25-40 years whereas about 9% represent the respondents within the ages of 40-60. About 6% of the respondents have their accounts not older a year in the bank, with about 10% of the respondents' accounts being two years old, another group making up about 14% of the respondents are three years old as account holders with the Banks whereas as large as about 70% of the respondents their account opened for a period above three years. Our analysis also shows that the respondents bear two types of accounts in the bank, with about 27% of the respondents being current account holders whereas about 73% have saving account in the banks. This implies that the majority of the respondents have saving account in the banks.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 2: Hypothesis 1: There is a Significant Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Experience

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	R	P	Remarks
service quality and customer experience	4.2454 4.2464	0.353337 0.367465	102	0.47***	0,0000	Sig

** Sig. at .01 levels, Source: Author's Computation, 2017

It is shown in table 2 that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer experience (r = 0.47***, N=102, P < 0.01). The implication of this result is that a 1% shift in service quality will cause a 47% shift in customer experience. Hence, it could be deduced that service quality influences and has positive impact on customer experience in the study. This can be explained as follow, an improved service quality through better service delivery may be lead to a more robust customer experience on many banking services offered by Zambian banks.

Table 3: Regression Analysis: Model Summary

Model	r	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.467	0. 401	0.409	0.305

Source: Author's Computation, 2017; Predictors: (Constant), service quality; ii. Dependent Variable: customer experience.

Table 4: Hypothesis 2: There is a Significant Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	R	P	Remark
service quality and customer satisfaction	4.3454 4.2464	0.245333 0.254355	104	0.57***	0,0000	Sig

** Sig. at .01 levels; Source: Author's Computation, 2017

It is shown in table 4 that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (r = 0.57***, N=104, P < 0.01). The implication of this result is that a 1% shift in service quality will cause a 57% shift in customer satisfaction. Hence, it could be deduced that service quality influences and has positive

impact on customer satisfaction in the study. This can be explained as follow, an improved service quality through better service delivery may be lead to customer satisfaction.

Table 5: Regression Analysis: Model Summary

Model	r	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.567	0. 501	0.509	0.405

Source: Author's Computation, 2017; i. Predictors: (Constant), service quality; ii. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

Table 6: Hypothesis 3: There is a Significant Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	R	P	Remarks
service quality and customer loyalty	4,5234 4,3564	0,242453 0,22535	101	0.52***	0,0000	Sig

** Sig. at .01 levels, Source: Author's Computation, 2017

It is shown in table 6 that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty (r = 0.562***, N=101, P < 0.01). The implication of this result is that a 1% shift in service quality will cause a 52% shift in customer loyalty. Hence, it could be deduced that service quality influence and has positive impact on customer loyalty in the study. This can be explained as follow, an improved service quality through better service delivery may be lead to customer loyalty and advocacy.

Table 7: Model Summary (Regression Analysis)

Model	r	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.654	0. 531	0.5709	0,505

Source: Author's Computation, 2017; i. Predictors: (Constant), service quality; ii. Dependent Variable: customer loyalty

Table 8: Hypothesis 4: There is a Significant Relationship between Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	R	P	Remarks
Customer experience Customer loyalty	4,5551 4,5589	0,241939 0,246466	107	0,62***	0,0000	Sig

** Sig. at .01 levels; Source: Author's Computation, 2017

It is shown in table 8 that there is a significant relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty (r = 0,62***, N=107, P < 0,01). The implication of this result is that a 1% shift in customer experience will cause a 62% shift in customer loyalty. Hence, it could be deduced that customer experience influence and has positive impact on customer loyalty in the study. This can be explained as follow, an improved customer experience through service quality and service delivery may be lead to customer loyalty and advocacy.

Table 9: Model Summary (Regression Analysis)

Model	r	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,794	0,631	0,609	0,505

Source: Author's Computation, 2017; i. Predictors: (Constant), customer experience; ii. Dependent Variable: customer loyalty

Table 10: ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	0.794	0.631	1.261	33.500	0.000
	Residual	3.916	104	0.038		
	Total	6.439	106			

Source: Author's Computation, 2017; i. Dependent Variable: customer loyalty; ii. Predictors: (Constant), customer experience

Discussion of Findings: From the hypotheses tested in Table 2 to 10, it shows an affirmation of the aim of this study (that there is a significant relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty). To this end, the study concludes that customer loyalty is a function of customer experience. Table 12 (ANOVA) shows the regression analysis(r^2) value of 0.631 which reveals that customer experience independently accounts for 63% of the variation in customer experience. The f-statistics of 33.500 reveals that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. Consequently, the output of this study is similar to previous empirical and theoretical studies (Albert, 2002; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bolton, 1998; Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Boulten & Drew, 1991). Specifically, our study agrees with Albert (2002), that customer loyalty is related to the final consequences of the overall and total experience which customers have with a company (Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Boulten & Drew, 1991). This is from the premise that, favourable customer experience can lead to customer loyalty because people tend to be rational and trust so they might have a tendency to reduce risk and stay with the service providers which they already had good experience. Furthermore, this study also concurs with the fact that customer experience could be an antecedent of loyalty in service context (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014; Hong, Goo et al., 2004).

Similar to other studies, our study also observed a positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty and customer experience. Simply, in the banking sector context, the service quality- loyalty relationship could also mediate by customer experience (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Hong, Goo et al., 2004). In addition, similar to a meta-analysis about customer loyalty antecedents, our results also show that the effect of service quality on customer loyalty becomes stronger over time (Pan et al., 2012). The study therefore affirms the competitive nature of the Zambian current business environment, especially. This also concur with the conjecture that, with the rapid growth of multidimensional demand and challenges of globalization (Ezenwakwelu, 2017; Akinyemi, 2014), various Zambian banks are under pressure to modify their banking products in a way to improve the quality of service so as to remain competitive in the industry (Yasin et al., 2004). This study is therefore of the opinion that, customer service is seen as an integral part of any stage of industry especially in the banking sector and this defines the organization's future development. The fast advancement in technological system related to internet is leading to fundamental changes in the Zambian banking industry, by which various businesses interact both internal and external world. This also applies to the way an organization relates with its customer (Messarra, 2014; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Hong, Goo et al., 2004).

However, due to the intangible nature of services received by banks, it is also difficult for Zambian banks to analyze the various expectations of customers, how a customer perceives and evaluates the desired outcome of the service quality, which bring about some level of loyalty to this firm (Messarra, 2014; Nguyen and Leblanc, 2002). Therefore, our study differs from Smith and Houston (1982), which simply posits that as customer evaluates their level of experience, hence a negative influence on their satisfaction with organizations (Smith and Houston, 1982; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1996). All Zambian banks are therefore adjudged to be customer centered, and thus driven by customers' demands, hence the saying the customer is always right applies. However, we also observed that based on the difference in preference, it is equally becoming more challenging to satisfy bank customers, thus often difficult to retain the loyalty of all customers. According to a research carried out by Oliver (2009), it suggests that both service quality and customer experience are two distinct but related constructs. This is particularly true for the Zambian banking industry, where an increased in the level of customer satisfaction may bring about profit maximization and improved financial results and trust of customers. To give credence to the purpose of the study, leading local banks in Zambia were studied.

It is on this premise that this study opine that customer experience or satisfaction should be the basic principle of all service organizations (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Oliver, 2009). This is in agreement with Sakthivel et al. (2005), that customer loyalty and experience have proven to be, undoubtedly, the major determinant for long term development and financial performance of a company (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Jones and Sasser, 1995). In addition, customers serve as the final judges to adjudicate the quality level of a product and services offered, thus their experience (satisfaction or dissatisfaction). It is therefore worth mentioning that any fundamental improvements in the quality of services rendered by Zambian banks can bring positive outcomes. The study is also of the opinion that, when a bank understands the fact that a continuous improvement of quality of service affects the experience of customers, it would help them in the

better allocation of both material and human resources needed to attain better quality, in response to clients' expectations and demands (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Chandler & Torbert, 2003). Consequently, this necessitated our main focus on such processes and improvements in customer experience monitoring through the quality of service rendered to customers and also to examines the extent by which customers experience affect customer loyalty; as well as, the relationship between customer experience and quality of service provided (Deshpande, 2016; Hay, 2004).

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary: This study seeks to develop and empirically test customer experience monitory and evaluation and also to study the influences of service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the Zambian banking industry. Based on a survey (using questionnaire) conducted on selected bank customers, 107 valid responses were contrived and analyzed using simple linear regression and ANOVA (Awolusi et al., 2018; Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018). The findings and analysis of data shows that quality of service provided and customer satisfaction are important when monitoring the experience of customers based on the effects of quality of service and customer loyalty and there returns thereafter. The study also observed a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. It is important to note that the theoretical and managerial implications of the study also posits a confirmation of the theoretical framework, while the proposed hypotheses were tested to confirm the plausibility of the study and accuracy of data and also to serve as bases for further studies.

Conclusion: The study concluded the significant relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty in the Zambian banking industry. Specifically, the study established significant relationships between service quality and customer experience, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, as well as, a significant relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty. Hence, the interrelationship between customer experience and customer loyalty is a vital construct that must be given concentrated attention and carefully examine it periodically from service quality to service delivery. It is therefore very imperative for banks and other financial institutions to monitor customers' experience and incorporate customer experience strategies into their management portfolio. This is an objective that needs to be accomplished in the face of competitive global business. The positive relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty posits that Zambian banks must ensure that their customer walk out with good experience by monitoring this periodically to adopt or adjust to current trends. This is imperative in achieving customer satisfaction, thus leaving them with the best of experience, which is very important because it is supposed to be an important motive of customer loyalty, repeated business or interaction with a customer and positive word of mouth are desirable (Bearden and Teel, 1983).

Recommendations and Implications of the Study: A number of recommendations have been outlined based on the findings in the research project: Financial institutions staffs should create a friendly and cordial environment with their customers. The Bank's environment should be conducive and enabling enough to give a good psychological before, during and after transaction. Thus, the bank's premises should be attractive and decent always. Staffs of Zambian banks should create a friendly environment with their customers. Zambian banking environment should be conducive, attractive, decent and enabling enough to psychologically assure their customer of the best of service. There should be a routine high quality service delivered to customers. This will help boost and also add to the value of satisfaction received by customers, thus their experience with the Banks. The personnel of the bank in the customer care service department of the financial institution should undergo various routine assessments on their relationship with customers. It is imperative for Zambian banks to understand that, the quality of service provided and customer satisfaction are important when monitoring the experience of customers based on the effects of quality of service and customer loyalty and there returns thereafter.

In addition, Zambian banks should organize routine seminars and training for their personnel on how to relate, control or manage the customer's emotion or grievances and the need to improve their relationship with customers. Lastly, performance management tools (like balance scorecards) could be deployed to constantly remind members of staffs on the importance of customer experience as a vital tool for creating, establishing, maintaining and improving customer loyalty, from which the profitability of the institution

depends. Customer experience therefore has positive impact on customer loyalty and Banks must ensure that their customer walk out with good experience by monitoring this periodically to adapt or adjust to current trends. The theoretical and managerial implications of the study confirmed the theoretical framework, while the proposed hypotheses also confirmed the plausibility of the study and accuracy of data. Hence, there should be a routine high quality of service delivered to customers and their views sorted routinely. This may help boost and also add to the value of experience of customers, thus their total satisfaction on the Bank's service. The customer care service department of the financial institution should undergo various routine assessments, monitoring and implementation of various recommendations on their relationship with customers periodically.

Contribution to knowledge: This study throws light on various ways to develop service improvement strategy in the organization especially in the service industry. The relationship between service quality and customer experience constructs are not widely discussed in academics as many an author didn't relate quality with the experience of customers. However, service quality and customer experience both are discussed as distinctive concepts in the literature. This work has a special contribution in this regard; therefore, future research can be done on the basis of this study to examine the effect of customer experience monitoring based on service quality and customer experience. The study also contributes for service firms especially the banking sector aiming to improve the quality standards to provide their existing and future customers the required experience so as to achieve their loyalty. Some methods of improvement are suggested in this study which can be implemented in banking industry as well as other service sectors. Also, this research was carried out in two different banks of local and international reputation.

Therefore, the results can be generalized up and recommended to some extent particularly in the banking sector. Furthermore, our study also concur with the tenants of the gap model for service quality given by Parasuraman, operationalized service quality as a gap between performance and expectation of customers; this is termed, SERVQUAL (Leonard & Marquardt, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al. 1985). Therefore, our study also affirms Zeithaml et al. (1988), SERVQUAL quality attributes: Responsiveness, Empathy, Tangibles, Assurance, and Reliability. (Akinyemi, 2014; Messarra, 2014; Gupta and Chen, 1995). Lastly, our study was an attempt to understand the nature of service quality, in the context of a developing economy, a gap positioned by previous studies (Akinyemi, 2014; Messarra, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1988). According to Akinyemi (2014) and Messarra (2014), research reveals that the process of delivery high quality services often results in various measurable benefits such as profit, cost savings, and market share. It is therefore imperative for service firms, academician and researchers to understand the nature of service quality and how it must be achieved in firms (Akinyemi, 2014; Messarra, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1988).

Limitations and Suggestion for Further Studies: It is as though norm that every research project and this study being no exception always encounter a number of setbacks or limitations that come as obstacle to carry it out. This research work has therefore faced a number of hurdles which in no order and are explained below. Firstly, there is no a scientific approved measurement scale in the monitoring of customer service or for measuring service quality and customer experience and therefore not optimal for the purpose of this research. Unfortunately, because of the limited resources and the fact that such data is often difficult and costly to collect, this study used a questionnaire to collect data on customer experience. Second, the results presented in this study are based on the analysis and evaluation of a causal model with cross-sectional data collected through the questionnaire. It is not optimal because the time orders of the research questions, which amongst others is one of the important elements or factors use in causal model analysis, but are unfortunately, ignored. Therefore, definite evidence of a causal effect cannot be inferred. Future research project should attempt to collect pooled time series and cross-sectional data in order to investigate, evaluate and test the objectives of this research work. Moreover, customer experience is found to mediate the relationship between customer loyalty and service quality just partly in the Zambian banking sector. This raises the question whether there are other constructs which can also explain the impacts of service quality on customer loyalty. These can be used as research questions for future research in the field.

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Understanding Postgraduate Student Preferences for University Choice in Zambia: The Case of ZCAS University

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to ascertain the university brand model that characterizes postgraduate student choice of ZCAS University. The brand model comprises brand attributes that attract postgraduate students to the university, the information sources they consult, who influences their decisions and what makes the university unique. The study was qualitative in design, while sampling of research participants was done purposively. Three focus group discussions involving seventeen first years part time and open distance e-learning postgraduate students, and five semi-structured interviews with marketing and recruitment staff at ZCAS University were used to collect data on the brand model. Thematic analysis and content analysis were then used as the primary data analysis techniques. Results of the study revealed that reputation, teaching quality, student support, fees and facilities were the top five ZCAS University brand traits that underpin postgraduate students' choice of the university. With respect to competitive advantage, facilities, teaching quality reputation and accreditations are perceived to be the university's primary unique characteristics. The study further identified friends, self, workmate and family as the greatest influencers of postgraduate student choice of the university; while websites, social media, print media and television are believed to be the most consulted information sources by prospective postgraduate students.

Keywords: *University Brand, Information Sources, Postgraduate, Influencers, ZCAS University, Competitive Advantage.*

1. Introduction

ZCAS University was established as a private university in Zambia in December 2016 (ZCAS University, 2017). The university inherited several undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes that were hitherto run by the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS), the parent company. The university was established to take advantage of the rise in demand for university education in the country, as well as to mitigate the continuing reduction in student enrollment on professional programmes offered by the parent company. It is generally acknowledged in the higher education (HE) marketing literature that competition for university students has continued to rise (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). In Zambia, for example, there are currently 62 registered universities (Higher Education Authority, 2019). This represents a significant rise in competition in the sector, given that there were just 3 registered universities 17 years ago. Like ZCAS University, most of the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Zambia offer business related programmes. This implies that the university is operating in a highly competitive market. However, this study did not address the specific attributes relevant to aspiring postgraduate students.

In order to grow and thrive as a new HEI, ZCAS University needs to strengthen its brand image in order to become more visible and increase its market share. The university, in particular, needs to ascertain the HE brand models that characterize student choice of university. Such a brand model comprises brand attributes that attract students to the university, the information sources they consult, who influences their university choice decisions and what makes the university unique. Several studies have been carried out to explore the positioning of HEIs in the market for postgraduate studies in various parts of the world (Zhu & Reeves, 2019). In the case of Zambia, there is a dearth of such research in the postgraduate market. The HE market, just like many other markets, is segmented on the basis of demographic, geographic, social and behavioral factors (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015); therefore, HE brand models identified in other countries may have differing elements from the Zambian market. For example, the factors that motivated students to pursue an MBA programme differed significantly between Indian university students and their Kenyan counterparts (Nyaribo, Prakash, & Owino, 2012).

A study that focuses on the postgraduate market in Zambia is therefore required. A study carried out in Zambia proposed a university brand model relevant to the market for undergraduate studies (Kayombo & Carter, 2016). The postgraduate market is very important to ZCAS University because of the large alumni base of former students who pursed professional qualifications at ZCAS. These potential students can easily be lured to pursue master's degree programmes at the university. It is therefore necessary that a positioning study is carried out to equip ZCAS University marketers with context specific knowledge regarding the HE brand model for the postgraduate market in the country. Such knowledge would help in developing customized marketing activities for this unique HE subsector. Accordingly, the current study set out to identify the foremost university branding factors that underpin postgraduate student choice of ZCAS University. In view of this, the research question designed to guide the study was: How can a university brand be identified and used for competitive positioning in the market for postgraduate studies in Zambia? The rest of the paper is organized as follows: a discussion of the literature review is provided in the next section, followed by justification of the research methodology. Presentation and discussion of findings follow thereafter; and finally, concluding remarks, recommendations, limitations of the study and directions for future research are presented.

2. Literature Review

Despite earlier doubts regarding applicability of brand management principles and practices in higher education (Chapleo, 2010), the case for managing universities as brands has continued growing from strength to strength (Furey, Springer, & Parsons, 2014). The subsections below review the literature on university brand positioning, university brand factors, sources of competitive advantage for universities, information sources and influencers of student choice of university.

Brand Positioning: Brand positioning can be considered to be activities an organization implements to position itself in a preferable place in a potential customer's mind (Dibb, Simkin, Pride, & Ferrell, 2006). Ries and Trout posit that brand positioning can be applied to anything ranging from an institution, goods, services, company, and even a person (Ries & Trout, 2001). With respect to this study, ZCAS University as a newly established HEI needs to position itself in favourable light in the minds of prospective and existing customers. The university could therefore aim to position itself, its schools, programmes it offers and even eminent staff such as the Vice Chancellor. However, to achieve this positioning effectively, the university must identify attributes that lure potential learners to HEIs. Accordingly, these factors are discussed in the sections below.

Higher Education Branding Factors: Many studies have been carried out to identify factors that inform prospective leaners' choice of postgraduate programmes, particularly the MBA programme (Saiti, Papa, & Brown, 2017). However, there is a paucity of research on institutional factors that aspiring postgraduate candidates consider. Ivy identified seven university brand elements that MBA students considered in their choice of South African universities (Ivy, 2008). These included programme (course content), prominence (reputation), price (fees and payment plan), prospectus (direct mail promotions and direct mail from university) and people (face to face tuition and contact with peers) as the most prominent elements. Promotion and premiums (infrastructure and facilities) were identified as relevant elements but not prominent. Additionally, the research was conducted in one or a few universities only, thereby limiting generalization of findings to other contexts.

In China, potential postgraduate students considered personal interest, employability, good income prospects, entry requirements, reputation, location, teaching quality and facilities as factors that underpinned their choice of a Chinese University (Liu & Morgan, 2015). In the UK the following choice criteria for potential postgraduate students (in order of importance) were unveiled (Soilemetzidis, Bennett, & Leman, 2014): HEI location, HEI reputation, course content and reputation of the subject area/department. More recently, comparable postgraduate decision making factors in UK universities that include fees, course content, location, infrastructure, speedy response, reputation, internships opportunities/work placements, accreditations, and practical nature of the course were unveiled (Towers & Towers, 2018). With respect to choice of foreign universities, quality of education, scholarship, quality of academic staff, study program, practice, tuition fee, standard of living in the state, rank and location were identified as key factors that potential postgraduate students.

Sources of Competitive Advantage: Several researchers have considered and studied the need for HEIs to employ strategies for gaining and sustaining competitive advantage (Kayombo & Carter, 2016). Local HEIs, for example, need to contend with strong international brands looking to sustain their leadership positions (Lomer, Papatsiba, & Naidoo, 2018). Accordingly, well established HEIs need to continuously innovate to sustain their leadership positions, while those hoping to become global brands can use competitive-integrative benchmarking to learn from the strong brands and create their own strategic advantages (Ganushchak-Yefimenko, Shcherbak, & Nifatova, 2017). This can be accomplished by finding interfaces for cooperating with other institutions in order to benefit from their experience. Competitive advantage was defined as "the achievement of superior performance vis-à-vis rivals, through differentiation, to create distinctive product appeal or brand identity" (Dibb, Simkin, Pride, & Ferrell, 2006). HEIs can gain competitive advantage by differentiating their service offerings to ensure that they satisfy their internal and external consumers better than competitors (Al Shobaki & Abu Naser, 2017). This differentiation is accomplished by building brands out of two main constructs: quality educations by retaining good service delivery staff and other conditions; and thereafter, ensuring good prospects for graduates (Lomer, Papatsiba, & Naidoo, 2018).

Although these studies addressed postgraduate contexts, a limitation in main cases is that the sample sizes were quite small. A reported study carried out in Zambia suggested that typical sources that HEI can exploit to gain competitive advantage include availability of courses, quality of teaching, facilities and infrastructure. However, this study did not address issues relevant to the postgraduate market. In the postgraduate studies market, institutions can further get competitive advantage from employability of graduates (which is a reflection of the quality of the institutions' programmes), local and international recognition or rankings, consistency of service delivery through proper leveraging of integrated management systems such as ERP which can improve cost management, and resource efficiency of administrative procedures (Soliman & Karia, 2017). Other researchers further assert that effective relationship management for both recruiting and retaining students is another potential source of competitive advantage in the market for postgraduate studies (Chaguluka, Beharry-Ramraj, & Amolo, 2018). Although the findings in the preceding studies relate to postgraduate students, their contexts are different to Zambia. Therefore, it is not feasible to generalize the findings to the market for postgraduate studies in Zambia.

Information Sources: It has long been established that potential students search for information when making university related decisions (Nicholls, Harris, Morgan, Clarke, & Sims, 1995). The literature search found few published studies regarding information sources consulted by aspiring postgraduate students. The review suggested the following as the most commonly consulted sources for information by prospective postgraduate students: social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram (Galan, Lawley, & Clements, 2015); Internet (AL-Mutairi & Saeid, 2016), and friends and family (AL-Mutairi & Saeid, 2016). Other information sources include print media (AL-Mutairi & Saeid, 2016); university agents (Moogan, 2018); and alumni, campus visit, and education expos (AL-Mutairi & Saeid, 2016). In the case of Zambia, there is no reported study in the context of the postgraduate market. Higher education marketers may therefore be unaware of the most suitable medium to provide sufficient and relevant information to aid prospective postgraduate students' choice of university. Marketing efforts may therefore not be bearing fruit as they are not focused on provision of sufficient and relevant information that is based on empirical research (Carter & Yeo, 2009).

Influencers of Student Choice of University: Influencers of student choice of university are people who influence decision making by encouraging potential students to choose particular universities or programmes. Knowing who influences student choice of university should be essential to brand and recruitment strategists because such knowledge can be used to provide marketing information to relevant influencers. There are few reported studies on influencers of prospective postgraduate students globally. Parents have been identified as influencers of postgraduate student choice in various studies such as (Liu & Morgan, 2015), (Moogan, 2018), (Nyaribo, Prakash, & Owino, 2012) and (Towers & Towers, 2018). Other prolific influencers identified include alumni and current students (Towers & Towers, 2018), friends (Nyaribo, Prakash, & Owino, 2012), college teachers (Nyaribo, Prakash, & Owino, 2012), and university agents (Towers & Towers, 2018). In Zambia, friends, parents and self were identified as the most prolific influencers of university choice (Kayombo & Carter, 2016). However, this study did not include potential or current postgraduate students.

Gaps in the Postgraduate Market Branding Literature: The review of the literature has revealed that although research has been conducted to unveil the postgraduate market brand model in other parts of the world, there is a paucity of such research in the African context. HE marketers may therefore fail to target their marketing messages at the most prolific influencers of prospective postgraduate students. In particular, there are no published studies that attempt to conceptualize or operationalize the following university brand orientation dimensions in respect of the market for postgraduate programmes in Zambia:

- The university brand attributes aspiring postgraduate students consider when choosing a university;
- The sources of sustainable competitive advantage in the market for postgraduate students;
- The information sources that potential postgraduate students consult in search of information about universities;
- The influencers of aspiring postgraduate students.

The current research aims at filling this gap in the literature by answering the following research question: How can a university brand be identified and used for competitive positioning in the market for postgraduate programmes in Zambia? To answer the research question above, the following objectives were designed:
RO1: Ascertain brand attributes that enhance a university's position in the postgraduate studies market in Zambia.
RO2: Establish ZCAS University's brand position in the postgraduate studies market in Zambia.
RO3: Recommend strategies that ZCAS University's management should implement to enhance the university's brand position in the postgraduate studies market in Zambia.

3. Research Methodology

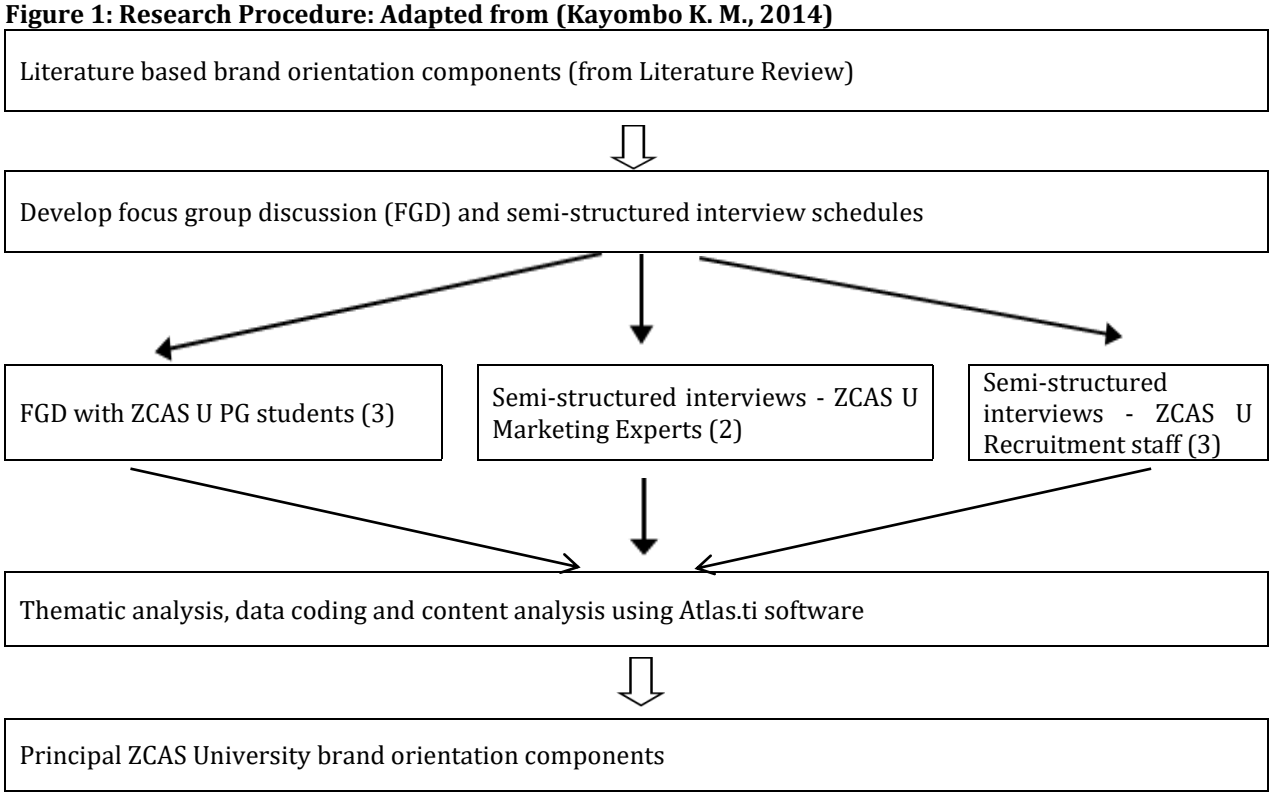
The methodology adopted to implement the study is outlined in this section. The study adopted a qualitative design. A case study strategy was chosen to implement the study. Semi-structured interviews with ZCAS University marketing executives and recruitment staff were conducted to collect data. Data were also collected from purposively sampled ZCAS University first year postgraduate focus group participants. The data were then analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques. The research procedure is illustrated in Figure 1 below, followed by justification of the research methodology.

Case Study Strategy: A case study has been defined as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (Robson, 2002). A case study strategy enables researchers to understand an issue in its totality and world context (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). This finding is in agreement with research undertaken in the context of choice of a Chinese university (Liu & Morgan, 2015). Facilities were also identified as an important factor that MBA students took into account when choosing South African universities (Ivy, 2008). As stated above, the HE sector in the country is still developing, hence most of the HEIs, including public universities, lack adequate facilities to support postgraduate study. Course content or structure was not highly regarded as a factor in student choice of university, although it received higher weightings in prior studies such as (Cvetkoska, 2019), (Ivy, 2008), and (Soilemetzidis, Bennett, & Leman, 2014). The choice of the case study strategy for this research is buttressed by several similar HE brand positioning studies such as (Blackburn, 2011), (Khalifa, Dukhan, & Mouselli, 2017), and (Liu & Morgan, 2015).

Sampling Frame and Sample Size: This study's sampling frame included ZCAS University marketing and recruitment staff and first year postgraduate students who had just made a decision to study at the University. Three or 60% of the 5 most experienced recruitment staff and both of the marketing executives were interviewed. University marketing executives, instead of other administrators, were interviewed as they play a key role in directing and controlling HEIs' brand management. Similar HEI branding studies have focused on university marketing experts as a source of information on brand related issues (Chapleo, 2010). In the Republic of Macedonia considered in their choice of universities abroad (Cvetkoska, 2019). Some of these factors, e.g. financial costs and academic image, were identified as being important for potential Chinese students seeking postgraduate training abroad (Zhu & Reeves, 2019), other factors unveiled included employability, reputation, language, culture, visa, admissions and weather. In order to triangulate data collection sources, 3 focus group discussions were conducted. The focus groups involved 17 of the 92 first

year part time and open distance e-learning (ODeL) postgraduate students who joined the university in the previous 3 months.

Figure 1: Research Procedure: Adapted from (Kayombo K. M., 2014)



Purposive sampling was used to select the focus group participants because this sampling technique ensures that only relevant information rich population units are included in the sample (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The choice of this sampling technique is buttressed my many similar studies (Kayombo & Carter, 2016). The 3 focus groups comprised distinct categories of students. The focus groups comprised part time students on ZCAS University masters' degree programmes, part time postgraduate students on foreign programs, and ODeL students. Grouping participants based on status and experience enhances their participation in the deliberations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). First year students were considered more suitable as a source of data because they had just made the university choice. They were therefore more likely to have fresher memories of the brand dimensions considered than returning students. Similar HEI branding studies have focused on first year students as a source of information about university choice (Carter & Yeo, 2009).

Data Collection: Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. These data collection techniques have been used in similar HEI branding studies such as (Liu & Morgan, 2015), (Towers & Towers, 2018), and (Zhu & Reeves, 2019). Three focus group discussions comprising 17 first year part time and ODeL postgraduate students who had recently joined the university were conducted. Focus group discussions were considered suitable because research participants challenge each other and discuss issues they consider important (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The focus groups technique is also considered 'naturalistic' because it echoes how people collectively make sense of phenomena. In addition, data were collected from business development and recruitment staff in the university by means of 5 semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research is recommended because the technique enhances understanding by asking "what" and "how" questions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Semi-structured interviews also enhance understanding by exploring the "why" issue.

Data Processing: The researchers recorded and transcribed the interviews and focus group discussions. Thereafter, they used Atlas.ti software to process the data. This involved data coding and creating quotations, memos, families and networks to facilitate content analysis. The researchers used thematic analysis to identify codes or themes from the focus group discussions and interviews. Thematic analysis is the "search for themes, or patterns, that occur across a data set" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The technique was employed to identify recurring themes that indicated university brand factors aspiring postgraduate students considered when choosing the university. The themes or codes identified in this process were then synthesized with those that emerged from the review of the literature. Subsequently, the codes or branding elements were used to categorize the interview and focus group data to facilitate content analysis. The use of thematic and content analysis in HE brand management studies is very common (Kayombo K. M., 2014).

Reliability and Validity: Several techniques were employed to enhance reliability during the data collection process. For example, researchers used focus group and interview guides, and provided research participants with question schedules in advance of the interview (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). In addition, researchers took notes during the discussions and adapted interview questions from similar studies (Ali-Choudhury, Bennet, & Savani, 2009). Furthermore, multiple data sources and data collection techniques were used to achieve triangulation (Lee & Lings, 2013). For example, data were collected from different sources such as postgraduate students and marketing executives. Additionally, multiple techniques such as focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were used in data collection.

4. Findings and Analysis

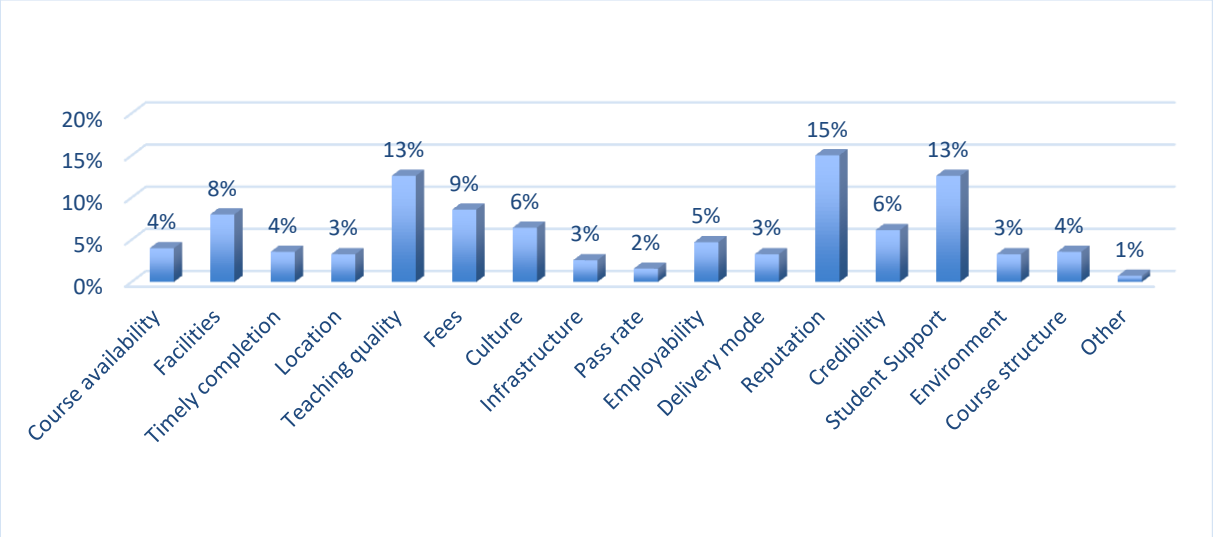
As indicated above, the aim of the study was to identify the principal HE branding factors that characterize postgraduate student choice of ZCAS University. These include brand factors the students considered, their perceived source of the university's competitive edge, the information sources they consulted and who influenced their choices. This section is therefore presented on the basis of these branding dimensions.

Higher Education Branding Factors: The study identified 19 variables that aspiring postgraduate students considered in their choice of ZCAS University (see Figure 2 below). Results of content analysis indicated that the most considered branding factors by aspiring postgraduate students at ZCAS University were reputation, teaching quality, student support, fees and facilities. Other factors identified include culture, credibility, employability, course availability, timely completion, course structure, environment, delivery mode, infrastructure, location and pass rates. Mission and vision, ease of entry and return on investment were insignificant, jointly accounting for only 1% of brand factor considerations. The brand factors identified in this study are comparable to those unveiled in other empirical studies elsewhere. For example, brand factors such as reputation, teaching quality, fees and facilities that postgraduate students at ZCAS University valued the most were also prominent in other studies such as (Ivy, 2008), (Liu & Morgan, 2015), and (Soilemetzidis, Bennett, & Leman, 2014). In the current study, potential postgraduate students seem preoccupied with the HEI's reputation and teaching quality, accounting for 15% and 13% of the total quotations respectively. One focus group discussant summed this up in the following quote: So you see, you see that the reputation of university is what in the end of the day will make someone either goes there or not, you know. Most of us are not going to take our kids to … University because we know that most institutions don't recognize it and don't trust the paper no matter how many times they are flashing on TV.

It is worth noting that the HE landscape in Zambia has many more private universities (i.e. 55) compared to only 7 public ones (Higher Education Authority, 2019). All the private universities in the country were established in the last twenty years; many of them lack highly qualified teaching staff, infrastructure and facilities. This could explain why reputation, teaching staff and student support preoccupy prospective students' thoughts when making university related choices. Student support (defined in terms of assistance offered to potential and existing students by various units or university staff such as lecturers, administrators and ODeL coordinators) seems to be an odd one out as a brand attribute, accounting for 13% of the total quotations. This attribute was mentioned mostly by ODeL students. Yeah, ESAMI in East Africa, in Tanzania. I found that most of the courses were the same. Research undertaken in China placed a higher premium on employability than what the current study revealed (Zhu & Reeves, 2019). This could be attributed to the fact that the majority of ODeL students are in full time employment and located in cities where the university does

not have a physical presence. Facilities were defined in terms of resources that HEIs use to aid and facilitate learning. Therefore, physically visiting the university to gather information to aid the decision making process is not feasible. In such a situation, student support facilities, including speedy response to potential students' queries is paramount.

Figure 2: Frequency of HEI Factors for ZCAS University



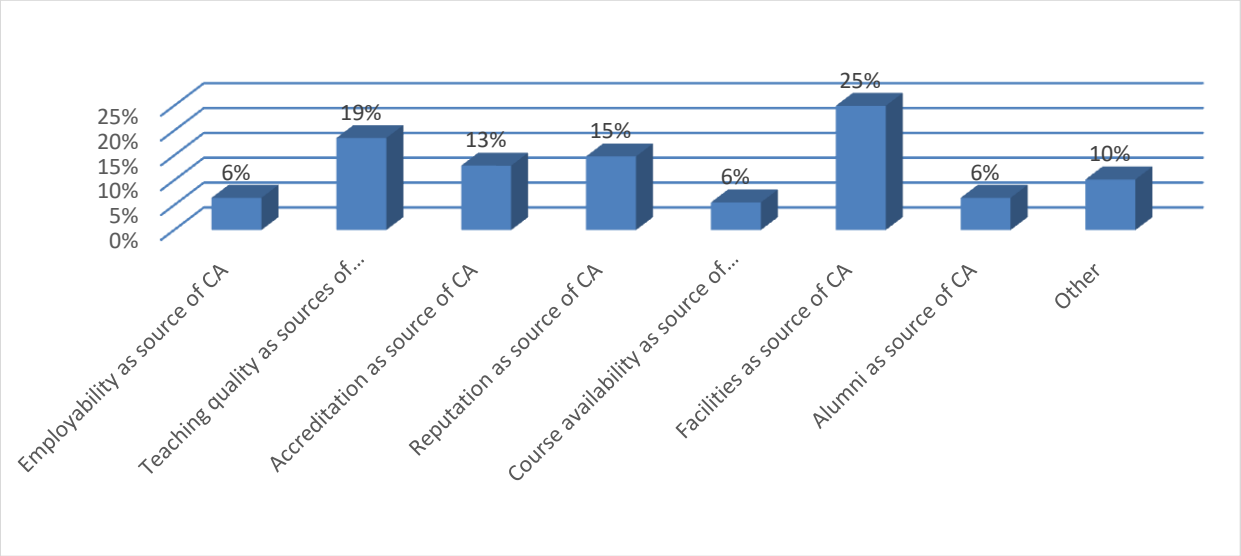
As in other studies such as (Ivy, 2008), (Cvetkoska, 2019), and (Zhu & Reeves, 2019), the current study suggested that fees, with 9% of the total quotations, are a key consideration in choice of university. In this particular case, fees are an important factor in choice of university because most of the students are self-sponsored; therefore, fees and terms of payment affect capacity of students to pay for their programmes of study. Furthermore, most postgraduate students are breadwinners at household level; thus they have other financial obligations in addition to paying their own tuition fees. One focus group discussant, for example, expressed their concern for fees as follows: I think the other factor which is there is also the cost element of it because we don't want to just go to a place and pay so much if there's a place offering a similar service and the cost is less, you would go there without affecting the quality of education. They include libraries, computer laboratories, parking spaces, eating places, recreation facilities and teaching aids. I can say, one of my bosses did the program I think before me and she was in her last semester during the time I was starting. So she is the one who advised that actually you learn a lot if you get on this program.

So I think that was one of the people who helped me cement the decision to come back and do something else. An apparent peculiar influencer revealed by the current research is the employer. The literature review on influencers of postgraduate student choice did not identify employers as influencers of potential postgraduate students. Facilities were classified among the top 5 brand attributes that aspiring postgraduate students considered in their choice of university. This is probably because as a developing country, employers in Zambia are just satisfied with a candidate holding a master's degree, and therefore less keen to thoroughly scrutinize programme content of those qualifications. Additionally, the course content for many of the programmes is similar, as asserted by one focus group participant: I think for me I considered, first I looked at, having done a Greenwich degree, I had considered the courses under Greenwich postgraduate. I looked at ZCAS, then I looked at ESAMI. This is possibly because most postgraduate students in the university are already in employment, and therefore employability prospects are not a paramount consideration in choice of university.

Sources of Competitive Advantage for ZCAS University: In order of importance, the top 4 factors which students thought give ZCAS University a competitive edge in the postgraduate studies market were facilities, teaching quality, reputation and accreditation (see Figure 3 below). Of these, the first 3 attributes are also among the factors that preoccupy aspiring postgraduate students' HEI choices. As stated above, Zambia's higher education sector is still in its infancy; most of the HEIs are less than 20 years old and have inadequate

highly qualified teaching staff, infrastructure and facilities. An HEI with state of the art facilities is therefore likely to stand out. In the case of ZCAS University, the competitive edge seems to be underpinned by the parent company's good reputation in the HE market. The university is wholly owned by ZCAS, an institution that has been in existence for 30 years and is well known for offering high quality education at a high premium.

Figure 3: Sources of Competitive Advantage for ZCAS University



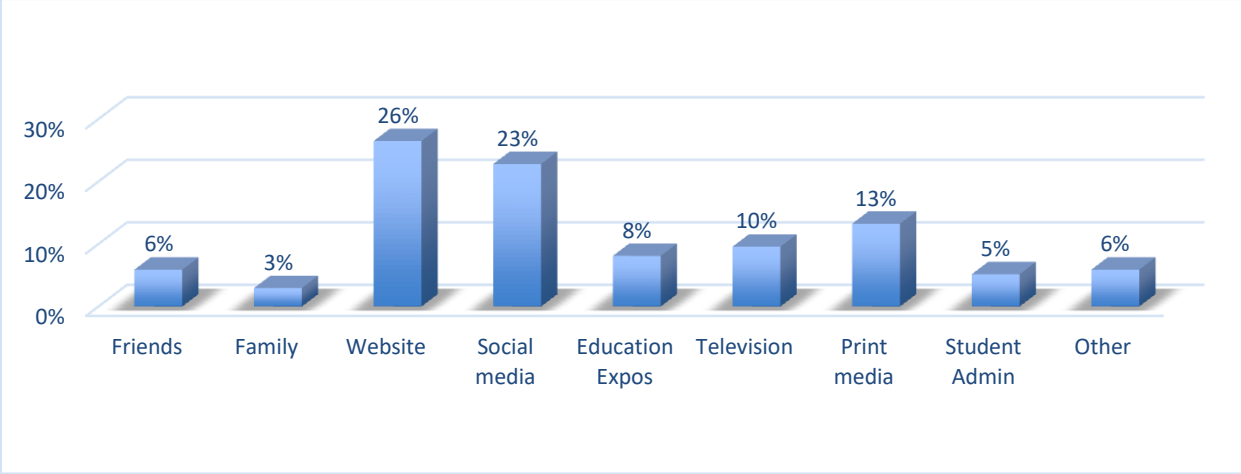
Accreditations with local and international institutions were considered to be another significant source of competitive advantage for ZCAS University. The university's parent company has been offering learning programmes in association with well renowned local and international institutions such as the University of Zambia, University of Greenwich, University of London, ACCA, CIMA etc. for many years. Many of these learning programmes are now offered in association with the university, and seem to give the institution credibility and recognition. This was echoed by 2 of the focus group respondents as follows: So, you know, the collaboration that ZCAS has like I said earlier, for you to be, to have that collaboration, it means that you have been vetted and you were found to be of high quality as an institution, so that is what I value most about ZCAS and then another thing on a personal level that I checked for was the university ranking and accreditations that the university has because accreditations will show quality. They prove that university actually has quality assurance. It gives you that assurance that okay, I am dealing with recognized, a recognized university.

Information Sources: The study revealed that websites, social media, print media and television were the most consulted information sources by prospective postgraduate students at ZCAS University (see Figure 4 below). To a lesser extent, potential postgraduate candidates sought information about the university from education expos, friends, student administration and family. Meanwhile, billboards, prospectuses and alumni were rarely consulted. The information sources identified in the current study are similar to what other researchers from other parts of the world found. For example, several researchers have observed that potential postgraduate students are increasingly turning to the internet and social media for information about universities (Galan, Lawley, & Clements, 2015). The popularity of websites (with 26% of the 136 quotations regarding information sources) and social media (23%) is not surprising as it reflects the increase in access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services in the country (Central Statistical Office and Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, 2018).

It also played a part in influencing my decision, which is key also. Print media (mostly newspapers) with 13% of the quotations and television (10%) are also popular sources of information. This could be attributed to the fact that most aspiring postgraduate students are relatively older and more likely to access these sources of information compared to those seeking undergraduate study. This can be evidenced from the following comment made by a focus group respondent: People that do postgraduate, I think maybe 60 or 70% are

managers. So, even media consumption is different from those that are trying to start to do undergraduate. These BBCs (Born before Computers) they still want to see things in hard copy, in a newspaper, in a magazine, on radio, or on TV. For example, the 2018 national survey on access and usage of ICT by households and individuals in Zambia indicated that access to internet services among households rose from 12.7% to 17.7% between 2015 and 2018. Meanwhile, 14.3% of the population said they had used the internet in the previous 3 months, compared to only 8.8% three years earlier.

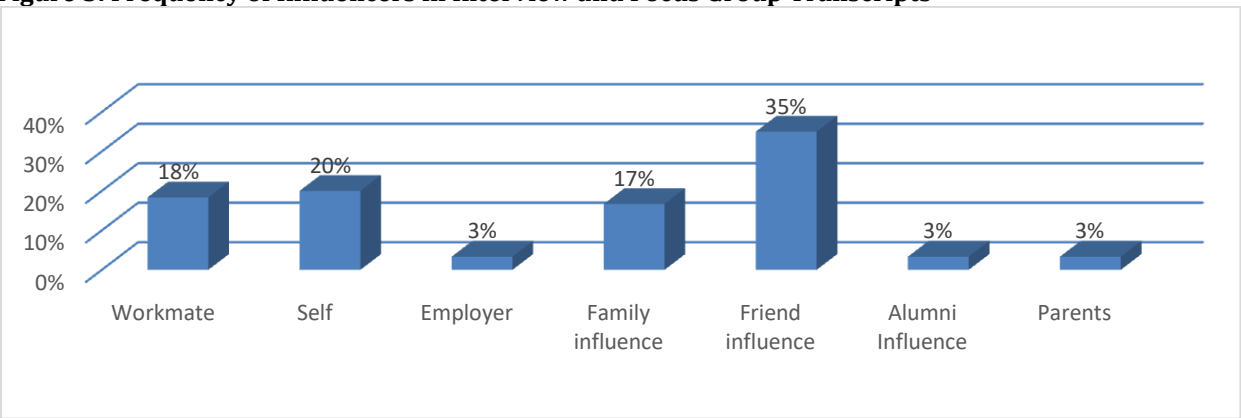
Figure 4: Frequency of Information Sources in Interview and Focus Group Transcripts



Considering that Zambia is set to increase universal coverage of both internet and communication facilities to 96% (Mvunga, 2019), the reliance on websites and social media as key information sources by prospective postgraduate students is likely to increase. As one focus group respondent retorted, the internet is a default information source: Of course, when I heard about it of course the main source where I went to was the internet. So the traditional media should always be considered. With respect to television, the 2018 ICT survey indicated that 37% of households in Zambia accessed television services in 2018, compared to 33% three years earlier (Central Statistical Office and Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, 2018). Television is therefore likely to continue to be a valuable source of information for aspiring postgraduate candidates in the foreseeable future.

Influencers of Student Choice of ZCAS University: Findings from the study suggested that potential ZCAS University postgraduate students were highly influenced by friends when choosing the university (accounting for 35% of quotations), followed by self (20%), workmates (18%) and family (17%) as shown in Figure 5 below. Other influencers of postgraduate student choice include alumni, employer, and parents, each accounting for 3% of total references.

Figure 5: Frequency of Influencers in Interview and Focus Group Transcripts



The influencers identified in this study are comparable to those unveiled by other researchers such as (Moogan, 2018), (Towers & Towers, 2018), (Nyaribo, Prakash, & Owino, 2012), although the degree of influence is different. Parents, for example, were identified as more prolific influencers of student choice compared to the case at ZCAS University (Moogan, 2018). It is evident from the study that most postgraduate students in Zambia are turning to their friends and workmates and/or making the final HEI choice decisions themselves. Two of the interview respondents stated this precisely as follows: For me. I think what influenced me the most was my friend who was doing the Greenwich program here at ZCAS and when I came he encouraged me to do the same. The apparent significant influence employers have on aspiring ZCAS University postgrad students could be attributed to high unemployment levels in the country compared to the other jurisdictions where similar studies were carried out. In Zambia, for example, the rate of unemployment is high, especially among the youth where it currently stands at 16% (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2019). Accordingly, employers may directly or indirectly influence students to choose universities they consider credible.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study has revealed that the 10 most considered branding factors in the choice of ZCAS University by aspiring postgraduate students in order of importance were reputation, teaching quality, student support, fees, facilities, culture, credibility, employability, course availability and timely completion. In terms of competitive advantage, facilities, teaching quality, reputation and accreditations make the university stand out from the rest. Furthermore, potential postgraduate students sought information about the institution from the website, social media and print media; while friends, self, workmates and family had significant influence in choosing the university. Compared to similar studies regarding the market for master's degree students, the current research has revealed many similar findings as discussed in Section 4. However, some unique brand variables have also emerged mainly due to the fact that the country's higher education sector is still in its infancy. Concerns about the quality of service offered and credibility of the institutions are high, hence potential postgraduate students are most concerned about the reputation of the university, teaching quality, student support and facilities in the HEIs. Universities such as ZCAS that exploit these concerns get a competitive edge.

Practical Implications: It has long been established by scholars that student choice criteria of universities differs between and within developed and developing countries (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Melanthiou, 2007). Therefore, ZCAS University's marketing strategists need to identify the specific brand variables that prospective postgraduate candidates consider in their choice of the institution and develop relevant marketing strategies. Some suggestions are outlined in the sections below.

ZCAS University Brand Variables*:* As discussed above, the most considered branding factors by aspiring postgraduate students at ZCAS University in order of importance are the reputation of the university, teaching quality, student support, fees and facilities.

Recommendations: To enhance its reputation further, ZCAS University management, particularly the Business Development Manager/Unit, must foster strong relationships with relevant government departments, reputable local and foreign universities, local and foreign professional bodies, employers and labor organizations. Activities that underpin such cooperation could include undertaking collaborative/joint research projects (e.g. with the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research), curriculum development (e.g. by incorporating input from business and regulatory professional associations such as chambers of commerce and industry), and staff exchange arrangements with collaborating local and international universities. Alternatively, management of the website can be assigned to a specific employee, preferably with marketing and IT knowledge. Other activities could include sponsorship of academic calendar events, organizing student internships with employers such as banks and audit firms.

Scholarship agreements with donor aided agencies that support affirmative action. In terms of student support, the university's Deputy Registrar needs to assign a specific recruitment staff to assist each potential student from initial engagement with the institution until enrolment on their programme of study. This should be applied particularly to potential students who apply online as they may not have face to face

interaction with the university. With respect to fees, there is a general perception in the market that ZCAS University's tuition fees are higher than those charged by competitors. The university's Business Development Manager needs to change this perception by making the fees more visible to current and potential students. This could be achieved by publicizing the fees on the university's website, internet searches and social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Google ads.

Sources of Information about ZCAS University: The study has established that potential postgraduate students are increasingly turning to the internet and social media during their information search about universities. It is equally evident that internet and social media usage is increasing in Zambia (Central Statistical Office and Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, 2018).

Recommendation: ZCAS University needs to revamp its website by enhancing user friendliness of the site and providing more information about the institution, its programmes, facilities, fees etc. The ICT Manager should take a leading role in this case and outsource management of the university's website to a specialist service organization. Alternatively, management of the website can be assigned to a specific employee, preferably with marketing and IT knowledge. Additionally, the Business Development Manager should increase subscriptions to relevant advertising agencies so that the university and its learning programs are made more discoverable in internet and social media searches.

Influencers of Student Choice of ZCAS University*:* The study has revealed that employers in Zambia have greater influence on their employees' choice of university than in other jurisdictions where similar studies have been carried out.

Recommendations: ZCAS University Business Development Manager/unit should raise the HEI's profile by engaging employers in various activities such as apprenticeship schemes, industrial attachment and curriculum development. The university should also engage in direct marketing of its learning programmes to major employers and labor organizations in the country.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Although this study has provided insights into the brand model that characterize postgraduate student choice of ZCAS University, it has some limitations. This implies that the findings cannot be generalized to the postgraduate market in Zambia. Studies that include more HEIs are therefore required. Firstly, the study was carried out in one private university, hence the findings may not entirely apply to other universities, let alone public ones. It has been found, for example, that variables that characterize university related choices differ among candidates aspiring to enter private and public universities in Malaysia (Songan, Sam, Tonga, Rahman, & Wah, 2010). Therefore, further studies need to be conducted in more universities, especially public universities. Additionally, the study did not distinguish between different course delivery modes such as face to face and Open, Distance and eLearning. It is conceivable that factors relevant to postgraduate candidates seeking face to face delivered learning may be different from those relevant to students pursuing education through online or blended learning platforms. Further studies should be carried out in this vein.

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Reinventing Appropriate Strategies for Curriculum Development and Implementation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria for Global Competitiveness

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Abstract: Technical Vocational education and Training (TVET) has been accepted the world over as a vital tool for achieving sustainable development and global competitiveness. However, TVET in Nigeria are faced with enormous issues such as inadequate funding, inadequate human resources, poor infrastructural facilities, among others which are militating against TVET as a means of achieving sustainable development and global competitiveness. Towards addressing these issues, there is need to embrace global partnership for quality TVET. Hence, this paper examines the concept of TVET, the teaching structure of TVET under the Nigerian Education system with a view to reinventing appropriate strategies for development and implementation of an effective curriculum that will bring about qualified and well trained professionals of for sustainable national development and global competitiveness.

Keywords: *TVET, Curriculum Development, Public-Private Partnership, Global Competitiveness.*

1. Introduction

Nigeria is blessed with natural resources. Despite these resources, Nigeria is faced with unemployment, poverty, social and economic instability, underdevelopment, poor quality of education, amongst others. Researchers have stated ways of addressing these issues through knowledge driven economy and skill acquisition in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). TVET is a driving force for the socio-economic growth and technological development of nations as its focus is oriented towards the workplace and its curriculum emphasizes on the acquisition of employable skills. TVET seen worldwide is globally recognized for its part in preparing individuals with skills to excel in a dynamic work environment (Oviawe, 2018). TVET prepares individuals to work in areas which require very specific skills in trades which are often of practical nature. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendation of 2000 and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on TVET for the 21st century defined TVET as: (i) a means to facilitate the alleviation of poverty; (ii) a mechanism to promote the environment for sustaining development; (iii) a part of long time learning and preparing; (iv) a way to prepare for world of work and occupational fields; (v) an integral part of general education (Oviawe, Uwameiye & Uddin, 2018). The definitions above indicate that the overall goal of TVET is to instil the right attitude, develop skills and knowledge which is required to enter and progress in any workplace. TVET is the education whereby people acquire skills and provide them better access to employment and income. British Council (2017) defined TVET as education geared towards the training of low-level manpower, such as, operative, artisans.

Craftsmen and master craftsmen for commerce, industry, agriculture, and ancillary services it concerns the attainment of skills and knowledge needed in organizations to enhance the opportunity for sustainable livelihoods, socio economic development, personal empowerment and production work in every day dynamic environments. From the above definitions of TVET, the words skills and knowledge occupy the centre stage. This means that TVET is an instrument for skills and knowledge to assist its recipients to become useful to the society in which they live. The objectives of TVET in Nigeria are to: (i) provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and business particularly at craft, advance craft and technical levels; (ii) provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; (iii) give training and impart the necessary skills leading to individuals be shall be self-reliant economically; (iv) provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man; and (v) give introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). Technical vocational education and training prepare individuals for careers with practical or manual operations, which is traditionally not academic related and specific to a particular trade, vocation or occupation. The programme specialise in entry into highly defined occupations. A very important role of education in general, as observed

by Ezenwafor (2015) is the preservation and updating of knowledge and skills of students in line with changes in the society.

Concept of Curriculum Development: A curriculum is a set of courses constituting an area of specialization offered by an educational institution (Merriam-Webster dictionary). It is heart of any learning institution, which means that schools, polytechnics, universities or any academic institution cannot exist without a curriculum. With its importance in formal education, the curriculum has become a dynamic process due to the changes that occur in the society. Eya (2006) defined curriculum as the sum of experiences learned by people in society as well as school. The curriculum is referred to as a systematic, progressive, purposeful and planned process desired to improve the educational system in its entirety. The society is dynamic; this implies that there are changes or developments happening around the world continuously, the school curricula are affected. Thus, there is a need to update them continuously to address the societal needs (Alvior, 2014). This is combined with fighting the unceasing nature of violence and a steady decline in citizens' living standards. TVET is a form of education that is widely acknowledged as a veritable instrument for commercial and industrial mobilization in any society because it provides the basic trainings needed for industrial development and management. TVET tailors education from merely learning theories in the classroom to actually putting into practice the theories.

Learnt in achieving national needs and job creation for citizens through appropriate curriculum development and implementation in ancient times, people taught their children knowledge and skills to survive by fishing or hunting animal for food. They had no formal education during that time, but their children learnt and acquired the necessary knowledge and skills needed for survival. Hence, they developed their own curriculum that is referred to today as the "Saber-tooth curriculum". This type of curriculum is one where the teaching goal is the knowledge and skills needed for survival. Though, with new inventions and discoveries as a result of development in science and technology, the way of life of the ancient days changed for the better. As a result of this scientific and technological revolution, education became formal, and the development of a specialized curriculum evolved. This curriculum was systematic, well planned and researched, purposeful and progressive. The curriculum was ever evolving to meet up with the changing realities of society through constant reviews and adaptation. Curriculum development as a term has a wide scope due to the fact that it covers the teachers, school and learners. Society's development is also included and the way of life overall. The economy of today shows that development of curriculum play a significant role in enhancement of the economy and its living standards.

It proffers solutions to global problems and condition such as sustainable development, climate change, poverty, politics and environment. A number of processes need to happen for society development to occur. Firstly, developing the curriculum in higher institutions to safeguard the identity of the nation and make sure its socio-economic stability and growth. Therefore, the government of a nation needs a clear cut vision for its people and the nation as a whole. It must establish a national policy objective for the constant review and development of a national curricula plan on the training and acquisition of knowledge and skills needed for the technological development of the nation. It is obvious, that in Nigeria today the importance of TVET and its role in technological advancement is yet to be taken seriously by most Nigerians despite all the enlightenment campaigns and encouragement by the government. TVET plays a pivotal role in the success of any governmental policy which is aimed at local industrialization and technological advancement. Such a policy must envision alleviating poverty, increase food security, literacy ratio, health care, environmental protection, resource development and increase in human per capita index. The policy must ensure the engagement of a large part of the nation's citizenry especially the youth in productive activities for the attainment of national objectives and global competitiveness.

Rather than seek solace in violent crimes, socio-political as well as communal clashes as a result of idleness and low standard of living. The attainment of the above policy can be largely rooted on implementing a well-structured, developed and productive TVET background. Ezenwafor (2015) reported that over three decades ago Nigeria adopted TVET in the school system, from secondary to tertiary levels, with huge government and foreign investment in training teachers at local and foreign institutions. Despite this, the nation is still struggling with rising unemployment, even among TVET graduates as well as universities dependent on professional degrees. Umunadi and Uwameiye (2015) stated that the effect of TVET on human resource

development in Nigeria was not adequately felt. This ugly truth as paradoxical as it may sound makes the relevance of TVET questionable. Take for instance, the current operating Nigerian curriculum at the secondary school level has TVET integrated in basic technology (FRN, 2013). In this curriculum, instructions are arranged in such a way that students are taught computer, farming skills, typing and shorthand skills among other at the junior secondary level while at the senior secondary level.

They are taught Building/Wood work, Metal work, Electrical/Electronics, Automobiles, technical drawing, amongst others. In revitalizing TVET in schools, this will provide students with opportunities to improve themselves in their overall competency, particularly in line with future or current occupations. The dynamics in a country's economy has the role of preparing students/young individuals for future jobs where TVET have crucial roles to play if well implemented. TVET still face the challenge of inadequate funding, low staff motivation, lack of modern facilities and personnel, which is needed and robs the nation of development which would have been possible through the contributions of TVET graduates. The study of Asogwa and Diogu (2007) maintain that Nigeria urgently needs to be directed to being self-sufficient and able to sustain the livelihood provided by TVET**.** Unfortunately today, the reality is not as it should be. It has been observed that students' enrolment in TVET courses have been decreasing exponentially in colleges, polytechnics and universities (Aina, 2008). Putting too much stock strictly on University education has hampered the opportunities of those technically gifted in Nigeria and less adept at academics (Ojimba, 2012).

A lot of "expatriate engineers" receive large sums of money from the Nigerian government for road construction and other technical services but they are products of vocational colleges from other nations. The issue of TVET in Nigeria is not taken seriously, so the need to reinvent TVET in Nigeria is paramount. The poverty level of the country increased to 70% to the point that a lot of Nigerians standard of living is less than a dollar a day. According to a news report by the World Poverty Clock, Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty. The report states that extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, the highest number in the world. At the end of May 2018, the survey showed that Nigeria had an estimated 87 million people in extreme poverty, compared to India's 73 million (www.dailypost.ng, 2018). The institutions of TVET in Nigeria do not possess the machinery and tools needed to properly train individuals in the acquisition of required skills organizations look out for. The problems of TVET are quite enormous; Hence, the need to resuscitate TVET in the curriculum. Nigeria is not utilizing TVET in achieving national goals and as such not reaping the many benefits of TVET like other countries of the world that have well developed and implementable TVET objectives.

2. Technical Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development in Nigeria

At the advent of the colonial masters in Nigeria, different indigenous communities and cultures had developed their own system of informal, formal and TVET system. There was in existence in ancient times what is referred to today as the "Saber-tooth curriculum" whose main objective was teaching of the knowledge and skills needed for survival. In the past, TVET was done through the system of apprenticeship, whereby youths usually at a tender age are attached to masters of crafts and learn the trades; acquire skills like textile design and dyeing, carving, foundry, blacksmith, masonry and carpentry, among others. This system saw apprentices spend years with their masters/trainers. The duration of such apprenticeship was largely dependent on the trade specialised in, the exposure, competence and skill of the master and lastly on the apprentice performance and overall capacity. When the training ends, the apprentice is given assistance by the master or immediate family to procure equipment's and tools to commence his or her own trade. Where the apprentices over the years have become a master in their respective fields, they acquire apprentices to work under them. Furthermore, Umunadi and Uwamieye (2015) observed that reflecting on the history of TVET in Nigeria, it is observed that the curriculum for education is subject to political and social influences directed to achieve any social or political needs of the government.

The commencement of British rule in Nigeria, administrators and traders where shared by the colonial missionaries and curricula were employed and modified to achieve the colonial master's vested interests. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and afterward, it was discovered that the colonial education curriculum did not suit the Nigerian people, because it did not produce the manpower needed to develop the society. The sustainability of youth empowerment was not achieved with the curricula introduced by the colonials' and in

solution Nigeria introduced the 6-3-3-4 system of education (Ojimba, 2012), the goal of designing the 6-3-3-4 system to get individuals prepared and useful to society (FRN, 2013). The choice of any TVET curriculum is focused on the role of technical colleges in society. This indicates that curricula need to be designed to fit society's need as stated in its national objectives. The Federal Government towards realization of a better citizenry for the nation decided to implement the 6-3-3-4 policy on education in order to achieve sustainable youth development and empowerment for the nation as a whole to foster change. However, the implementation of this policy has been a large far-cry from the intended objective. This is because as observed by Eze (2013), TVET does not contribute immensely in reducing unemployment, hunger and poverty in Nigeria due to the problems it faces.

Challenges of Technical Vocational Education Training in Nigeria: One of the prominent challenges identified by Oranu (2004) in Odu (2013) is the lingering issue of the Curriculum of TVET. Oranu added that the curriculum of TVET with practical content is generally organized into an average of 67% for the theoretical classes and 33% for workshop. FRN (2013) makes provision for the range of subjects to be offered in technical colleges. TVET curriculum has to, as a matter of necessity is concerned mainly with practical activities than merely theoretical classes. However in reality, the opposite is the case as the curriculum in practice in secondary schools, technical colleges and universities actually focus on theoretical learning inside the four walls of the classroom than practicing these theories learnt (Odu, 2013). To reinvent TVET, the youth must be taught practical aspect of TVET; exposed to the equipment at the work places. In other words, the slow growth of technology and industrialization is largely credited to the continuously disparity between the current Nigerian level of industrialization (consisting majorly of unskilled labour, semi-mechanized practises) and the current trends in science and technological advancement.

This can be traced to TVET's inability to use technological and scientific ideas and effectively implement such ideas to promote technology. Lack of funds available to TVET establishments makes it difficult to pay the salaries of staff. It leads also to teachers being let go or forced to retire ahead of time. Thus, suggesting the need to refurbish or reinvent the entire TVET curricula in Nigeria. It is noteworthy that though such refurbishment of the curricula may not necessarily be the only remedy to producing highly literate technical and vocational experts for the industry but it will put Nigeria on the path of rapid industrialization and corresponding economic growth. This is only attainable when solutions are provided to some of the challenges faced and effectively and adequately equipping the youths with much needed skills to live daily (Okoye, 2010). The study of Olunloyo (2002) stated that among the issues causing the changes in the appropriate design of TVE curriculum is the issue of students being prepared for the changes from dist or cruel mode of production to the use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) standard in scientific and technological practices of production and industrialization. Ojimba (2012) recognized 6 challenges the curricula currently face in Nigeria.

These challenges are highlighted below:

- The approach to teaching follows the traditional techniques used to transfer knowledge via lecturers reading out loud to students, they put down notes. The system of education in Nigeria continues to put consideration on the value of this mode of teaching.
- The following are inadequately provided such as entrepreneurial skill development, concept of business management, social science and humanities.
- The curriculums are estimated to be overloaded and too academic with intellectual content in pure mathematics and science without emphasis on technology and basic engineering.
- There is limitations to how competent support staff and indigenous teaching with adequate experience with technology.
- The inadequacy of textbooks and the available textbook being from foreign countries are filled with examples that do not have local content.
- The model of the curricula is foreign which was developed under good a condition (training opportunities, infrastructure, equipment and staff) that is not available in developing nations. Other salient challenges/factors associated with the ineffective development and implementation of curriculum on technical and vocational education in Nigeria as examined by Umunadi and Uwameiye (2015) are as follows:

Inadequate Funding of TVET: TVET has undoubtedly affected the Nigerian society particularly with regard to the products of the training program that continually contribute their part to developing the nation via manufacturing institutions (Odu, 2013). Lack of funds for vocational establishments has resulted in the increase in graduates who are half-naked due to lack of funds to maintain and build labs, workshops and equipment (Umunadi and Uwameiye, 2015). Staffing in TVET is commonly inadequate due to inadequate funding. The rate of employee turnover is high as a result of improper remuneration and as such, staff are not attracted towards teaching but strive to go into other fields where economic opportunities are better and this is sometimes located abroad or in industries. Therefore, unqualified and inexperienced TVET teachers given employment reduce the standard of education, leading to the inability to achieve the goal of TVET (Agbionu, 2003). Additionally, Momoh (2012) state that the lack of commitment on the part of government and insufficient funds weakened TVET in Nigeria a direct consequence of this is that while the number of TVET institution is dwindling that of general education is growing in bounds (Momoh, 2012).

Inadequate Facilities: In Nigerian Universities, majority of TVET departments do not have laboratories or workshop space, let alone useable equipment and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate, as the workshops only have items or equipment that were provided when the departments were first established of which most of them are already obsolete or grounded (Ojimba, 2012). It is quite unfortunate and surprising too to know that most TVET departments still depends on engineering workshops and lecturers to teach technical education concepts in this 21st century. The available facilities, programme as at today are inadequate quantitatively and qualitatively and besides they are out-dated. Oryem-Origa (2005) opined that only 40% of institutions of Higher Education in Nigeria have laboratory or workshop space for TVET programmes. The remaining 60% do not have laboratory or workshop, spaces and this has resulted to the low quality of technology programmes in Nigeria higher institutions. He also observed that the few schools that have laboratories, experience acute shortage of laboratory equipment and supplies. The shabby performance of TVET graduates is no longer news as very important projects in the country, particularly, the construction industry are now run by technicians and craftsmen from neighbouring West African countries (Nworlu–Elechi, 2013).

Brain Drain: Brian drain denotes lecturers of technical education and TVET teachers' movement and this is vital for the technological and socio-economic development of the country. The conclusion is that the situation is partly the reason it has been very difficult to carryout experiments effectively for students. This has also made teaching and research in science and technology difficult and therefore the country was producing insufficient and ill prepared TVET graduates for driving the technological and socio-economic development of Nigeria. This is in from one university to another, one profession to another where conditions of work are better. The study states that about "45% of all Nigerian professionals including technical educators have left the Nigerian shores over the years. Between 1997 and 2007 alone, Nigeria lost over 10,000 middle level and high level managers to the western economies". Nigerian lecturers numbering 500 continue to move each year, to foreign nations.

Training and Retention of Staff: The need for on-going training of staff ensures continuous enhancement in improving the quality of their output. Staff can be trained overseas or locally. Training that take place within the nation is less costly compared to training overseas but less comprehensive due to inadequate literatures, facilities, and challenges that arise from the need to meet the required demands. Education abroad requires a lot of foreign exchange but there is an encouraging atmosphere for achieving success in a record time. Overtime, however, it has always been difficult to get the trainees back to their respective countries after their research was completed. The salary and service benefits paid to TVET teachers in Nigeria are about the lowest in the world (Ojimba, 2012). This leads them to migrate to other countries for better pay.

Apathy of Political Office Holders/Law Makers: Education generally including TVET programme has been grossly neglected in Nigeria. TVET educators have the greatest challenge of convincing the law makers on the reason they should give priority attention to the programme in resources allocation. Many options of getting positive results have been advocated at different for a namely; lobbying, participation of TVET educators in governance, wooing and among others, yet the government is still playing a lopsided attitude to the proper development of the programme in Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria will ever remain a technologically backward and dependent nation if this negative attitude and trend is not reversed.

Value System in Nigeria: A lot of emphasis in Nigeria has been put on university certificates without regard to if the holder has the necessary knowledge and skills to defend it. In developed society contrarily, individuals who possess technical skills and qualifications are regarded highly. As such, this country's value system depends on the skill, knowledge and competence of an individual and not the certificate they possess. TVET graduates in public service are discriminated against and their future career prospects are restricted. Given this, parents and secondary school leavers tend to favour university educations to TVET (Nworlu-Elechi, 2013). The benefit of TVET cannot be an over-statement to say that TVET drives economic growth. A war cannot commence where there is army. Similarly, Nigeria cannot achieve economic growth short of having a TVET established equipped with the best resources. This is what is missing in the development of Nigeria's policy (Dike, 2009) given this, Nigeria need to invest significantly education, with emphasis on TVET (Ojimba, 2012). Now Nigeria will start implementing policies to reposition TVET for successful competition in the evolving global market. UNESCO, the World Bank, among other organizations, noted that revitalizing this sector is one of the ways in which young people can boost their economic opportunities.

Nigeria Labour Congress and the affiliated Unions, churches, banks could also give their support in this regards by setting up functional vocational training centres in the Local Government Areas from where the people could go and acquire some technical and vocational job skills. Furthermore, upgrading the skills of the workers consequently would improve their productivity and attract better pay packages (salaries, allowances and other benefits). There is now the urgent need for all agencies and organizations involved in National Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and Self Employment and Entrepreneurial Development System (SEEDS) to create more awareness about TVET and job training in their programmes for economic growth and development strategies aimed at poverty reduction, job creation and global competitiveness. Paying lip service by Nigerians in this regard will not solve the problem a policy by the World Bank in 1991 states that developing skilled labour is a vital factor for any nation's development.

Getting the private sector involved, training institutions and employers of labour can provide the best medium in terms of efficiently and effectively developing the skill of the labour force. Till now, it seems the Nigerian Government paid deaf ear to the warning. Also on the 13th September 2018 the World Bank drew attention to the ugly trend, they noted that there is skills gap between what the institutions are producing and what the industries are demanding so in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education through NBTE organize a workshop in Abuja for Innovation Development and Effectiveness in the Acquisition of Skills (IDEAS) for the national economy in Nigeria. The IDEAS project is aimed at deviating from the current operating supply driven curriculum to a demand driven one, where the government shall produce graduates that are well skilled and relevant to the economy. So there is urgent need to address the problems associated with curriculum development and implementation in TVET in Nigeria with the view of reinventing TVET for global competitiveness.

3. Global Competitiveness

The world is a global village. Having a competitive advantage at an international level is fundamental for Nigeria as a developing nation. Providing her citizens with functional education that would guarantee international competitiveness should be the in-thing for any nation whose world of work is shrinking and as a consequence, her citizenry have to look beyond the local workplace for employment and rendering of services. Doing this will involve a thorough redefinition of the concepts of education, schooling and curriculum development and design. To this end, the World Economic Forum (2014) identified several pillars that mark the competitive strength of countries as institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health, education, technological readiness, operational diversity and innovation among others. Each of these components has a different degree importance and they are interactive with one another. Among them, education and technological readiness are at the core; they increase a nation's productivity in terms of competitiveness. The World Economic Forum (2016) defined competitiveness as the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country. The Forum opined that competitive economies are those that are most likely to be able to grow more substantially and inclusively, meaning more likelihood that everybody in the society will benefit from the fruits of the economic growth. In the context of education, global competitiveness has to do with global marketability of education and the ability of the education system of a country.

To meet global or international standards and produce human capital that has the capacity to innovate and compete effectively in the ever dynamic and emerging world of work. Thus, the products or graduates must have the requisite competences, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are substantially comparable with global benchmark and provide the nation the requisite innovation for development. This is because the emerging world of work has increased channels and access to global customers through enhanced communications, improved transport system, centralized financial system and globalization with its attendant reduction (in most cases removal) of barriers. This has increased mobility, thus making knowledge a global commodity. TVET is the organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding valuable for all activities of life. It involves the leading out of the potentials of the individual recipient and the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and competences to enable an individual contribute effectively to his/her own as well as societal development. TVET is a potential tool for imparting scientific and technological skills as well as liberate the minds of the individual. There is usually a high correlation between the quality on man power and the overall level of development of any country and her system of education. The degree of development of a country is a product of her educational system. Today, Nigeria as a developing country is faced with unemployment issues.

Which make employment stiffly competitive for both the skilled and the unskilled in the light of the above, the World Economic Forum (2018) advised governments at all levels on the need to prioritise investments in human capital in order to improve Nigeria's competitiveness in different spheres of life. This implies that it is essential for Nigeria to invest in quality and functional education (TVET) that will equip her present and future workforce with the requisite skills that are required for the emerging world of work. Learners and students are prepared by TVET for professions with mostly practical or manual activities, originally not related to academics and focused on a particular vocation, occupation or trade. As opposed to overall education, TVET learning is focused on "applied" instead of "academic", skills instead of knowledge and practice instead of theory. Therefore, there are a number of problems faced by TVET because of the high rate of global unemployment. To reach its stated goal, TVET in Nigeria should be strengthened and as such, it should not be left to the government alone but private partnership should be sort out as well to help the nation achieve its estimated goal the examination of how private and public partnership can be developed and implemented in TVET curriculum.

Concepts of Technical Vocational Education and Training and Public/Private Partnership: The economic system of a country is made up of private and public sector. The private sector is operated majorly by companies and individuals with the intention of making profit. The private sector is made up of small businesses, corporations, as well as profit and non-profit organizations; the end beneficiary of the services offered by the private sector is the general public who purchase the goods and services provided by the private sector for consumption. A coalition between the private/public sector and TVET is regarded to as partnership. Partnership can be defined as the agreement between parties who agree to form an alliance in order to further their own interests. The alliance can be between organizations combined, local community, employees and their representatives, professional association, schools and government. TVET establishments can form an alliance with private/public in order to overcome their limits and this is referred to as Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The PPP Policy (2012) referred to Public-Private Partnership as a long standing contract between the private and public sectors where the ability of the parties involved should be focused on risks and reward, offering services or products through adequate allocation of resources, building and operating infrastructures, financing and designing. PPP is a collaboration and arrangement that private and government bodies enter into to offer services to individuals based on terms already established (Oviawe, 2018). Agence Francaise De Development (AFD) (2014) viewed PPP as that consisting of bringing together public authorities and private stakeholders to devise, finance, build, manage or preserve a project of public interest.

The public/private partnership is a broad term for the association formed between public and private bodies, regularly with the goal to introduce resources in the private sector and expertise to assist in the provision and delivering of public sector services and assets. In context, public/private partnerships in TVET refer to different arrangements between the private and public sector participants, where the private sector brings to the table services and infrastructures the public sector ought to provide without putting their profit in

jeopardy, the main goal of this is to offer practical training opportunities for skill development for learners. There are different types of partnership, formal and informal partnerships. Formal partnerships refer to an agreement between parties where each of their obligations and roles are well spelt out through a written agreement while an informal partnership refer to agreements between parties whereby obligations and roles between parties are verbally agreed upon. The major feature of PPP include; private sector arrangement through delegation of some project functions (delegating the role of finance and asset, rehabilitate, maintain, operate, develop/expand, build and design to private sector parties); requires private sector entities take noteworthy risks in carrying out this functions assigned, i.e. the revenue of private parties depends on performance (quality and quantity of output supplied or asset availability); management or operation of assets or services is within a time frame; and involves infrastructures and assets provided for the benefit of the public as output has the factor of facilitating services provided by government of sovereign nations to its citizens (PPP Policy, 2012). The contract with the private sector has the benefit of a time frame that comes after the agreement has been made.

Need for Public/Private Partnership in TVET for Global Competitiveness: The neglect of TVET regrettably serves to obscure global development. Nations over the world have attempted to combat unemployment issues. The volume of graduates unemployed and in the labour market is distressing and the distress is more pronounced due to the quality of graduates. The increase in unemployment rate among youths contributes to the increase in social vices and poverty rate facts gotten from the federal Bureau of statistics and National Manpower Board show that the population of youths in Nigeria is 80 million which signifies 60% of the entire population. The number who are underemployed is 1.6 million while those unemployed is 64 million while over 112.5 million youths in the country are below the poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015 in Oviawe, 2018). TVET is no longer seen as being solely in the realm of educational institutions but is increasingly involving workplaces, private individuals and a variety of other non-governmental and community organizations (Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), 2003 in Oviawe, 2018). ANTA postulated that the increase in competition changes the makeup of the economy workplace and occupational changes significantly influence the nature of activities in the workplace. The indication shows that the level of skill possessed by current and future employees need to be developed continuously. Given this, learning in the work place (formal/informal) is becoming a vital role in training and education in the workforce. Therefore, partnership is needed. The importance of PPP in TVET is highlighted due to the ineffectiveness of TVET institutions and programmes and low quality of output (Oviawe, 2018). PPP is unavoidable and the difficulty in finance makes it harder for the government to pay the rather high cost involved.

Ways for Reinventing TVET Appropriate Strategies for Curriculum Development and Implementation in TVET for Global Competitiveness: In reinventing the TVET system to empower the youth to meet the changing needs of the economy, market and the expectations of the society, the following are suggested:

- Students who graduate from TVET establishments are to be equitably and adequately rewarded. The contradiction between general studies and technical certificates need to be eliminated by changing the mind-set and thinking as well as through policy.
- The majority of the informal sector that produce artisans need to be monitored and regulated. The licensing of these institutions will allow them award apprentices with certificate when they complete their training on government's behalf. Doing this, fraudulent activities can be detected and isolated.
- The employer of labour and government should remove urgently the contradiction that is between TVET institutions and university. Polytechnic establishments should be set up to grant degrees. Highly qualified students will be attracted and TVET will be encouraged to send qualified teachers between the two systems.
- The TVET institutions need to commence teaching industry focused employment opportunity for those leaving secondary schools. This offer dropouts sufficient opportunities.
- TVET curriculum should be set up with the demands in the work place as a guide.
- When TVET industries and institutions collaborate, the association will allow them understand and appreciate their needs and offer solutions that will benefit society globally.
- TVET is needed to build good linkage and relationship with similar organizations outside the country that promotes the enhancement of technology and cross fertilization of thoughts. By so doing, TVET

institutions exchange programmes, get access to new innovations and other advantages that is available to the institutions where TVET programmes are properly developed.

- TVET requires proficient and skilled teachers. The preparation of the teachers should be prioritised. Regular training for technology teachers to update their skills and this is to keep up with global changes in technology in the industry.
- Adequate resources should be allocated to TVET. Insufficient funding affects the provision of necessities like training materials, relevant textbooks and well-equipped laboratories.

4. Conclusion

In Nigeria the TVET system requires urgent attention. Priority focus has to be paid to investing in TVET. Since no country can cope favourably with cheap and unskilled labor in the changing global marketplace. The lawmakers in Nigeria and all stakeholders in the education sector must learn from their foreign counterparts as attempt is made to invest more in TVET framework to meet the ever-evolving global competitive position in technological development. The lack of consultation would lead to the teaching of obsolete curricula material and teaching methods, the majority of students studied through lectures and academic test books, and are limited opportunities for gaining practical experience through the use of machinery, equipment and practical techniques associated with the field to teach TVET innovation through lack of qualified teachers to teach TVET innovative; entrepreneurships and job skills; also serious shortage of skilled workers and technicians in the growth sector of petroleum, gas, agriculture, manufacturing, solid minerals and ICT sector are not left out.

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The Generational Differences in Work Values and its Impact on Workplace Conflicts of Operational Level Employees in Pharmaceutical Companies of Western Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Workplace conflicts among employees in different generations are inevitable due to differences in aging, experience, life stage, expectations, career stage, and the work values they admired. Thus, this study aimed at identifying whether there is a significant impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts. Accordingly, the primary data for the study was collected through a survey by distributing a standard questionnaire among 120 operational level employees who are working in Pharmaceutical companies in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. For the data analysis and arriving at conclusions, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA used. The analyzed data revealed that there is no significant impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts. However, further analysis done using one-way ANOVA showed that there is a significant difference in work values between generations and workplace conflicts between generations. Hence, the findings of this study will be a better decision-making guideline for policymakers and managers in pharmaceutical companies in arriving at various employee-related decisions and improving employee-related work policies in organizations concerning workplace conflicts and grievance handling as well as for the academics and students in the field of social science for research and study purposes.

Keywords: *Generational differences in work values, Workplace conflicts, Operational level employees, Pharmaceutical companies.*

1. Introduction

Numerous researchers have revealed that generational differences exist among various generations and is varied with the characteristics associated with employee behavior and work values, leading to influence employee engagement and cohesion (Gursoy, Maierb, & Chic, 2008; Gursoy, Karadag, & Chi, 2013; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Thus, conflicts between employees of different generations like Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials or Generation Yers, is frequent at work due to difficulties of getting along with each other. Also, studies have indicated that these generational differences may arise due to various aspects of the professional and personal life of the employee as well (Macky, Gardner, Forsyth, & Cennamo, 2008; Rousseau & Greller, 1994). The presence of employees belong to various generations in the workplace creates conflicts among employees (Geddie & Jackson, 2002; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Griffin, 2004). Also, these generational distinctions could build incompatibilities between the relationships of supervisors and subordinates as well (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009). Further, researchers have identified that employee productivity, communication, and coordination to achieve goals too affected by gaps among different generations other than the organizational performance (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009).

Even though there are many research studies related to generational differences in work values and workplace conflicts, the majority of such studies have tested the work values of employees in the manufacturing industry (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Mikitka, 2009). However, in this study, the researchers attempt to assess the impact of generational differences in work values on the workplace conflicts of operational level employees of pharmaceutical companies in the Western province of Sri Lanka. Since the discussions had with few managers of pharmaceutical companies by the researchers revealed that workplace conflicts among generations are prominent due to differences among the work values of employees of each generation when they are getting along with each other. Further, it has identified that workplace conflicts often created over demands for work-life flexibility, followed by rules and attitudes that are evolving as a result of improvements in technology (Levenson & Deal, 2016). Thus, analyzing the impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts of operational level employees in pharmaceutical companies of Western Province, Sri Lanka serves as the primary objective of the study. In contrast, the secondary objectives are **(i)** to identify whether there is a significant difference in work values between

generations **(ii)** to identify whether there is a significant difference in workplace conflicts between generations.

2. Literature Review

In the modern business environment, employees from different generations are working together (Gursoy, Maierb, & Chic, 2008). Here, a generation could be defined as a collection of people with similar ages or born on a given period that shares significant life events and possess identical personality types and feelings towards works and personal life in satisfying their means (Kupperschmidt, 2018). In other words, a generation is a collection of people born and raised in a similar social context (Mannheim, 1953). Accordingly, the employees of the current workforce belong to three generations namely, Baby Boomers (employees who born between 1946 to 1964), Generation X (employees who born between1965 to 1983), and Millennial Generation (employees who born between1984 to 2002) (Levenson & Deal, 2016). The workplace conflicts among these generations are frequent at work due to differences in aging, life stage, experience, expectations, career stage, and the work values they hold and value. Accordingly, employees from different generations find it difficult in working closely together due to the above differences leading to workplace conflicts.

Further, it has identified that workplace conflicts often created over demands for work-life flexibility, followed by rules and attitudes that are evolving as a result of improvements in technology (Levenson & Deal, 2016). Also, many researchers have generally conceptualized interpersonal conflict as a concept with two dimensions, namely cognitive and relational conflicts (Rahim, 1983; Pinkley, 1990; Priem & Price, 1991; Jehn, 1995; Simons & Peterson, 2000). Cognitive conflicts often arise due to inconsistencies in performing various tasks (Jehn, 1995; Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Roloff, 1987), whereas relational conflicts caused by emotional incompatibilities (Thomas, 1992; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Rahim, 2002) and interfering or disruptive behavior (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000). Accordingly, in this study, the researchers defined workplace conflicts as a combination of both cognitive and relational conflicts.

Also, Lancaster and Stillman (2002) have stated that if generational differences effectively managed, it could use as a tool to nurture the business. Also, understanding and respecting these generational differences and associated work values could empower companies to perform (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Kupperschmidt, 2000). When it comes to values, values are the indicators that represent actions and decisions of individuals (Rokeach, 1973); also, these values are static and do not change frequently (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989; Rokeach, 1973). Thus, understanding these work values is essential since the extent to which employees adhere to these work values influence their attitude towards the job. Accordingly, in this study, the generational differences in work values considered as the independent variable, where it has divided further into five dimensions, as mentioned below (Gursoy, Maierb, & Chic, 2008).

Leisure Rewards: Access to free time, vacation, and autonomy at the workplace.

Intrinsic Rewards: Intangible Rewards. e.g., access to learning and development, opportunities to use creativity.

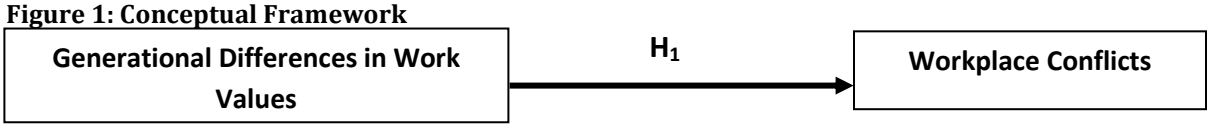
Altruistic Rewards: The opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of society and volunteering at helping others.

Social Rewards: Ability to maintain an effective person to person (interpersonal) relationships at work.

Extrinsic Rewards: Tangible rewards given to individuals. e.g., career advancement opportunities, and job status.

Also, workplace conflicts are prominent among operational level employees due to their knowledge gaps and diversity. So this study is based on operational level employees working in the Western province of Sri Lanka; hence employees in this province have been experiencing workplace conflicts. Accordingly, the current research study attempted to identify the impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts. Hence, the researchers have developed the below hypothesis with the aid of the literature.
H1: There is a significant impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author

3. Methodology

Sampling Method: The convenient sampling method is the sampling technique used by the researchers for this study due to the ease of access for the population. The sample comprised 120 operational level employees representing four major pharmaceutical companies in the Western Province of Sri Lanka between the ages of 18 – 60, as recommended by Nulty (2008).

Method of Data Collection: The researchers used a standard questionnaire consists of 24 close-ended questions with two parts (generational differences in work values and workplace conflicts) for this study. To assess the generational differences in work values, a questionnaire comprised of five dimensions that were initially developed by Johnson (2000) used. Accordingly, the first dimension leisure rewards measured through four items, and the Cronbach Alpha for this was 0.800. The second dimension intrinsic rewards comprised of seven items scale and the Cronbach Alpha for that was 0.864, while the third dimension, altruistic rewards measured by two items, and its Cronbach Alpha, was 0.774. The social rewards dimension was measured using two items scale, and its Cronbach Alpha accounts for 0.779, whereas the last dimension extrinsic rewards comprised four items with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.865. Accordingly, the tests of reliability were valid to measure the given variable of generational differences in work values. To measure the dependent variable of workplace conflicts, the researchers used the standard questionnaire developed by Doucet, Poitras, and Che (2009), and the workplace conflicts construct measured through five items scale where the Cronbach Alpha was 0.872.

Data Analysis: The quantitative method was used to analyze the data gathered through a standard questionnaire. Also, a five-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree (5 to 1) used to get the responses from respondents.

4. Findings

The sample of this study comprised of 6% baby boomers, 38% generation X, and 56% millennial/ generation Y. Consequently, more millennials have participated in the survey. The mean value of the dependent variable, workplace conflicts, was 3.7864, which depicted that generational differences in work values prevail within the workplace. Also, the standard deviation was 0.50856, which lies in between the accepted range.

Table 1: Descriptive of the Dependent Variable

Descriptive of the Dependent Variable			Statistic	Std. Error
Generational Differences in Work Values	Mean		3.7864	.04642
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.6945	
		Upper Bound	3.8783	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.7953	
	Median		3.7368	
	Variance		.259	
	Std. Deviation		.50856	
	Minimum		2.53	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		2.47	
	Interquartile Range		.63	
	Skewness		-.200	.221
	Kurtosis		-.059	.438

Source: Primary Data

Further, the mean values of generational differences in work values between generations based on born years showed that the baby boomers emphasized much importance on work values than the generation X and Y, as indicated in the below table.

Table 2: The Mean Values of Generational Differences in Work Values between Generations based on Born Years

		Generational Differences in Work Values
		Mean
Born Year	Born between 1946 – 1964	3.99
	Born between 1965 – 1983	3.65
	Born between 1984 – 2002	3.86

Source: Primary Data

The Spearman correlation coefficient was 0.111, indicated a weak positive relationship between generational differences in work values and workplace conflicts. Further, the correlation coefficient was insignificant at 0.227. Even though this study initially aimed at finding the impact through regression analysis, it was decided to stop the analysis at correlation due to a weak positive relationship between generational differences in work values and workplace conflicts. Accordingly, the H1 was rejected. However, further analysis of one-way ANOVA by going one step further showed a significant value of 0.047 for generational differences in work values by born year (generations), concluding that there is a significant difference in work values between generations.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA for Generational Differences in Work Values by Born Year (Generations)

ANOVA Generational Differences in Work Values	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.571	2	.785	3.146	.047
Within Groups	29.207	117	.250		
Total	30.777	119			

Source: Primary Data

As indicated in Table 4, the significant value of one-way ANOVA for workplace conflicts by the born year was 0.001, where it revealed that there is a significant difference in workplace conflicts between generations.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA for Workplace Conflicts by Born Year (Generations)

ANOVA Workplace Conflicts	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.904	2	4.452	7.801	.001
Within Groups	66.771	117	.571		
Total	75.675	119			

Source: Primary Data

5. Conclusion

The current study focused on testing the impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts of operational level employees in the pharmaceutical companies of the Western province, Sri Lanka. Accordingly, analyzing the impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts was the primary objective of the study. In contrast, specific objectives were to identify whether there is a significant difference in work values between generations and to identify whether there is a significant difference in workplace conflicts between generations. The findings of data analysis revealed that there is no significant impact of generational differences in work values on workplace conflicts. However, further analysis done using one-way ANOVA provided evidence that there are significant differences in work values between generations as well as workplace conflicts between generations. Thus, these findings indicated that it needs

to create an atmosphere with opportunities within the organizations where each generation could accommodate and interact with each other, which will lead to increase employee motivation and cohesion. Accordingly, the final findings of this research study achieved the established specific objectives successfully, even though it could not reach the established primary objective.

Recommendations: Redesign jobs and reward packages (both intrinsic and extrinsic) based on the work values admired by each generation will assist organizations to retain their employees and create a conducive working environment. Also, considering the differences of work values among various generations in formulating policies and in making decisions would assist in creating positive supervisor and subordinate relationship as well as positive peer to peer relationship within the organization. Further, managers in the work setting should better understand the changes in the work values associated with each generation to reduce undue tension among employees and to promote job satisfaction and productivity. For example, companies could allow millennials to work in flex time as they value much autonomy. In addition to that, developing flexible employee-related policies linked with work practices will help the organization to attract and retain talented employees from different generations. Accordingly, by implementing the above suggestions in the workplace would assist in creating an effective and efficient working environment with the collaboration of employees in all generations by using their differences in work values in a more strategic manner.

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The Influence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) Integration on Teaching and Learning in South African Schools

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Abstract: Despite the recent emphasis on the quality of education for all in South Africa, the department of education still faces major challenges that hinder the progress of implementing quality education, especially in rural areas. Consequently, this study followed an action qualitative method. The overall purpose of the study was to determine the influence of ICT integration in on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and to further examine the benefits of using ICT to enhance personal growth, individual performance, critical thinking skills reading and writing skills. The research questions were semi-structured and open-ended. The researcher interviewed nine (9) learners and seven (7) teachers in a two-session focus group, the first session involved only teachers and the last session had only grade, 12 learners. The themes of the sessions were documented separately; however, the relationship between the themes was identified. The study also performed an observation in the classroom to access situations that would have been almost impossible to identify in an interview or a questionnaire. Results showed that a lot still needs to be done by the government to initiate the process of integrating ICT in education or empower teachers with ICT skill and to do away with the traditional teaching method. The study, however, concluded on the positive influence of ICT integration on teaching and learning practices in the classroom for both teachers and learners. Consequently, the study recommends the following: government must provide training and incentives to encourage personal development in teachers and for young graduates to value teaching; policies about lost equipment must be drafted and understood by all parties; deployments of technology innovation, as well, as the imperatives of following the recommendation of UNESCO's four stages of ICT integration.

Keywords: *Information Communication Technology (ICT); ICT integration; action qualitative method; educational intervention; South Africa.*

1. Introduction

The challenges of education in South Africa are not new, there were always visible from Bantu education, to 1994 when South African was promised the quality of education in a new democratic country and up to now the department of basic education is still addressing the challenges of quality education. Although there is visible progress, there are also new emerging challenges and the dimension of the causes. Over the past four years, the Department of Basic Education has experienced a steady decline in South Africa's matric pass rate from 78.9 % in 2013 to 70.2 % in 2015 (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; DBE, 2017). There is a multitude of published challenges that causes the downward trend of matric performance such as under-qualified teachers, lack of school libraries, not enough textbooks for the learner, lack of motivation to push to learn from their communities and societies, and no culture of reading (Meenakshi, 2013; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). This shortcoming of school education poses a tremendous challenge in higher education because student enters into the higher education institutions academically unprepared. The research done by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) in 2015 stated that more than half of the student.

Dropout during their first year (Meenakshi, 2013) this results from the student who enters into higher learning without being academically ready for the transition and other life issues such as finances. The poor performance of high school learners does not only affect the success rate of higher education but the national development as a whole (Awolusi & Atiku, 2019; Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018). Since the post-apartheid in 1994, the South African government has been trying to address the challenges of providing quality education, however, more than 20 years later, despite the progressive policy markers the performance and quality of education in schools remains sub-standard (Meenakshi, 2013). The matter is urgent because of South African pupils "persistently low performance in academic achievement" (DBE, 2016). Information and Communication Technology has a great impact in people's lives it has changed almost everything about how

we do things in a daily basis from the online shopping, card payments, social media, information sources (search engines) (Asika & Awolusi, 2013; 2015).

It is no doubt that the future of ICT is infinity. Integrating Information and Communication Technology. Into education can improve the quality of education and performance (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016; Awolusi, 2013a; Awolusi, 2013b). The qualitative study, therefore, explored the importance of Information Communication Technology in schools. The study explored the benefits and the influential factor of integrating ICT into schools. The study also provided a brief comparison of how ICT in school is implemented in other countries and their achievements in this regard. The research of information communication technology in schools is becoming more necessary because ICT is constantly changing the way we do things and the current research yields few conclusive statements, most focusing on the advantage and disadvantages of the impact of ICT in schools. South Africa has a significant history of education which cannot be ignored when we discuss the future and the transformation in education. In 1994 South Africa took a transition politically, eliminating Bantu education act for better quality education for all. Bantu education act was introduced in 1953 during the apartheid era, establishing a new black education department within the department of native affairs (Hartshorne, 1992). The role of the department was to create a curriculum that discriminated black pupils from receiving equal education experience as to white pupils (Kallaway, 1984).

The black education curriculum was designed to ensure that black pupils receive a limited education that will make them work manual labouring jobs under whites (Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). Although Bantu education allowed black children to attend school, however, with severe lack of learning, material and limitation (Meenakshi, 2013; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). Since 1994 South African education has undergone major transformation establishing a new department called Department of Education and currently separated into two departments namely, the Department of Basic Education comprised of public, private schools, early childhood development and special needs schools, and has over 12 million learners across the country (DOE, 2015) and the second department is the department of higher education and training. The mandate of the Department of Basic Education is to improve the quality of teaching and learning, this includes improving teacher's capacity and practice, as well as, increasing access of high-quality materials (DBE, 2017). The mandate was part of the documented strategy in 1996 to redress the inequality of apartheid education. Even though there has been a progressive policy and legislation amendments providing quality education is still a major challenge for the department (Meenakshi, 2013).

That notwithstanding, the department of education still strive to provide quality education for all as a result of the following strategic reasons:

- To reduce poverty and contributes to the national development of the country.
- It seems to be the only way a black child can regain the pride that was diminished during apartheid.
- To reduce crime and corruption rate.
- Education amongst women can decrease the maternal mortality rate.

The department introduced several curriculum changes to improve the quality of education in South Africa, the first curriculum was launched in 1997 March called curriculum 2005, which was part of Outcome-Based Education (Jansen, 1998). The concept of OBE has been defined differently by different people in theory or practice. Archer (2014) explains OBE as 'a learner-centred approach to education that focuses on what a student should be able to do in the real world upon completion of their course or program'. The curriculum was seen at the first curriculum reform that will break the inequality of education, improve learner's performance and prepare them for future prosperity (Jansen, 1998), the OBE curriculum had a broad framework that allows teachers to create their learning programmes and teaching materials (Chisholm, 2003).

The initiatives of OBE and curriculum 2005 bought benefits such as (1). It provided guidelines for improving the quality of teaching and learning (2). It provided a study context that learners will need to apply in a real-life situation (3). Promote self-directed and independent learning approach; this is just a few of the benefits. However, the department of basic education experience lots of challenges during the implementation of the curriculum and most challenges were lack of resources, lack of learning material that is variable in quality or often unavailable, under qualified teachers and inadequate training and development of teachers. This

challenge has hindered the success of the curriculum and learners continued to receive a poor quality education. Meenakshi (2013) argued that for the success of the curriculum ICT must act as a vehicle to move OBE forward. The department of education also share the same view stating that to ensure the success of OBE curriculum information communication technology must be integrated into learning to achieve the highest possible academic standards (Meenakshi, 2013). Yet today there is still a little impact of ICT in education.

It is important to describe the concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education for the study, the researcher refers to ICT as a set of technological tools that are used to communicate. Manage (input, transmit, disseminate and output) information, this tool includes television, radio, internet, computers, social media and other computer software. The significance of these tools in education will be discussed in detail in chapter 2 of the paper. The department of education introduced computers in schools during the 1980s mainly in private schools and well-resourced government schools (Department of Education, 2003) after the introduction of OBE providing computer labs in schools become an agenda of the department of education, however, still today there is a challenge of infrastructure in schools more especially in rural areas.

Problem Analysis: Over the past four years, the Department of Basic Education has experienced a steady decline in South Africa's matric pass rate from 78.9 % in 2013 to 70.2 % in 2015 (DBE, 2017) whereas over 40% of the learners passed with a minimum pass rate (Pitan & Muller, 2019b). The department of basic education reported that the reason for the decline is the lack of qualified teachers, lack of enough textbooks in schools, lack of resource, overcrowded classrooms etc. This shortcoming of school education poses a tremendous challenge in higher education because student enters into the higher education institutions academically unprepared. The centre for Education Policy Development (CEPT) that was established in 1993, to advocate and promote quality education and training for all, released an article named 'Challenges facing education in South Africa' which stated that 'South Africa has a high-cost, low-performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries, or in similar developing economies' (Pitan & Muller, 2019a). The shocking article that was published in the economist, also appeared in the middle and Africa share the same sentiments revealing that 27 % of South African pupils who have attended school for six years cannot read and write compared with 4% in Tanzania and 19% in Zimbabwe (Pitan & Muller, 2019b). The department of basic education claims that many of the problem roots are from apartheid (DBE, 2016).

Pitan & Muller (2019a) mentioned that other countries use educational software to improve the learner's reading and writing. The exposure of ICT can improve the learner's ability to read and write, for example, we can mention Malaysia which ranked 52 out of 76 subsiding South Africa at position 75 out of 76 countries in the world-class education (2015). Malaysia's quality of education has improved dramatically after they have introduced smart school, the smart school is a 'learning institution that has been systemically reinvented in terms of teaching-learning practices and school management to prepare children for the Information Age' (Agudo & Sánchez, 2005; Haugland, 1998). ICT (Information Communication Technology) has taken the world by storm with the emergence of technology like the Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing, Social Media (like Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, LinkedIn, knowledge forums, etc.) and search engines just to mention a few. ICT is now connected and intertwined with most of our lifestyles to the extent that if a child is deprived of ICT it would be like missing an important portion of his/her early childhood development. The lack of Information Communication Technology in schools deprives learners the ability to become effective independent learners, to be initiative, creative and stay relevant in a global market.

Meaning when learners rely on teachers for information or books which might be outdated due to the ever-changing market or industry; the learners learning capacity becomes limited and they grow up with limited knowledge. Limited knowledge means limited opportunities. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to determine the influence of ICT integration on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and also to further examine the benefits of using ICT to enhance personal growth, individual performance critical thinking skills, reading and writing skills in South Africa. The purpose statement, therefore, revolves around the following specific objectives:

- To determine whether the use of ICT in schools can improve the learner's performance.
- To determine the appropriate method of integration ICT in education.

- To determine whether the use of ICT can improve reading and writing.
- To determine whether the use of ICT in education can improve critical thinking.

Hence, the specific questions are outlined as follows:
A. Does the use of ICT in school improve learner's performance?
- Does the use of ICT in school improve reading and writing?
- Does the use of ICT in school improve critical thinking?

B. What is the appropriate method of integrating ICT in education?
- Do you think that there are subjects that are best suited to the integration of ICT than others?
- Is it adequate for ICT to be taught as a subject rather than using ICT as a support tool for the curriculum?

Moreover, based on the specific objectives and questions, the following hypotheses were contrived from literature:
H11: The use of ICT in school can improve the learner's performance.
H12: The use of ICT as a tool to support teaching and learning can yield more benefits than teaching ICT as a subject.
H13: The appropriate use of ICT can improve learners writing and reading skills.
H14: The appropriate use of ICT can improve the thinking skills level of learners.

The above questions and hypotheses are specifically aimed at achieving the overall purpose of determining whether the integration of ICT into education can actually improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and to further examine the benefits of using ICT to enhance personal growth, individual performance, critical thinking skills reading and writing skills.

2. Review of Relevant Literature

The Overview of the Concept of Integrating ICT in Schools: There is a major emphasis of the quality of education for all in South Africa, this emphasis of quality education served as a vehicle to redress the injustice system of apartheid, to develop a responsible citizen that contribute to the emerging democracy. However, the department of education still faces major challenges that hinder the progress of implementing quality education, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, ICT (Information Communication Technology) has taken the world by storm with the emergence of technology like the Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing, Social Media (like Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, LinkedIn, knowledge forums, etc.) and search engines just to mention a few. The concept of Information and communication technology (ICT) in this study is referred to as a set of technological tools that are used to communicate, manage (input, transmit, disseminate and output) information, the tools include television, radio, internet, computers, social media and other computer software. School is referred to as a place where teaching and learning activities take place and it is equally important to define education as it will be used frequently in this chapter, education is referred to as a set of instruction that enables the process of teaching and learning.

Many authors such as Agudo and Sánchez (2005) and Haugland (1998) agrees that the appropriate use of ICT in teaching and learning can have many more positive outcomes such as the ability to access education anywhere and anytime, it motivates learners and connects learning to the real-life situation. However, the concept of integrating ICT in school is often misinterpreted by teachers and learners as having access to information from the internet and using it to prepare school task (Pitan & Muller, 2019a). Integrating ICT in education is not only about having computer class, teaching learners about the basic use of information technology, is about exploiting valuable services that ICT can offer to improve the pedagogy in education. Agudo and Sánchez (2005) also argue that integrating ICT into education is not only about a learner having access to information on the internet but is all about 'making learners, think of information'. Learners must get involved and be interactive with information to an extent that they can use it to be creative, identify gaps come up with new ways of doing things and new strategies to resolve some of the underlying issues experienced in the county. For this to happen the department of basic education needs to transform the learning experiences by creating a learning environment that promotes advance thinking capability through

the effective use of information and communication technology. The last stage was launched in 1999 to carry out the second stage and transform education (Pitan & Muller, 2019a).

Haugland (1998) claim that integration of ICT in education is not about "simple improvement of the traditional method" is about radically transforming the pedagogy in education creating collaborative learning through ICT-based learning environment. Unlike South Africa, Singapore, for example, had a master-plan of integrating ICT into the learner's assessment, pedagogy and the school curriculum which seeks to develop learner's competency for the 21st century. The master-plan included three stages, the first stage was to provide schools with ICT infrastructure and train teachers with basic knowledge of ICT, and the second stage was to create effective and persistent use of ICT in schools. This master-plan is an example of how South Africa can integrate ICT in schools. Now Singapore schools are equipped with the latest website and app to deepen student's learning and to be engaged during the classroom lesson. Some of the technologies, for example, are 3D printer technology in design and technology class, smartphone and iPad to access school assessment and projects and to continue learning even after class, iPad app to download music during music lessons and teachers also uses Facebook to generate ideas in class (Agudo & Sánchez, 2005; Haugland, 1998). The need to integrate ICT in education has been identified as a global resolution, not only to improve the unstable economy but is also significant to all mankind (Olaofe, 2005). Mastering the basic skill of ICT has now become the basis of living because ICT has become central to the contemporary of society impacting how we do things in life. Whether doing shopping, communicating (emails, telephone, social media), financial transaction, listening to radio news or watching TV, driving a car all this includes the use of ICT. Any child who is deprived of the exposure of ICT is deprived of the basic of life. Teachers who use the behaviourism framework, they usually break down the curriculum subject content into sequence ranging from simple to more complex and the learning process becomes linear. The basic skill of ICT has now become a human right, transforming the society from Information Technology age to Knowledge age (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011).

The Importance of ICT in School: One of the most significant findings in the general research of the use of information communication technology in school is the ability to support inclusive practice in school. The term 'Inclusive' refers to the effort that is made in school to accommodate learners with either physical, communication, mental, or sensory disabilities. ICT can indeed assist the learners in question to overcome their communication difficulties and access a wider range of the curriculum like any other learner by providing software's that meets their particular needs that enables them to be on the same level with their peers. Example, the access device electronic communication device with recorded or synthetic speech can help learners with communication disability to improve their listening, speaking, and understanding. ICT allows learners to gather data that would be impossible to gather manually or using the traditional method. Instead of going through a dozen textbooks, magazine or newspaper to collect information, the internet provides worldwide data in a single platform. Some subjects in school are constantly changing such as social studies, health, or technology these subjects needs continuous updating to stay relevant and in use. Textbooks are the only periodical; only the use of the internet can help a student to stay up to date with the subject.

The use of ICT in school can make learners more receptive to the digital world. The exposure of ICT at an early stage can make learners to easily adapt to the new technologies and evolution. Today our lives revolve around the use of technology, from communication, shopping, cars, just to mention a few. This software's are constantly improving and widely accepted by the communities to make their lives easy. Learners need to be receptive to this communication rich-environment. ICT can help enhance the skill of teachers in their perspective areas. Many researchers indicated that one of the reasons that hinder the success of ICT in school is the unqualified teachers. With ICT teachers can access a range of forums and blogs that can improve teacher's skill and knowledge. There are also online courses that teachers can enrol and study at their own pace. Information communication technology can improve learner's thinking ability. Critical thinking is a skill that students need to be successful in their professional life; ICT is more of thinking skills than just mastering the software. ICT can provide a pedagogical framework that enables learner's to become effective independent learners; for example, computer games and other assessment software are available that can adjust themselves to the level of competency of the students and move to the next level as they improve their thinking skills.

Theoretical Review

Constructivism Learning Theory: This theory was reinforced by educational psychologists such as Jean Piaget and William Perry after they augured their dissatisfaction with behaviourism learning theory (Rampersad, 2011). The behaviourism learning theory is teacher-centred learning, a teacher plays a significant and a led role in transmitting knowledge to learners, the students learning processes rely heavily on the teacher's material and knowledge. The assumption that is made is that student who listens to teacher's explanation, does classroom activities instructed by teachers, and engaging on the feedback provided by the teachers will result in effective learning (Rampersad, 2011). In contracts, the constructivism is learner-centred learning, constructivism learning theory suggest that 'learners must construct their knowledge and meaning of experiences' (Rampersad, 2011). This theory is concurred by researchers such as (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011) who are advocating the hypothesis that student learns best in an environment that enables them to discover new knowledge for themselves rather than being provided to them by the teacher. The theory encourages learners to think outside the box, be creative, learn from experiences of the world, and be active to create new knowledge. The teachers who use the constructivism framework must provide students with appropriate guidelines to assimilate new information to the existing information and encourage them to construct new knowledge by themselves.

The constructivism theory is believed to have two major benefits, firstly it enforces student to solve 'authentic,' problems. Secondly, learners can acquire new knowledge through life experiences and discipline (Agudo & Sánchez, 2005). These benefits are based on a setting that students learn best in an environment that enables them to acquire knowledge and find a new solution for themselves. There is a strong assumption that the implementation of ICT in schools follows the constructivism theory, ICT being a force or a tool that students can use to gather new information (Haugland, 1998). The role of ICT in constructivism learning is to constitute the learner-centred learning, decrease memorization, improve the thinking capability of learners and it is only through ICT that the theory can be transformed into practice (Agudo & Sánchez, 2005; Haugland, 1998).

Structuration Theory: The structuration theory was developed by Anthony Giddens in 1988 and has then become the most influential theoretical paradigms applied to the influence of information communication technology in education (Agudo & Sánchez, 2005). The main argument of the theory is that it is the act of human beings that creates a new structure out of the existing structure, this means even if there is an existing structure (can be a specific tradition, culture, institution, moral codes or other established ways of doing things) individuals can reproduce or change the structure by ignoring the rules and replacing them with new behaviours (Haugland, 1998). According to the theory, information technology has the potential impact the society and reform a particular structure. Agudo and Sánchez (2005) was the first researcher to study the relationship between technology and organizational structure using the structuration theory, according to Barley's view the implementation of new technology can change an organization's structure and reform ways of doing things in an organization. The main argument of structuration theory based on the influence of information technology is that ICT has the power to reform society or a particular structure.

Empirical Review: The advantages and disadvantages of implementing ICT in school have been an interest of many researchers due to the global demand and the opinion that ICT can reduce poverty and regain the pride of mankind, so far the researchers have not yet provided a clear consensus that proves beyond doubt that ICT can improve student performance (Meenakshi, 2013; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). Since the revolution of the internet, many researchers shifted focus to the use of internet activities in school such as the blog, Wikipedia, social media and other online platforms; hence thus far there is still no concrete proof of how ICT can improve student performance. It is importable that we take the topic seriously because ICT has extremely influenced every discipline under the sun and education cannot be an exception (Meenakshi, 2013; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). Brush, Glazewski, and Hew (2008) have augured that ICT can be used as a tool for students to discover new information, Improve their problem-solving techniques and come up with new solutions in both their communities and in the classroom. Meenakshi (2013) stated that ICT can provide the ability of students to become the lead on their learning process by learning to manipulate information and building new knowledge through the access of internet. ICT provides many possible ways that can improve student's understanding, for example, e-books are commonly used in aloud activities, this can be beneficial to

a learner who struggles to read the text and this e-book can be accessed using a device such as a laptop, iPad, cell phone or a computer. Another example is the use of images to explain a learning topic; ICT can present different images in a different format to attract a learner's interest.

Rampersad (2011) augured that ICT provides lots of service to learner's including 'distance education programmes, inexpensive printing, cell phone plans, internet connection, free dial-up, technology equipment, rentals classroom media stations, etc.' Rampersad (2011) further insisted that computer brings powerful aids of translating theory into education, he mentioned computer assistant learning and distance education for examples. Koc (2011) mentioned that the use of ICT in the learning environment can promote collaborative learning enabling students to communicate effectively and share work anywhere, anytime. For instance, the use of blogs and Skype can gather students around the world to collaborate, share knowledge, explore ideas and solve the major problem. The study of Meenakshi (2013) indicated statistically that there is a correlation of using ICT to learn and the acquisition of critical thinking skills. Many authors shared the same sentiments indicating that the integration of ICT into education can foster the students to reach a higher level of thinking skills. Barak and Dori (2009) explain critical thinking as a skill that requires a student to think independently, rationally and clearly to take responsibility and control one's mind. Barak and Dori (2009) further explain that critical thinking is essential for one to have to be successful in the future. Through the implementation of ICT in school students can access educational software such as games to improve their thinking skills the disadvantage of integrating ICT into education is limited; the one which was the most concern.

Quality use ICT to Improve Learning and Teaching: Researcher mentions the keyword 'appropriate' when they justify the benefits of integrating ICT in teaching and learning, there is no single evidence indicating that teaching and learning can be improved by just using computers. Significantly, we understand the appropriate use of ICT to improve the quality of education in South Africa. Rampersad (2011) argued that we need to integrate ICT in schools in such a way that it allows learners to take control of their learning than the subject content itself (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011). Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) can be addictive, destructive and can shift a learner's focus. When a learner's focus is shifted the purpose of integrating ICT in education is going to be defeated. The more the learners become capable of learning by themselves or with their peers, there more their thinking skills improves. Rampersad (2011) mentioned that is also important that ICT allows teachers to create their materials and provide more control of the course content. One of the countries that were recognized to have been deemed to have made reasonable progress in integrating ICT in education in Singapore.

Singapore had a master-plan of integrating ICT into the learner's assessment, pedagogy and the school curriculum which seeks to develop learner's competency for the 21st century. The master-plan included three stages, the first stage was to provide schools with ICT infrastructure and train teachers with basic knowledge of ICT, and the second stage was to create effective and persistent use of ICT in schools. The last stage was launched in 1999 to carry out the second stage and transform education (Pitan & Muller, 2019b). This master-plan is an example of how South Africa can integrate ICT in schools. Through the initiation of the master plan, leaners were able to develop competencies for independent, collaborative learning and also become responsible ICT users. The integration of ICT in education needs to be designed in a way that it revitalizes both learners and teachers, develop the quality of education by providing support in difficult subject areas (Pitan & Muller, 2019a). South Africa needs to change and reform its education system and use ICT as a vehicle to improve the quality of education.

Information Age: "People whose education consists of lectures and textbooks are not well prepared for problem-solving in the complex world that we live in" ~ Patricia Senn Breivik. There is a common say that said 'we are living in an information age' that is true; ICT has brought information on our fingerprint. The information age is referred to as a modern time in which information is easily accessible, disseminated, stored and managed through the use of computers. In the information age, students should be able to construct knowledge, instead of a teacher handing it to them (Rampersad, 2011), creating an opportunity for students to teach and learn from each other. The importance of integrating ICT in education is to enable student and learners to acquire knowledge deem relevant in the information age (Rampersad, 2011).

The Current State of ICT in South Africa and Education: According to world economic Forum data (WEF) network readiness index (NRI), South Africa ranks 75 out of 143 countries in the year 2015 (WEF, 2015). The WEF NRI report measures the exploitation, opportunities, and the influence of ICT in a competitive world (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011). The WEF NRI statistics indicate that South Africa also lags with its fellow BRICS countries, Brazil ranking (60th), Russia leading them with (54th), India (68th), and China (58th) (WEF, 2015). The report that was published by UNESCO Institution for Statistics titled, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education in Sub-Saharan Africa – A Comparative Analysis of Basic E-Readiness in Schools which explains what is happening in the African continent regarding ICT implementation in education, the report mention South Africa as one of the African continent country that has ICT policies and plans in place to implement ICT in education (Pitan & Muller, 2019b), however, even today there is still the little impact of e-learning in the South African education (Shafika, 2007). As with the status, in 2015 the status of schools with computer facility is 40.9 per cent (DBE, 2015) this includes schools that have one or more computers for administration purpose. The report of the South African Institution of Race and Relation (SAIRR) states that 4 out of 10 public schools have computer facilities (Pitan & Muller, 2019a).

The Political Influence of ICT in Education: The political goal of providing quality education to all has a significant influence on implementing ICT in education. For political agenda education is necessary for four reasons, firstly, it reduces poverty, contributes to the economy and the national development of the country. Secondly, it is seen as the only way that an African child can regain his pride that was diminished during the apartheid era. It is without a doubt that the exploitation and opportunities offered by ICT in South Africa affect the implementation of ICT in schools. The fact that South Africa ranks 75 of 143 countries in the WEF, network readiness index Report indicates the lack of positive impact in South African e-education learning. Thirdly, education can reduce corruption and lastly, education amongst women can decrease maternal mortality rate, in turn, the country's population will decrease and the government services will be able more effective than efficient (Meenakshi, 2013; Faggella-Luby & Deshler, 2008). The National Integrated ICT Policy White Paper that was released on 28 September 2016 (White paper, 2016) after the government had realised that social, political and economic transformation has certainly changed and ICT policies need to respond to the change (Rampersad, 2011). In 2012 the South African cabinet initiated the review of ICT related policies.

They appointed a panel which included the representatives from the private sector, public sector, state-owned companies, NGOs and academia in January 2013 to assess the policy, diagnose the challenges and recommend proactive policy approach for future reference (Meenakshi, 2013). The development of the National Integrated ICT Policy was based on the outcome of the panel's findings and recommendation. Meenakshi (2013) explained that the review of the ICT related policies was necessary to address the current ICT challenges in the country. The political analyst (Rampersad, 2011) said that ICT can have a great impact when policies designed to implement them are crafted in a manner that supports the transformation of education. In 2010, the government introduced new Growth Path which stated a route map to create new skills and jobs to eradicate poverty and in 2013 the document was updated and renamed the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP (2013) stated poor quality of education in of one of the challenges in the country and the document further recommended E-learning as a mechanism that can be used to redress the inequality in education and provide continuous improvement in education (NDP, 2013). The national Development plan serves several important functions such as providing a vision of how ICT can be implemented in schools and how the learners, teachers, parents and the public can benefit from its use in schools (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011).

Gaps in the Literature: The advantages and disadvantages of implementing ICT in school have been an interest of many researchers due to the global demand and the opinion that ICT can reduce poverty and regain the pride of mankind, so far previous studies have not yet provided a clear consensus that proves beyond doubt that ICT can improve student performance (Rampersad, 2011). Rampersad (2011) mentioned that the development of ICT policies is essential because it encourages government and organization to initiate programs resource and enable efficient use of ICT in schools. Since the revolution of the internet, many researchers shifted focus to the use of internet activities in school such as the blog, Wikipedia, social media and other online platforms; hence thus far there is still no concrete proof of how ICT can improve student performance. We must take the topic seriously because ICT has extremely influenced every discipline under the sun and education cannot be an exception (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011).

3. Methodology

The research design is a significant part of the research because it plans how the research will be conducted and implemented to obtain answers. The study follows the qualitative research design. Awolusi (2019) state that the research design aims to plan and align the research objectives with the practical consideration and limitations (Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018; Eze & Awolusi, 2018). The research approach is 'Action Research'. Corey (1953) define action research as an attempt of a fellowing colleague or a researcher to study an underlying problem scientifically to correct, provide guides or and evaluate actions. This approach is suited for the present study since action research can combine theory and practise, providing the ability to focus on generating solutions and empower both the teachers and the learners (Awolusi, 2019). The interest of action research in education is growing rapidly because it encourages teachers to work together on a common issue, provide an opportunity to learn, correct their mistakes and improve their teaching practice (Awolusi & Atiku, 2019).

Research Method: In this study, the researcher follows 'Qualitative Method'. Qualitative research is design to reveal a different range of behaviour and the perception that a specific target audience has on the identified topics or challenges (Awolusi et al., 2018; Burns and Grove, 2000:388). In this study, we use a qualitative method to understand what is happening inside the classroom and analyse the effect of the situation or other educational intervention. The researcher attempted to keep the research question narrow in the scope. The researcher started by analysing what exactly needs to be resolved or improved and drafted all the possible points. All question were evaluated to ensure that there relate directly to the research topic. The research questions were semi-structured and open-ended.

Population and Sampling: A well-defined sampling strategy is important in qualitative research to; attain unbiased and robust research result (Awolusi, 2019). There is a tendency of considering qualitative sampling design as less important comparing to quantitative sampling and most qualitative researcher makes little attempt to ensure that sampling is an accurate reflection of the population (Polit and Hungler, 1995:517). Conscious selection of population group by the researcher was considered in the study. The research sample was compromised in two groups namely, the teachers and the learners. The reason why the researcher interviewed both the teachers and the learners is to understand and compare the classroom experience from both the learners and teachers. The two groups participated in the same criteria setting and answer the same questions (see Appendix A). The sampling criteria are significant to standardize the population as possible (De Vos, 1988:193). In this study the sample criteria were as follows: Participants must speak Sepedi or English; must be over 18; must be either a high school teacher or a high school learner; and all races must be included in the sample. There were only nine (9) learners that are above eighteen (18) at Derek Kobe Secondary School and all nine learners participated in this study. Seven (7) teachers volunteered to participate; the total number of informants was sixteen (16).

Data Collection and Analysis: In this study, data will be gathered using focus group interviews, questionnaires and observation. Next, the researcher will elaborate on the three selected method and the objectives of each method.

Focus Group: A focus group is defined as a group of selected individuals having common interest or character and asked about their opinion or perspective about an issue or a topic (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011). The main advantage of the focus group interview is the ability to obtain data more quickly from many individuals at a lower cost and short period (Rampersad, 2011). The focus group interview was held at Derek Kobe Secondary School, the first group consisted of teachers and the second group consisted of learners. The interview environment was conducive, comfortable and a non-threatening for all participants. The period of the interview is an hour long. The researcher requested permission to record the interview session before the sessions and later the researcher transcribed and translated verbatim.

Questionnaire: The researcher made a provision for individuals who cannot make it to the interview session but wish to participate. The questions on the questionnaire were similar to interview questions asked in the focus group. All processes and criteria were similar to the focus group interview except that the fact that the informants were only participating at their own space and their own time.

Observation: The researcher visited Derek Kobe Secondary School for a day; the aim was to observe their ways of teaching and learning, routines and participation and collaboration of students in the classroom. The observation method will help the researcher to have access to a real-life situation.

The Process of Data Analysis

- Following Creswell' approach, the researcher started by organising and preparing data for analysis, using listening to the audiotapes of the interview repeatedly to internalise the context and then transcribed the interview. The read through the data and ensure that no data was left out.
- After completing the task for all focus group interviews the researcher read through the data again to make general sense of the information and get the overall meaning of the data. The researcher created categories of information.
- The researcher broke down the data into a chunk of information and each chunk of information fell under an identified topic.
- Lastly, the researcher presented the findings and analysis in the next chapter.

To ensure that adequate ethical guideline and standards are adhering to in this study, all participants received and signed a consent form (see appendix B) before participating in the data collection. The consent to access the school and interview learners and teachers was requested and approved by the department of basic education (see appendix C).

4. Data Presentation, Results and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the proposed study was to determine, analyse and understand how the integration of ICT, into education can help solve challenges related to poor quality education and how ICT can improve the overall quality of education in South Africa. All participants were asked to express their thoughts, ideas and experiences about the integration of ICT in education. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To determine whether the use of ICT in schools can improve the learner's performance.
- To recommend the appropriate method of integration ICT in education.
- To determine whether the use of ICT can improve reading and writing.
- To determine whether the use of ICT in education can improve critical thinking.

Data was collected using a focused group interview; the focused group were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of nine grade 12 learners and the last group was seven teachers. All participants were asked six open-ended interviews which were as follows:

- How can ICT help you achieve your work (teaching or learning) more effectively?
- Do you think that the use of ICT in school can improve reading and writing and why?
- Do you think the use of ICT in school can improve learner's thinking and why?
- How do you think ICT should be used in school?
- Do you think some subjected are better suited with ICT than others and why?
- Is it adequate for ICT to be taught as a subject rather than using ICT as a support tool for the curriculum?

The Process of Data Analysis: Data were analysed using Creswell' approach of qualitative data analysis (Tapscott, 1998; Fredrickson, 1981); the researcher listened to the audiotapes repeatedly to internalize the context and transcribe the interview verbatim. The researcher read and re-read the verbatim transcripts to get the general sense of information and the overall meaning of the data. The researcher started identifying and grouping similar topics and ideas, new themes emerged during the data coding. The participants were also asked to validate the process of data analysis.

Themes: The themes were group according to teachers versus students. We have separated the two categories because during data analysis the researcher realized that even though both the participants (teachers and students) has been asked similar questions, their answers, ideas and perspectives were different. Under each group (teacher and learners) the researcher has written sub-themes and their category. The researcher will first tabulate the themes and then describe each theme below. Within the tables, the

researcher quote words of the participants to indicate the emotions they set when expressing their thoughts towards the integration of ICT in education.

Category	Themes
Learner's perceptive	Reading and writing in the classroom
	Language proficiency
	Teaching methods
	The possibility of online learning
Teacher's perspective	Teaching subjects using ICT
	Teachers expertise and confidence in using ICT
	Skills development

Learner's Perceptive: Theme One: Reading and writing in the classroom many students shared frustration about the shortage of textbooks at school. All participants indicated major challenges that negatively impact their ability to read and write effectively. Some of the challenges mentioned were: the shortage of textbooks and stationery, absence of teachers in the classroom, lack of mentorship, and shortage of qualified teachers. Below are some of the learner's remarks.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotation
342/15-01-2018/Anonymous /2	"We do not have textbooks, year after year when we start a new grade; the teachers tell us that the previous students did not bring back their textbooks. The teachers write notes on the chock board, and we copy them to our scribe books but sometimes this scribe books get lost and then you're in trouble. "
348/15-01-2018/Anonymous /2	"We usually memorize word by word because if you write anything that is not in the teacher's notes, you are going to fail. We don't study to understand, we study to pass."
339/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	"I remember one year, we spend almost two months without a geography teacher and finally the teacher comes, he could not answer most of our questions."

The recent study of Gordon concluded that 'Students that can't read effectively fail to grasp important concepts, score poorly on a test and ultimately fail to meet educational milestones' (Tapscott, 1998; Fredrickson, 1981). One of the learners mentioned that most of the classrooms have 'more than 60 learners, which makes it even more difficult to concentrate in classes.

Theme Two: Language proficiency all participants indicated that teachers sometimes teach English (second language) in their mother tongue (first language) to make learners understand but this translation does not assist much because during the test they must write in English. Below are some of the student remarks.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotation
348/15-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'I was taught English in Sepedi (mother tongue) ever since'.
339/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'I know it is important to know English because all other subjects are written in English. I just wish we had a platform where we practice English on our free periods'

According to section 29(2) of the Constitution states that 'every learner has the right to receive a basic education in the language of his or her choice, where this is reasonably practised' (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011); the use of African languages at school was another vehicle to depart from the history of apartheid. However, According to DOE, a learner will not be promoted if the learner scored below the pass rate in any language, this includes English. All participates complaint that as much as their given instruction in their mother tongue, they should also be allowed to write in their mother tongue or maybe they should have a platform was learners can learn English proficiency on their own pace.

Theme Three: Teaching methods all participants confirmed that the method of teaching method is teacher-centred learning, the learners rely heavily on the teacher's knowledge. The following are some of the comments from learners.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotations
334/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'To be honest, I sometimes do not hear anything in the classroom; the teacher will come and talk! Talk! Talk! The whole period. I think it would be more helpful if we had tutors'.
336/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'We do not usually do group discussion, although we try to help each other with homework'.
339/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'The teacher writes notes on the board and we copy to our excise book and then we refer to our notes when we write homework'.

Eight (8) of ten (9) learners indicated that they do not like the current method of teaching because it does not groom leaners to become independent and to be future leaders, instead it teaches learners to be lazy. One of the learners said that 'the truth is that, we are spoon fitted' and the learner revealed frustration.

Theme Four: The possibilities of online learning all participants revealed excitements about the idea of integrating ICT in education. Below were their comments.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotations
339/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'School will be exciting but seriously it will solve most of our challenges, for example, if the teacher is absent from class, we can go to the lab and do research '.
335/15-01-2018/Anonymous /1	'It will be nice to have a platform where you can download questions and answers, interact with peers and learn the basic skill of ICT.'

All participants indicated a positive attitude toward the integration of ICT in the classroom. The participants mentioned a few points that ICT can assist them to learn effectively. 1). Access of e-books 2). Online assessment 3). Active interaction with peers from local school 4). Provide basic skills in ICT for market relevancy.

Teaching Subjects Using ICT: The reluctance to use ICT was evidence during the teacher's interview; perhaps this was because the teachers are afraid of change and lacked experience in ICT. Teachers were very much uncomfortable about the teaching of subjects using ICT. Below are their expressions:

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotation
220/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'How do you expect teachers in my age to start learning ICT, I know my job, I have been teaching life science for 15 years and my students are passing. I don't need to know ICT'
222/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'Some subjects like mathematics and physical science cannot be integrated with ICT'.
219/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'I don't think we do have a framework for the integration of ICT in the classroom …….. That is where the problem starts……. We are confused.'

Many teachers are still confused about how ICT can be integrated into school subjects. This is the similar finding of Leonard Newton, in his research study titled 'Management and the use of ICT in subject teaching', the research evidence that teachers often have the pressure of integrating ICT in their lesson with no proper guidelines of how and where ICT fits in their teaching framework (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Rampersad, 2011). The teachers of Derek Kobe senior secondary school did not understand how ICT will fit into the school

curriculum; they vision ICT as a support tool for the administration process at school. They emphasised that ICT can help solve issues such as lack of storage, linkage of question papers, the record of learner's reports and school performance but showed a little concern about ICT in the classroom. Mathematics and physical science teacher were worried that computers will solve problems on behalf of the learners.

Teacher Expertise and Confidence in Using ICT: Teachers understood that the integration of ICT in education can be beneficial in some ways but yet lacked confident about the possibility of government investing in ICT and empowering teachers. Below are the teacher's comments.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotations
222/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'We are struggling to get just one desktop …. How can the government invest in expensive software and hardware, if we cannot get simple tools like a desktop?'
219/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'I know that integration can be good for both teachers and learners, there are a lot of online platforms that can teach the learners how to read and write. Teachers can also collaborate online '
226/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'We have an online WhatsApp group, we mainly use it for internal communication and it is much helpful. The introduction of ICT can help in many ways '.

Young teachers from the age of 30 and less responded with so much confidence about the use of ICT in the classroom, however, with the provision of proper training, support from ICT specialist and management. Whereas, teachers above 40 showed a lack of confidence and interest in the integration of ICT in the classroom. One of the teachers said that 'I fear that we are going to become part of the furnisher while young people take your jobs', the teacher worked at the same school for more than 30 years, started as a cleaner until promoted and she is now teaching home language (Sepedi), she expressed a deep sense of fear for losing her job. Some teachers do not want to go back to school and study; they explained that they are 'too old for that'. The research that was published at the University of Cape Town stated that South Africa tends to hire unqualified or under-qualified teachers (Pitan & Muller, 2019a).

Skills Development: Teacher's ICT skills and development is advised worldwide. Rampersad (2011) viewed teacher's training and skills as the main catalyst to the success of the integration of ICT into learning and teaching. However, teachers insisted that management does not take training and skills development seriously. Below are the teacher's experiences about skills development in their perceptive areas.

Record ID/Date/Speaker/Session	Quotation
220/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'I come here seven years ago and I have not gone to any professional training for personal development. It's not that I have not initiated but the very attempt I am always told that there is no budget
222/12-01-2018/Anonymous /2	'There is no growth in teaching, I regret the day I choose this career, and we are not taken seriously. We have to fight for everything including teaching materials '.

Teachers stressed that skills development is not something that is often practised, according to them, skills training fails due to a few factors. One major factor is the shortage of teachers, there are usually allowed to stay away from the classroom for a longer period. From all seven teachers who disclosed their qualifications, only 3 of them have degrees and the others have a college certificate. SADTU conducted a study and interviewed ninety-one teachers about their professional development and training, the finding indicated that eighty-five teachers received their first training at different colleges in South Africa and only six teachers received their fundamental training at the universities (Pitan & Muller, 2019a).

Classroom Observation: The researcher went to school to try to find out the behaviour and practices of learners and teachers in the classroom. The observation aimed to see how the current classroom situation is

and how the integration of ICT in the classroom can assist to transform the classroom experience. The researcher aims to understand if the current teaching methods are learner-centred setting or teacher-centred setting; the observation was composed of three dimensions. The dimensions were: (**1)** Communication, (**2)** Real-life experience link, (**3)** Questioning/participation.

Communication: This dimension aimed to analyse the communication between the teacher and learners in the classroom, to verify if the communication is from teacher to learner, leaners to teachers or if there is a peer to peer communication. To achieve this, the researcher observed how the teacher conducted the classroom activities such as problem-solving, classroom excise and homework corrections.

Findings: The communication was mostly teacher to learners. Each subject is allocated an hour; the researcher observed that the teacher spoke for approximately fifty minutes of the lesson. The teacher explained notes, demonstrated diagrams on the board and the leaners listened without any interruptions.

Real-Life Experience Link: This demission aimed to verify if teachers bring the real situation in the classroom and the learners can relate the classroom activities with what is happening outside the classroom.

Findings: During the mathematical classroom, there was no linkage of a real-life situation and the classroom, however, during life orientation, students were very much active and bought life situations into the classroom.

Questioning/Participation: This dimension aimed to find out if teachers provide an opportunity for the learners to ask questions, allow other learners to answer and to also analyse how learners construct their questions and answers.

Findings: The teacher gives a platform for leaners to ask questions but only one leaner out of 58 leaners asked a question. In general, participation was poor.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary: Many research studies have revealed that Information Communication Technology (ICT) can be a significant tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The most crucial point derived from the literature review is that ICT has proven to be effective across the whole curriculum not just for mathematics and science. While some teacher still fears the use of ICT in the classroom, learners show great interest and enthusiasm to use ICT. ICT does not only enforce rules and regulation but it is also flexible, it allows changes in the organization or curriculum at any point in time. It also encourages teamwork, collaboration and improves computer literacy for both teachers and learners. According to the literature review, there is no doubt that ICT has a positive academic impact on learners with special needs. According to the participants, there is still a lot to be done by the government to initiate the process of integrating ICT in education or empower teachers with ICT skill and to do away with the traditional teaching method.

The literature review reveals that for a successful implementation of ICT in the classroom teachers training is significant as they become the main catalyst of the integration. The participants complained about the school budget constraint for skills training and procurements of teaching and learning resource. Much previous research such as Pitan and Muller (2019a) and Rampersad (2011) indicated that buying desktop and laptop is not enough, budget for ICT at schools should include software, hardware, maintenance, support services, and proper development of infrastructure.

Conclusion: The study revealed strong arguments about the integration of ICT in education to improve teaching and learning practices. Following the objective of the government to transform South Africa into an inclusive and innovative digital and knowledgeable society, the government has made progress to implement policies that reinforce and facilitate the implementation of ICT in education. Below are some of the documented findings:

- The literature review provides evidence that a proper integration of ICT in education can improve teaching and learning.

- Evidence showed that information technology in the classroom can improve learner engagement and concentration.
- ICT can provide a pedagogical framework that enables learner's to become effective independent learners. For example, computer games and other assessment software are available that can adjust themselves to the level of competency of the students and move to the next level as they improve their thinking skills.
- The integration of ICT into education can foster the students to reach a higher level of thinking skills.
- ICT enables educational activities that are hard to achieve with traditional leaning such as discovery learning.
- ICT enables access to reading material such as E-books.

The finding of the interviews leads us to document that the department of education still has not yet achieved the milestone of providing quality education for all. Below are the summaries of the finding of this research.

- There is a considerable shortage of books
- Learners are frustrated about the teaching method
- Learners feel like they are not taught to understand the basic concept but to memorize teacher's notes.
- The department still hired under-qualified teachers
- There is a shortage of teaching tools such as paper, stationery, textbooks
- Teachers fear change, whereas learners show excitement

The study, therefore, concludes that the integration of ICT in school will have a positive influence on both teachers and learners. The implementation of ICT in the classroom will improve the quality of teaching and learning, the relationship between teachers and the learners, encourages peer to peer learning, discovery learning, teamwork, critical thinking, computer skills and the overall student performance.

Recommendations: The implementation of ICT in the classroom will improve the quality of teaching and learning, the relationship between teachers and the learners, encourages peer to peer learning, discovery learning, teamwork, critical thinking, computer skills and the overall student performance. Consequently, the following specific recommendations are desirable:

- The teachers training to use ICT is significant to the implementation of ICT in the classroom, a well-trained teacher can provide creative ways to enhance learners understanding, provide an individualized option for students to learn at their own pace and prepare learners for future technology change in the society and higher education.
- The government must provide training incentives to encourage personal development in teachers and for young graduates to value teaching.
- It is crucial and needs careful consideration when choosing the right technology for the integration of ICT in schools.
- The budget planner must work on the total cost-benefit equation and ensure that investment matches the teacher's support services, resource, effective use of technology and policies. Learners need to be provided with minimum acceptance ICT resources; this includes (Internet, Security measure, computer, school software etc.).
- Policies about lost equipment must be drafted and understood by all parties.
- Technology innovation such as E-learning, blogs can assist the department of education to address the inequalities in education and facilitates ongoing improvements for both teachers and learners.
  The study further suggests that the implementation of ICT into education follow the recommendation of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2002) on the four stages of ICT integration. The four stages are as follows:
- 'Emerging'. This is the initial stage where the school initiate the procurement of computer equipment and software, in this stage teachers and school managers are starting to familiarise themselves with the possibilities of using ICT to improve the quality of education.
- 'Applying'. In the second stage, teachers become dominant in a sense that they need to assist learners to develop an understanding of the contribution of ICT into their learning activities and create a task that will enable them to use the information skills.

- 'Infusing'. In this third stage, the integrations of ICT I school starts to involve across the whole curriculum. Learners will start having an intense understating of the contribution of ICT into learning and teaching. Learning software and online assessment will be embedded in subjects area and teachers start exploring new ways of using ICT.
- 'Transforming'. In the transformation stage, learners use ICT rethink and become creative. The ICT becomes an integral part of the school's development and knowledge and the school becomes the learning centre of the entire community.

Implications and Contributions to Knowledge: Being action research and qualitative study, the present study serves as a veritable 'tool' of responding to the major challenges that hinder the progress of implementing quality education, especially in the rural areas in South Africa. In addition to its major contributions to practice, the present study is also an extension to the on-going debate on ICT integration in education in South Africa. The adopted theories and conceptualisation also validate the influence of ICT integration on the quality of teaching and learning and the overall benefits of using ICT to enhance personal growth, individual performance, critical thinking skills reading and writing skills. The implementation of ICT in education continues to pose challenges both locally and globally. The white paper on E-education states main challenges as to be the transformation of the information society, the impact of ICT access, financial implication, and the process of integrating ICT into learning and teaching (DOE, 2003: 8). Consequently, the present study demonstrates how ICT can be used to improve learners thinking skills, writing skills, and empower them to become independent learners, as well as, the veritable roles of teachers as formidable catalyst of integrating ICT into education. The study, therefore, suggest, that teachers and learners must use computers to learn rather than learning how to use computers or have a computer as a subject.

This study also provides a clear indication of how ICT integration in education can improve the quality of education and resolve some of the major issues faced by the department of education. There are many ways of adding value to the integration of ICT in education. For instance, the UNESCO report states that ICT skills must not be 'taught as a distinct activity 'but be learnt in a context that is meaningful to both the teachers and the learners (Pitan & Muller, 2019a; Roos, 2005). The success of the integration of ICT into education lies in the ability of the teachers to create activities and task that will enable learners to use the information skills effectively. This approach is encouraged by the new teaching strategy in South Africa called Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and learner centred learning (Roos, 2005). Although, the study is more of scholar-practitioner/ action research, however, the study and data collection were carried out in one school in Limpopo province, hence, there is need to be cautious in generalizing the outcomes of the study. Future studies may extend the investigation to other provinces. That notwithstanding, the study validated all survey instruments and objectively investigated the influence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in improving the quality of education in South Africa. Lastly, the study also posits that teachers are the catalyst for integrating ICT into education. Further studies may determine to which extent does the teacher and learners need to use computers to co-construct knowledge and collaborate in school projects.

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