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Telephone: ++263 8 677 006 136 | +263 779 279 912

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JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

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The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or sub-community is a function of their deliberate participation in matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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Contents

- 1** Infusing Resilience for Climate Change in Peri-Urban Communities in Zimbabwe
NYASHA NDEMO, INNOCENT CHIRISA AND NOMALANGA MPOFU-HAMADZIRIPI
- 21** Collective Action for Rural Development: Insights from Chimanimani Rural District of Zimbabwe
TIMOTHY MARANGO, LEONARD CHITONGO², HAPPWELL MUSARANDEGA³
- 43** Pandemic Within a Pandemic: Gender-Based Violence Experiences of Women in Marondera Urban (2020-2021), Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe
PRINCE MUZUVA, NOMAGA MPOFU-HAMADZIRIPI AND PROMISE HLUNGWANI
- 59** The Emerging War on Drug and Substance Abuse: The Case of Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe
PRINCE MUZUVA, AARAM GWIZA AND PLACXEDES MUDANGWE
- 75** Human Capital Projects And Programme Development in The Spirit of Industrialisation and Improved Service Delivery in Zimbabwe
NICOLE ZIMUNYA, NYASHA NDEMO AND RUMBIDZA MPAHLO
- 86** Industrialisation in Zimbabwe: Shaping The Debate and Practice Through Social Sciences
HALLELUAH CHIRISA, PATIENCE MAZANHI, ROSELIN KATSANDE-NCUBE AND TAWANDA ZINYAMA
- 1088** The Contribution of Human Resources Information System in The Effective Management of Human Resources Using Netone Cellular (Pvt) Ltd, Zimbabwe As A Case Study
ROGERS TAKURA NAMALAWA

- 1288** Workforce Diversity and Employee Engagement at The National Railways of Zimbabwe
NICOLE K CHAWATAMA
- 1544** Effects of E-Human Resources Management Implementation on Organisational Productivity: The Case of The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
PAIDAMOYO SAMUEL ZVEUSHE
- 1722** Abortion among Pregnant Teenage Girls: A Case Study of Cherima, Marondera, Zimbabwe
KUDZAI MUTUWIRA
- 1899** Planning and Delivery of Projects Under the Impact of Covid-19: Some Reflections on Zimbabwe
ZEBEDIAH MUNETA, INNOCENT CHIRISA AND ENOCK MUSARA
- 2066** Socio-Ecological Conundrums: Towards the Wise Use of Wetlands in the Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe
MOREBLESSING MUSUNDIRE AND ROSELIN KATSANDE-NCUBE
- 2277** Begging as a Livelihood Strategy: A Case Of Street Children of The Harare Central Business District in Zimbabwe
TANATSWA CATCH AND WITNESS CHIKOKO

INFUSING RESILIENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IN PERI-URBAN COMMUNITIES IN ZIMBABWE

NYASHA NDEMO¹, INNOCENT CHIRISA² AND NOMALANGA MPOFU-HAMADZIRIPI³

Abstract

The study explores essential ways to increase the resilience of peri-urban areas is to invest in social capital by developing civic engagement mechanisms. It advances the argument that climate change in peri-urban settings has affected their resilience and adaptation. Zimbabweans' livelihoods in peri-urban areas depend mostly on the agro-industry. Furthermore, they depend on biofuels for energy hence they need to build resilience to survive the impact of climate change. This article makes use of a desktop study where it reviews available literature cases and experiences in peri-urban communities in Zimbabwe and beyond. Evidence from the sources show that research on climate change resilience in peri-urban areas has been explored but not critically dissected the implications of climate change on peri-urbanites and their livelihoods, hence this study was done to formulate strategy on how to mitigate the impact and build resilience. The study recommends the utilisation of social ties to improve everyone's access to water. In the negotiation of water insecurity, cooperative and familial norms are crucial. Their water security was enhanced by providing fora for civic engagement and creating social capital. While peri-urban water insecurity issues have attracted a lot of attention, little has been written about the function

¹ Department of Development Programming and Management, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe

² Office of the Vice Chancellor, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe; Department of Urban & Regional Planning, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

³ Teaching and Learning Institute, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Marondera, Zimbabwe

of social capital in mediating water insecurity. While researchers have been interested in how social capital plays a part in coping with the effects of climate change, there has not been much research done in a peri-urban setting, hence this study aims to close the knowledge gap.

Keywords: *disaster, temperatures, development, weather, sustainability, population*

INTRODUCTION

Cities in Africa are characterised by high levels of informality and poverty, poor infrastructure and, consequently, a high susceptibility to environmental dangers. This is in addition to the rapid urban population increase and urban land expansion. Cities are under more environmental challenges because of climate change and its effects (Angel, 2011). As a result, guidelines for sustainable development of cities must include climate-resilient circumstances. Urban green spaces (UGS) are a critical component of a range of solutions to increase the general resilience of cities. The ability of a city to handle stress and recuperate from stress is enhanced by UGS. However, the existence of green spaces in cities is threatened by both urbanisation and varying climate circumstances (Baker, 2008). Nevertheless, by making appropriate management and planning decisions that result in urban vegetation being sufficiently integrated into the city matrix, and by sustainably supporting urban climate resilience, their continued existence can be secured. These tactics include ecosystem services aimed at lessening the effects of heatwaves and floods, enhancing air quality, and enhancing food security.

Although increasing global urbanisation and its environmental, economic and social problems have been intensively discussed, approaches to enhancing urban climate resilience in developing countries demand further scientific investigation (*ibid.*). As such, this study (1) elaborates on urbanisation in Africa; (2) discusses urban land expansion and environmental challenges in the context of climate change; and (3) examines the potential to contribute to urban climate resilience. As argued by the definition of resilience in socio-ecological systems, resilience is the capacity of a system to withstand shocks and avoid crossing thresholds that would inescapably result in new states,

keeping the system's ability to reorganise itself as change occurs. In line with Banuri (2001), the ability of an urban system and all its underlying socio-ecological and socio-technical networks to maintain or quickly resume desired functions in the face of a disturbance, to adapt to change and to swiftly transform systems that restrict current or future adaptive capacity, is referred to as urban resilience.

Climate resilience in natural and human systems heavily depends on such systems' capacity to both adapt to and mitigate the consequences of climate change (evolutionary resilience). In this context, adaptation refers to retaliatory changes made in reaction to real or anticipated climatic stimuli and their repercussions or impacts, whereas mitigation refers to proactive human actions taken to cut back on greenhouse gas (GHG) sources or increase sinks (Beauchemin, 2011). Both methods contribute significantly to urban climate resilience because their ultimate goal is to reduce the adverse effects of climate change. Zimbabwe is expected to have significant effects from climate change, such as increasing water stress, more frequent droughts, decreased production of crops and cattle, altered wildlife ranges, an increase in wildfire events and possibly expanded malaria zones (Caldwell, 2019).

With support from the UNDP and funding from the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) of the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) is working with communities to address climate change and build resilience to its effects (*ibid.*). A project in Zimbabwe called Building Climate Resilient Rural Communities aims at reducing the vulnerability of rural communities to climate change by developing strategies and principles that local governments may utilise when mainstreaming and planning for adaptation. Integrating climate hazards into all development choices and planning entails mainstreaming climate change (*ibid.*). Development activities are more robust to climate uncertainty and more likely to succeed when climate risk is recognised and included in policies, plans and practices.

Cities can either contribute to climate change, adapt to or alleviate the consequences of changing climatic circumstances by taking into account their enormous concentrations of human capital (Coquery-

Vidrovitch, 2005). Mitigation and adaptation measures work together to increase urban resistance to climate change and its effects. Modifying the built environment and lifelines, promoting urban green infrastructure, taking preventative measures to lessen social vulnerability, fostering climate change governance, bolstering strategic urban planning and conducting routine risk assessments while making this information accessible to decision-makers and urban residents, are all examples of adaptive aspects of climate change resilience in cities (Chen and Ravallion, 2007). Major initiatives to advance urban climate change resilience in Africa have thus far centred on enhancing the infrastructure of low-income communities, implementing legislative changes, implementing emergency measures like building drainage after flood events, launching programmes to combat poverty, and learning from the experiences of other cities (Chen and Ravallion, 2007).

For instance, 3 000 reinforced housing units were built in 2005 for the relocation of flood victims in Dakar (Senegal), which is vulnerable to the coastal inundation and erosion that affects many other coastal cities in Africa. Retention ponds were also built in the floodplains and settlement in the floodplains was prohibited. Effective climate change adaptation necessitates community-based, institutional and infrastructure initiatives, as argued by experience from Kampala (Uganda). The lack of capability, expertise and resource availability within national and local government, however, hinders the successful implementation of climate resilience measures in many African cities (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005). Urban areas can contribute to climate change mitigation, even though efforts to adapt to climate change must be given priority. The most essential gas emission mitigation measures are to support public transportation, use renewable energy sources, implement better waste management practices and preserve or grow.

These adaptation and mitigation strategies undoubtedly reflect the social, engineering and planning implications of urban living, but their efficacy has not yet been empirically shown (Jenkins, 2014). However, a growing body of evidence indicates that cities that were previously

considered to be sole producers of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO²) may also be able to operate as carbon sinks are thought to store a significant quantity of carbon, as argued by estimates from cities in North America and Europe. Nearly 231 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide are stored in the city of Leicester (United Kingdom), which has a surface area of 73 square kilometres (Henderson, 2014). In the United States, where urban areas make up 3% of the entire country's land area, metropolitan trees are estimated to store 630-700 million tonnes of carbon.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Although climate change is having a significant impact on urban and peri-urban agriculture, Lwasa *et al.* (2014) observe that evidence from some African cities such as Ibadan, Dakar and Kampala, also indicates that when properly implemented, adaptation strategies can lessen the vulnerability of these agricultural systems and increase the resilience of urban and peri-urban communities. "Adjustments in natural or human systems in response to present or anticipated climatic stimuli or their effects, which minimise harm or exploit advantageous chances" is one definition of adaptation to climate change (Robinson *et al.*, 2018). As argued by Moser and Ekstrom (2010), "Adaptation encompasses changes in social-ecological systems in response to actual and anticipated impacts of climate change in the context of interacting with climatic changes" (Moser & Ekstrom, 2010:22-26). As argued by Moser and Ekstrom (2010), limitations on adaptation and impediments to adaptation are the main reasons climate change adaptation efforts fail. Absolute challenges, such as the size of the land or the availability of water, are referred to as adaption limits (Jenkins, 2014). Typically, physical, environmental and ecological, these challenges might be hard to overcome through innovation. Obstacles that can be overcome with preparation and effort are referred to as climate change adaptation barriers. These might involve adjustments to institutions and land use policies (Moser and Ekstrom, 2010). Considering the elements that promote or inhibit adaptation, this article discusses climate change adaptation in Kensington.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unplanned peri-urban growth (about 7.2% annually) and exposure to climate-related hazards (such as droughts, rising temperatures, falling dam levels and localised flash flooding) in Namibia, continue to degrade ecosystems, basic infrastructure, public services and historical inequalities. For instance, the situation in Namibia's informal settlements was deemed a humanitarian disaster in 2018 and a state of emergency was proclaimed there in 2019 after six years of drought (Kessides, 2012). The accomplishment of many sustainable development goals and the growth of regional economies and healthy communities are all threatened by these issues. In these conditions, proactive involvement and inclusion of local stakeholders, particularly voices from the margins, in urban planning have the potential to enhance decision-making, lessen historical disparities, encourage benefit-sharing and strengthen social-ecological resilience (Simone, 2011). However, there have been few attempts to evaluate the factors that contribute to unplanned informal settlement growth, their reciprocal interactions with social, economic and environmental impacts (such as the security of food, water, energy, land and livelihoods), and how this influences current and future planning processes (Kitto, 2012). Peri-urbanisation and climate change are interacting and intensifying each other all over the world. The decision to relocate from a rural to a peri-urban area is accelerated significantly by more frequent and intense rapid onset (floods and wildfires) and slow onset (drought and biodiversity loss) events caused by climate change, as argued by a substantial body of evidence (*ibid.*). Both phenomena have multiple drivers (IPCC, 2021). For instance, climate-related shocks and stresses in 2020 included swarms of locusts in the Horn of Africa that resulted in widespread famine; a record 30 severe storms, including Hurricanes Iota and Eta, that caused significant damage along the Atlantic coasts; four million acres of forest were destroyed in California; destructive typhoons in the Philippines; massive floods in Indonesia; and devastating earthquakes in

California. Tens of millions of people are being forced to relocate across borders, to more hospitable latitudes, into protected regions, and peri-urban areas, along with an estimated 50% of all other species (Welch, 2017). Because of COVID-19's recent experiences, it has also been argued that one adaptive response to a crisis in a compact metropolis would be outmigration, which would accelerate the conversion of rural land into peri-urban (or suburban) areas (Dutta *et al.*, 2020).

Peri-urban areas are often thought of as those with both agricultural and industrial economic activity and are characterised by poor administration, limited planning and a lack of utilities like sanitation and waste management. The term "peri-urban" is a bit nebulous, though. It refers to an interface between rural and urban activities, institutions and perspectives. It also refers to the movement of commodities and services between physical areas and the shift from rural to urban contexts as a process (Mabogunje, 2018). The complex, varied, and transitional nature of peri-urban space, and the variety of needs and aspirations of peri-urban stakeholders who may come from many different countries of origin, work in local manufacturing and/or agriculture, commute to the urban core, or own a "second home" are all factors. As argued by Shkaruba *et al.* (2021), "municipal land-use planning at different scales and spatial extents, controlling the use of the land inside the border of the municipality" is one of the many governance or planning instruments that manage peri-urban environments. Peri-urban landscapes fall under the territorial purview of metropolitan, regional, or landscape authorities, which utilise a variety of planning levels and related spatial plans under various governance structures, necessitating an appropriate level of coordination at each of the various levels (Mabogunje, 2018). As argued by Mabogunje, new types of governance are required to address the peri-urban space's escalating issues. They place a strong emphasis on the necessity of teaching decision-makers the specific trade-offs that arise from decision-making in a peri-urban context and enhancing coordination of the heterogeneous network of peri-urban organisations (Simone, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Desktop research was used and relevant information on infusing resilience on climate change was gleaned from current literature. Secondary data was gathered from developed and developing countries' experiences, World Bank publications, Google Scholar articles, and previously presented studies on some of the important subjects of planning, development, and urbanisation.

RESULTS

Because of growing urbanisation and rising human activity, peri-urban ecosystems are increasingly at risk of degradation and loss due to increased resource consumption and waste. Cities exist under a "sphere of reliance" on their surroundings and their ecosystems rather than independently (GEAG, 2016). As a result, the loss of ecosystem services that support urban and peri-urban people is caused by the degradation of these ecosystems.

A strategic framework for planning and innovation is critical for peri-urban sustainable development. However, because they will eventually become metropolitan regions, the peri-urban margins also offer enormous potential. This circumstance necessitates a thorough awareness of the opportunities and problems these peri-urban communities provide. The areas of innovation needed to change these urban outposts must be identified (Meerow, and Joshua, 2016). This roundtable aims at investigating these problems and ultimately identify potential strategic research areas required to make these peri-urban communities self-sufficient. A strategy framework based on issues, challenges, and opportunities is shown Table 1.

Table 1:1 Summary of Results

▪ Items	▪ Challenges	▪ Opportunities	▪ Innovation
▪ Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incrementalism ▪ Maintainability ▪ Poor connectivity of all social and physical infrastructure ▪ Poor quality of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of land ▪ Availability of natural resources ▪ Integrated planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth ▪ Containment strategy ▪ Land information systems ▪ Technology

	housing		enhancement like solar roadways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor quality of electricity ▪ Increasing energy demand ▪ Poor systems of energy distribution ▪ High generalised cost of transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy-efficient buildings ▪ Energy efficient transport ▪ Energy efficient planning ▪ Energy management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renewable distributed micro-grids ▪ Hybrid power systems ▪ Energy from waste – biomass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sudden socio-economic change ▪ Lack of sense of ownership/participation ▪ Lack of adequate employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local participation ▪ Availability of human resources ▪ Opportunity to provide skills training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Livelihood opportunity ▪ Peri-urban commons ▪ Inclusive planning!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defining peri-urban areas ▪ More political will for development ▪ The increasing problem of security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parameterisation of peri-urban areas ▪ Data creation: land database ▪ Transparency of land transactions and allocation of resources ▪ Public participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enhancing the local economy with more linkages with the urban core ▪ Technical capacity building of local body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degradation of natural assets ▪ Solid waste (SW) disposal and management ▪ Groundwater contamination ▪ Ecosystem threats ▪ Urban heat islands ▪ Air pollution ▪ Degrading quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less local SW generation ▪ Rainwater harvesting ▪ Use of biodegradable material resources ▪ Policies to reward and penalise ▪ citizen to safeguard the environment ▪ Carbon trading ▪ Air quality improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce/reuse SW ▪ Creating baseline status of environment ▪ Monitoring of resources ▪ Public participation in SW management ▪ Technologies to develop renewable and green energy. ▪ Improvement of air quality

Water supply: As polluting above-ground rivers and lakes destroys usable sources of surface water, this is frequently the most critical service lost. Groundwater is contaminated by the disposal of sewage and solid/liquid waste in peri-urban regions, which promotes the spread of numerous diseases (Misilu *et al.*, 2018). The demand for this finite water supply rises because of population growth, and water tables fall as underground aquifers are unable to replenish.

Flood buffers: This is frequently one of the most important services in danger since unauthorised construction on areas designated as open/green belts prevents natural drainage and worsens flooding. Floods and severe waterlogging increase the risk of property damage and fatalities.

Waste treatment: The ecosystem's capacity to filter trash out of water supplies is undermined by the degradation of wetlands. The remaining streams are polluted by waste from peri-urban industries, excessive untreated human waste and garbage.

Food production: As the urban fringe grows, industry and housing developments (both formal and unofficial) take the place of productive agricultural land. This frequently displaces poor farmers and can result in lower food production and higher food prices, especially in cities that are heavily dependent on nearby agricultural supplies (Taylor and Camaren, 2014). Peri-urban land maintains green vegetation cover that absorbs air pollution and ambient heat, but clearing vegetation slows the process of filtering hazardous substances from the local atmosphere. This helps to regulate climate and air quality. A "heat island" effect may develop, raising temperatures in a region when once-permeable, shady environments turn dry and solid.

Fuel wood and timber: Farmers in the area rely on a source of fuel wood and timber that is removed by deforestation. Ecosystem services offered by these transition zones have a substantial impact on the sustainability of both urban and rural development. Managing the environment of this interface is important in the current setting (Özden

and Chigoyie, 2012). Understanding population trends, socio-economic change, on-going urbanisation process, anticipated climatic change, influence on natural resources and livelihoods in these transition zones becomes crucial. To manage the resilience of these ecotones, new collaborative governance systems with several levels are needed. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal No.11 also emphasizes the importance of making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by implementing integrated policies and plans for resource-use efficiency and climate change adaptation (UN, 2014), which is impossible without protecting these peri-urban areas. Peri-urban areas are rapidly changing and now provide true environmental services outside but close to cities and towns. These new areas relieve over-tourism pressures on productive forests and reserved ecosystems, including protected areas. Suburban parks and other ecosystems, such as bodies of water, agriculture farms and horticulture nurseries, among others, provide significant facilities to satisfy crowds and are highly valued by visitors (Özden and Chigoyie, 2012). They are used for sports and recreational purposes. However, because of the influence of developed European nations, expectations in some peri-urban areas are more demanding and complex. New health demands are emerging, and forests and bodies of water are increasingly seen as contributing to health, not just by individuals, but also by institutions whose perceptions of forests are changing (Walker, 2002). The role of peri-urban forests as sources of wellness is an intriguing concept that should be investigated further and applied to other environments such as mountains, coasts and so on (Parker and James, 2014). The environmental and forestry sectors are now expected to manage such new social demands, especially through collaboration with the health sector (along with urban and rural development).

DISCUSSION

Achieving long-term, broad-based economic growth in developing countries requires resilience. To succeed, development professionals are starting to understand that building resilience across all

programmes and initiatives is essential (Walker, 2002). Recent years have seen the rise of the idea of low-carbon, climate-resilient development as a crucial framework for addressing policy and action to combat climate change, capturing the necessity of fully integrating mitigation and adaptation activities into development planning and implementation (Parker and James, 2014). A peri-urban area, located next to the margins of the city where many intricate socio-economic activities take place, is a constantly changing zone of interaction and transformation (Watson and Agbola, 2013). As a result, its ability for resilience is primarily influenced by two sets of input-output dynamics: on the one hand, with the nearby metropolitan region, and on the other, with its subsequent exclusively rural systems. Moving away from existing reactive techniques and toward the creation and implementation of proactive strategies is essential for increasing urban and peri-urban resilience to natural hazards and climatic extremes (Quagraine, 2011). The approach's major goal is to keep natural ecosystems resilient and their services available so that communities may endure and withstand harsh catastrophes. Climate change is known to increase the likelihood of disasters by increasing the frequency and severity of hazards and by adding new layers of hazards. It also increases the factors that make people more vulnerable in two ways: through ecosystem degradation, decreases in water and food availability that cause food and health insecurity, and changes to livelihoods due to an increase in weather and climate hazards (Sudmeier-Rieux *et al.*, 2013).

Ecosystems and cities have a mutually beneficial interaction that frequently involves reciprocity. Ecosystems offer cities and their citizens a wide range of physical and environmental services that also contribute to increasing a city's resilience (Rakodi *et al.*, 2006). However, the cities' fast urbanisation and unplanned expansion are posing a threat to ecosystem health. The "extractive" aspect of urbanisation sets a low value on protecting the environment, having

an impact not just on individuals whose livelihoods are immediately impacted but also on the city itself (White and Paul, 2014). Peri-urbanisation results in the encroachment of environmentally fragile regions for housing and other development projects. These alter how agriculture is practised, constrict green spaces and open areas, and put more strain on water and other natural resources (Satterthwaite, 2001). Inadequate delivery of basic services, industrial effluent, air pollution and a lack of infrastructure for hygiene and sanitation distinguish these places. The peri-urban regions, which offer ecosystem services to urban areas, are used as landfills for urban solid waste, sewage, etc., causing environmental degradation, contaminating groundwater and negatively affecting the quality of life and health of those who live there. A national urban policy tool has been developed by the UN-HABITAT (2015) to address concerns related to climate change in cities and human settlements (*ibid*). The tool's primary goal is to provide national, municipal and other stakeholders with the knowledge and tools they need to create successful policy frameworks to address urban climate change, with a particular emphasis on urban governance, adaptation and mitigation (Satterthwaite, 2007).

Table 2: National Urban Policy Tool (UN-HABITAT, 2015).

▪ Focus	▪ Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting low-carbon urban development (Mitigation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage and aid in the creation of neighbourhood-level plans and initiatives to cut GHG emissions. ▪ Energy should be obtained from low-carbon and renewable sources more frequently, especially through decentralised or distributed energy delivery, and more efficient energy use should be encouraged. ▪ Promote urban planning strategies that are more suited to lowering GHG emissions, such as reducing commute times. Promote more environmentally friendly forms of transportation at the same time: promote (i) the more environmentally friendly design and construction of new buildings; and (ii) the retrofitting of existing structures to reduce GHG emissions. ▪ Improve the sustainability of municipal solid and liquid waste management.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Climate ▪ Resilience ▪ (Adaptation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage applied study on the dangers posed by the effects of climate change and other threats in urban settings. Allow for the use of results to guide decision-making. ▪ Inform decision-making at all levels, encourage and promote the creation of local-level climate change risk assessments that incorporate an examination of climate resilience and adaptive capability. Encourage multi-hazard analyses. ▪ Encourage the mapping of risks, especially those that may change over time due to the climate. ▪ Planning human settlements, managing land use, and delivering essential infrastructure and services in a way that accounts for risks and fosters resilience, including climate resilience, are all important aspects of this. Encourage and support local-level plans and initiatives to increase climate resilience to achieve this. ▪ Emphasize initiatives that help marginalised and vulnerable populations become more resilient. Upgrade slums and informal communities locally wherever possible to increase resilience to shocks and strains, especially those brought on by the effects of climate change. ▪ Encourage the preservation and restoration of ecosystems and natural buffers as a component of adaptation efforts. ▪ Make provision for regional planning as a way to safeguard ecosystems and prevent "maladaptation."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addressing ▪ Urban Climate ▪ Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination of municipal, state and federal efforts is necessary to combat climate change in metropolitan areas while promoting local authority. When appropriate, engage in cooperative action. ▪ Urban managers should be given resources and their institutional ability to confront climate change should be strengthened. ▪ Increase knowledge of the economic prospects and side effects of climate change among the general people. ▪ Ensure that all national urban policies, legislation, regulations, investment plans and other frameworks are completely compliant with national climate change policies.

Land use planning and master plans, the ecosystem in peri-urban areas is getting worse. There is less biodiversity and the landscapes are

getting smaller. The peri-urban regions are neither "the waiting room" nor "lagging zones" (Mitra *et al.*, 2015; Satterthwaite, 2007), thus it is important to strike a balance between pressures for urban expansion and living standards. Without developing the areas around a metropolitan area, it is impossible to sustain a constant input/output of materials. Therefore, a planned and transformational approach is required to promote the inclusive, egalitarian, and sustainable development of urban and peri-urban zones. Regional and urban master plans are thought of as blueprints that should be revisited by professionals in city planning. The strategy must be interdisciplinary, involving professionals from all disciplines and local communities in the planning and management process (Satterthwaite, 2007). It is time we started working with individuals who are knowledgeable in rural planning and are cognisant of the transitional rural dynamics that have significant effects on the "character" of peri-urban areas.

Concerning the role of peri-urban ecosystems in adaptation and the resilience of urban systems against climatic and water-related disasters, this advice offers help to practitioners and policy-makers. Although the advice is primarily directed towards the Asia-Pacific region, it provides pertinent information for circumstances in other growing nations also (Seto *et al.*, 2018). The basis is an understanding of urban carrying capacity that considers the supporting and absorbing capacities of urban and peri-urban zones and their ecosystems (White and Paul, 2014). To mainstream the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into a more comprehensive framework of urban resilience, it is necessary to acknowledge the significance of ecosystems, particularly those in peri-urban regions (World Bank, 2000). Greater comprehension and integration of ecological infrastructure together with social resilience in peri-urban regions of a city or big township are necessary due to infrastructure and engineered systems' redundancy, sustainability, dependability, and operability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Understanding that urban resilience to the effects of climate change is a significant, complex challenge handled via multiple approaches, is critical given the increased awareness of urbanisation. Supporting

climate resilience in cities requires a variety of actions, and green areas must play a major part in this endeavour. Using Kumasi as a case study to highlight the potential for climate resilience of African cities, this study examined urban population increase and urban land development in Africa in connection to climate change and the function of green areas. Without a doubt, urbanisation accelerates the loss of natural land cover and worsens the effects of human activity on the environment. To strengthen a city's resilience to climate change and its effects, urban green areas offer opportunities for both reactive (adaptive) and proactive (mitigate) solutions.

Urban vegetation blocks the flow of water and air across land surfaces and above them, reducing the likelihood of floods and air pollution. The removal of GHGs from the atmosphere by vegetation, particularly trees, is crucial for improving air quality and reducing both regional and global warming must be effectively planned, well integrated into urban space and supported by strong institutions to significantly increase urban resilience. Under these circumstances, green areas might be created from abandoned roads, structures and other compacted bare surfaces in cities that otherwise sit idle and useless. A city's ability to withstand climatic stress is increased by vegetation because it increases biodiversity, breaks up soil compacted concretes and eventually restores ecological balance to such areas.

Due to inadequate enforcement of current laws and a dearth of ad hoc measures, traditional and corporate interests are given the initiative. De facto bottom-up procedures, therefore, control our existence and administration. Chieftaincies, or traditional leaders, and individual landowners, play particularly important roles in this situation. For African towns to maintain and increase their green cover, the government, traditional leaders and civil society must all be involved in setting priorities, simplifying processes and enforcing laws. Therefore, this study suggests that there is need to encourage the development of inclusive and participatory urban climate resilience solutions to secure regional economic success and social-ecological sustainability. Given Zimbabwe's chronic drought, promoting public awareness of the need for urban development that is climate-resilient and future resource flows for food, energy and water. Create and

submit a grant request that was jointly drafted (by foreign partners) to introduce our method to other GCRF ODA countries. Train a young group of Zimbabwean researchers studying the social-ecological system and climate in cutting-edge methodology and fieldwork techniques.

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COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM CHIMANIMANI RURAL DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

TIMOTHY MARANGO¹, LEONARD CHITONGO², HAPPWELL MUSARANDEGA³

Abstract

Despite considerable financial investments made since independence in 1980 to achieve rural development, there is not much tangible improvement in the lives and livelihoods of individuals, families and communities in Zimbabwe. The crux of the matter is lack of collective community action. Community collective action is a crucial social capital that can stir rural development. We argue that collective action has a huge potential to achieve sustainable people-centred development. The study adopts a case study approach, analysing the role played by community collective action in rural development in Chimanimani Rural District (CRD), Zimbabwe. A sample of 220 respondents were conveniently selected. Likert scale data was randomly collected from five out of 23 wards of the CRD. A descriptive data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Emerging from the study, failure to invest appropriately in efforts designed to strengthen community collective action appears to be the missing link in rural development in African communities, including the CDR. The study concluded that community collective action is the major factor influencing rural development. It is a resilience builder that promotes trust among inhabitants of a community. The study recommends that development

¹ Research Council of Zimbabwe, 11 Stafford Road, Mt Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe

² Department of Development Sciences, Faculty of Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Zimbabwe

³ Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe

Corresponding email: vachitongo@gmail.com

planners, scholars and policy-makers should go back to the drawing board and consider community collective action as a resilience strategy in development.

Keywords: *human factor, social capital.*

INTRODUCTION

Community collective action is a social capital and a contemporary global phenomenon. In sociological terms, and borrowing from enlightenment philosophers such as Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes, collective action is viewed as a social contract. Collective action is not an easy concept to define due to its fluidity and intangibility nature. Its applicability is evident in the tangible results of community action. It places grassroots community people at the centre of their own development processes (DFID, 2000; Macchi, 2011). People are considered as the primary resource or development stakeholders, not recipients or objects of development. Collective action is defined as an action taken by a group in pursuit of members perceived shared interests (Marshall, 1988). Meinzen-Dick and diGregorio (2004) regard collective action as the pursuit of a goal(s) by more than one person (either directly or on its behalf through an organisation). Ostrom (2004) contends that collective action occurs when more than one individual is required to contribute to an effort to achieve an outcome. Social capital refers to the sum of trust, social solidarity, knowledge and information-sharing, mutual support, empowerment, leadership, encouragement and networking (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Ostrom (1999) defines social capital as the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity. It is from the idea of the word “shared” where collective action comes in as social capital.

Community action, on the other hand, refers to a wide range of organised human activities and social actions. In simpler terms, it refers to community engagements or involvements. Dumbase (2018)

argues that the purpose community action is to build community and social capacity. This implies helping the community to share knowledge, skills and ideas. Community action inculcates community resilience, meaning assisting the community to support itself. Furthermore, community action enables the community to maintain and create wealth for itself. Dumbase (*ibid.*) gives examples of helping people to create employment for themselves or developing community enterprises for improved community livelihoods.

Community collective action is a tested concept. In some western societies, it has been tried and found to be an effective method for stimulating community development and a solution to some community social challenges, such as alcoholism. The following examples are the evidence of the importance of community collective action. Canada and the United States implemented a successful alcohol preventive community programme in the 1970s (Giesbrecht and Douglas, 1990; Greenfield and Zimmerman, 1993). Around the same years and a decade later, some few other European countries did the same (Holmila, 1997; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1999). The Malmö community-based research, done in the 1970s in Sweden, was the pilot European community collective action project. The results of the study clearly demonstrated that under the right conditions, the positive effects on health can be dramatic (Allamani, 2015). The study revealed that an intervention for heavy drinkers, including early identification and brief information, together with periodic control of blood gamma-GT, leads to half the number of deaths among the control group (Kristenson *et al.*, 1983). While studies on community collective action have been conducted in Eurocentric setups, little, if any, has been done in Africa, and specifically in Chimanimani District of Zimbabwe, although the concept is not new in Africa.

Community collective action is one strength among African communities, although no scientific studies have been conducted on the subject. It is right at the core of *ubuntu/unhu*. *Ubuntu* in Africa is premised on a collective sense of 'being' and responsibility (Bangura *et*

al., 2007). Arguably, it can be seen as a smart version of the Marxist collectivism, in the European sense. From the Afrocentric viewpoint, Turaki (2006) argues that people are not individuals, living in a state of independence, but part of a community. They live in a relationship and interdependence. Indeed, community is the cornerstone in African thought and life (Mbigi, 2005). Despite this sense of oneness, community does not remove individuality completely. This is evident in the idea that, *I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am* (Mbiti, 1969). One remains an individual, but is attached to the whole. Therefore, community collective action is naturally within the African child.

Another example was the *zunde ramambo/isiphala senkosi* (chief's granary) concept. In this, people pooled some resources that would be used to create a community agricultural field where every community member participated. The yield would be used to help the needy members of the community when need arose. This practice was a better method of helping needy members, better than the donor community food handouts. It was better in that even the recipients of the outputs of the *zunde/isiphala* would, at some point, participate in the production of the food. In other words, it was not free food, just like what the donor community does, which may promote laziness and the so-called donor dependence syndrome, but the sense of work to eat. *Zunde/isiphala* was a form of social security with a local preparedness strategy towards drought and famine mitigation. It promoted the spirit of family and food security. The chief's granary (*zunde/isiphala*) and (*humwe/nhimbe/ilima*) were said to be traditional strategies used in coping with the negative effects of climate change in Chimanimani District (Marango, 2017). Brazier (2015), in a comparative study, gives practical examples of coping strategies that were being practised in Muzarabani. These include social safety nets such as *zunde/isiphala* and *humwe/nhimbe/ilima* in which the community contributes grain and store to help the needy families during times of hardship. In all these, it is collective action in action.

Community collective action is an important social capital for any normal community. Furstenberg (1998) sees a positive relationship between social capital and community socio-economic success. McQuillan (1998) argues that relationships within the family and the community are critical to the success of its posterity. Observe that collective action is all about relationships. Relationships of love, support, encouragement, knowledge and information are a prerequisite to development of the community. Therefore, collective action is the crux of community transformation. Willer (2014) sees collective action contributions earning individuals improved status in community by signalling their concern for the group's welfare, relative to their own.

Collective action promotes trust among the inhabitants of the community. While trust is a loaded and fluid term, Mcknight and Chervany (1996) argue that trust makes cooperative endeavours happen, because it is key to positive interpersonal relationships. During the organisational restructuring crisis in the 1990s, trust was found to be an asset, a social capital for organisations (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Mishra, 1996). Ortiz-Ospina and Roser (2015), did research on a world survey on trust. In the report, it was concluded that trust is a fundamental social capital and a key contributor to sustaining well-being outcomes, including economic development. Gould and Hijzen (2017) argue that trust is a key component of the social capital. They noted that trust enables participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1995). From this, collective action is the crux of development. Collective action is, therefore, a rural development propeller.

Currently, there is inadequate research or literature that highlight the benefits of investments directed at strengthening collective action as a strategy for promoting rural development. This study, therefore, sought to assess the levels of collective action for rural development in some communities within the CRD of Zimbabwe. The aim of the study was to identify opportunities that could enhance the effectiveness of rural development initiatives. Specifically, it sought to build an understanding of the extent to which collective action, as a social capital, can serve as a vehicle for rural development. The results of this

study revealed that failure to invest appropriately in efforts designed to strengthen social capital specifically collective action, appears to be the missing link in rural development work carried out in African communities, including Chimanimani District.

It is noted that Zimbabwe, from 1980, when political independence was attained, considerable amounts of financial, technological and human resources, with the aim to propel rural development and reduce rural poverty, enhance the social, political and economic status of the people, was invested, but the country remain trapped in poverty (Marango, Francis and Adjibolosso, 2016). This reality is confirmed by the Rural Livelihoods Assessment of 2011, especially Chimanimani District (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Council (ZimVac), 2011). This is despite the fact that the district has a sound resource base. It is this paradox that requires unlocking. The situation articulated above might have its roots in the application of Eurocentric approaches that ignored local realities (Koopman, 1991; Khoza, 1994; Mararike, 1999).

As alluded to in the examples above, community collective action is at the centre of thought and life in African settings. Modern day African development is Eurocentric. Parameters of development are defined in a European perspective. It shuns the Afrocentric perspectives, viewing them as primitive and barbaric. The only major challenge is that western mainstream theories of development have rarely tried to build on this pillar of African community vitality. It can be argued further that Africa's strength still lies in those areas where the wealth of the west is weakest.

COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Theories of collective action trace their origins from Olson (1965). Olson focused on behavioural traits the assumptions and methodological issues borrow from neo-classical economics. Poteete and Ostrom (2003) argue that policies and programmes should be in the public interest. However, politics and power dynamics determine development policies and trajectories. Therefore, the participation of

people in policy identification, design implementation and evaluation require participation of various pressure groups (McLean, 2000). The classical behaviouralist view is that groups are formed because of a common interest which individual members seeks to pursue. Groups of common interests are expected to act on behalf of their common interests in as much as individuals also act on their personal interests (Olson, 1965) Olson's major assumption is that individuals are rational beings. Since society is riddled with people with different beliefs, cultures norms and values, it makes the whole concept of rationality highly idealised. Economists argue that rationale people will not mobilise resources to pay public goods, especially when they feel that they will not benefit directly. This is why governments coerce the public to pay tax. In Zimbabwe, the government introduced a controversial 2% tax for all money transfers to fund government activities and programmes as the economic meltdown bit Zimbabwe.

There are several concepts that have evolved from the collective action theory since its inception. One of the most useful characterisations of Olson's model is the N-person prisoner's dilemma. The prisoners' dilemma, perhaps the most famous of all games, has been studied extensively by many authors (McCarty and Meirowitz, 2007). It has been used to explain how disputes in communities can be resolved. In order to achieve collective action, it encourages some form of shared responsibilities. Another prominent concept is the free-rider concept. A free rider is a person who benefits or utilises resources and services without contributing to their sustainability (Oliver and Marwell, 1988). The free-rider problem is one of the simplest ways to understand how communities fail to formulate sustainable collective action strategies, even when everyone will benefit (Hardin, 1971). Thus, the greatest challenge faced by planners is on how to overcome this problem. Public institutions should formulate social welfare programmes for the vulnerable groups within communities, for instance, women, children, the sick and elderly people. At the same time, they should develop innovative strategies to motivate the able bodied to enhance production systems.

METHODOLOGY

Chimanimani Rural District is the study site. It is located in the Eastern Highlands province of Manicaland, Zimbabwe. Chimanimani is bordered by Mozambique in the east, to the South is Chipinge District, Buhera District in West and Mutare District to the North. The population of the district is approximately 133 810 people (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), 2012). Of these, 52% are females. The district has a highly rugged terrain marked by the Chimanimani Mountain range. The district altitude ranges between 6 000 m and 600 m in the East and in the West, respectively. The annual rainfall ranges between 200 mm and 1 000 mm depending on the natural geographical region of the district.

The district is rich in natural resources. These resources include natural and commercial forests, fertile soils and precious minerals such as gold, diamonds, lime and copper. Chimanimani boasts spectacular tourist sites, namely the Bridal Veil Falls, Pera Falls, Tessa's Pool, Vhimba Botanical Reserves, Hot Springs resort near Nyanyadzi and Chimanimani Mountains, locally known as Mawenje. These and others make the district a viable tourist destination. The survey design was employed using a Likert-scale as used as a data collection tool for community perceptions on the level of collective action. Non-probability sampling methods (i.e., convenience and judgmental sampling) were employed. This was done because the Chimanimani Rural District Council did not have clear records of its residents. Secondly, there were certain respondents with valuable information who could only be sampled purposively.

NB: SOME WARD NUMBERS SEEM TO HAVE MORE THAN NAME (E.G. MHANDARUME (WARD 2); WENGEZI (WARD 2 again))

Five out of 23 wards in the district, namely Mhandarume (Ward 2), Mhakwe (18), Chikwakwa (19), Chakohwa (3) and Chimanimani Urban (15) participated in the study. Mhandarume has a population of 2 938, Chakohwa, 4 492, Mhakwe, 2 457, Chikwakwa, 3 573 and Chimanimani urban, 3 647. From each ward, 44 respondents participated to represent various households. A total of 220 local

residents participated in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire and were entered into the computer using the Microsoft Excel software package. They were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc). Frequencies of the scores of the dimension social networking were calculated. The Kruskal-Wallis test for k-independent samples was used to determine if there were any differences in perceptions relating to the social capital dimensions among the wards. Post-hoc tests for effects that were found to be significantly different were then carried out using the independent samples Mann-Whitney test.

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Venda Ethics Committee (Project No: SARDF/17/IRD/03/2802) and the Chimanimani Rural District Council, the local authority, to interview its residents and to get access to its records. Meetings with key stakeholders, i.e. District Administrator, local community, and political leadership, were carried out. Respondents' consent was sought before data collection. Those who participated understood what it meant to either participate or not. Personal details such as the names of respondents were not included on the questionnaire to protect them from possible reprisals. The researchers made it clear to the participants as to the way to the publication of the findings ensuring honesty and justice.

FINDINGS

LEVEL OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT

A large proportion (85%) of the respondents opposed their readiness to contribute in some way to projects initiated by the community without direct benefit to their individual capacity. Along the same lines, almost two thirds (59%) of the respondents expressed their disagreement with the fact that they participated in development programmes in their respective wards. Almost a third only (30%) were willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development projects. On stakeholder's willingness to cooperate with the

community, a smaller proportion (21 %) agreed that council was willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals. On the same tenet, only 20% of the respondents said that NGOs in their respective wards were willing to cooperate and implement development projects that originated from them. The level of collective action was low as demonstrated by a large proportion of respondents (77%) expressing a sentiment that they were not willing to cooperate and assisting their fellow community member who would have befallen in an unfortunate event.

Table 1: Respondents’ perception of level of collective action in Chimanimani District

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
I am ready to contribute in some way in a development project initiated in my ward even if it does not benefit me directly.	5.1	7.6	2.5	39.9	44.9
I am participating actively in development programmes and projects in our ward.	16.2	16.3	8.1	29.7	29.7
Everyone is willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities, e.g. repairing schools or roads without payment in my community.	13.3	17.1	17.7	23.4	28.5
If an unfortunate event befalls one member of my community, for example attachment of property because of debt or non-payment of fees for a child, our community members are willing to cooperate and assist.	5.1	8.9	9.5	42.4	34.2
The NGOs in our community are willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development programmes (that are not initiated by them).	1.3	7.0	12.7	47.5	31.6
Chimanimani Rural District Council is willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals.	7.0	13.9	20.3	36.1	22.8
I personally find sense in paying rates due to Council.	8.2	9.5	8.2	32.3	41.8

The Kruskal Wallis test and Mann Whitney U score were then used to establish whether there were any differences in the extent to which the perceptions of the respondents ranked the level of social capital in the wards of the district. It was discovered that there was general disagreement on almost all the responses. There was significant difference on the perception that, "Everyone is willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities such as repairing schools or roads without expecting payment in return" ($p < 0.05$). Significant differences were also found on the perception that, "The Rural District Council is willing to cooperate and accept proposals that originate from communities under its jurisdiction" ($p < 0.01$).

The potential to utilise collective action to drive the development agenda manifests in numerous ways in Chimanimani. This prevails even amongst the broad diversity of marginalised population groups, despite their lack of recognition in local development planning. Such underrated yet socially valuable groups include women, unemployed youths and elderly people. Typical focal points noted from the sampled wards where informal gatherings were found to be common are Wengezi (Ward 2), Chakohwa (Ward 3), Ngangu (Ward 15) Mhakwe (Ward 18) and Chikwakwa (Ward 19). With the escalating unemployment and poverty in Zimbabwe, large groups of youths were often spotted at growth points and rural service centres where they informally gather to share life challenges and possible livelihood options. At marketplaces across the district, women also share marketing and other livelihood sustenance strategies. It was widely noted from the study that the more the rural people were strained by socio-economic challenges in the district, the more they pooled their minds to evade various challenges by collectively sharing possible livelihood options. During the study, many elderly people in the district revealed that they form a rich but undervalued hub of local area knowledge. The elderly fraternity widely echoed the potential of their knowledge to be mainstreamed in various community development programmes.

Approximately 74% of the respondents did not get the sense in paying rates due to the local authority. The negative attitude follows the local

people's grieving attitude towards the purpose for which funds are set aside. Disadvantaged people, situated deep in poor communities like Chitimani (Ward 3) and Makandwa (Ward 19), lamented the poor state of their roads which hampers the movement of goods and people. The sick and elderly members of the community expressed disgruntlement with the long distances they travel to access healthcare services. This explains why only a smaller proportion (21%) agreed that Council was willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals.

DISCUSSION

The fact that only 13% of the 220 respondents were ready to contribute in some way in a development project initiated in their ward, even if it did not benefit them directly, is a sign of a severely low level of collective action. This is demonstration of the individualistic agenda, which could be a result of social exclusion within the development programmes and projects implemented in communities. In other words, it is an indirect indication of lack of trust that their efforts will benefit them as individuals. This implies that those facilitating rural development, namely Chimanimani Rural District Council and the District Development Coordinator's Office, are not harnessing the existing potential for participatory decision-making methods for community collective action. The general lack of trust amongst community members in Chimanimani mirrors the countrywide scenario in which many people dissociate themselves from development programmes that they believe are biased towards the interests of governing political heavyweights in Zimbabwe (Makumbe, 2010; Manase, 2016). This is a common socio-political misnomer that negates the community development agenda. Nevertheless, global comparisons of trust attitudes around the world today suggest that, indeed, trust among community people is possible (Gould and Hijzen, 2017).

The Chimanimani scenario is against the *ubuntu/unhu* principle. While the district is endowed with diverse knowledgeable population groups, including disadvantaged people, such social capital is not effectively harnessed for developmental purpose. Mbigi (1997) argues

that at the heart of *ubuntuunhu* is the idea of unity, working together and having love for each other. Unfortunately, the rich hub of knowledge, such as the elderly within community settings, is not fully capitalised by community development agencies including the Chimanimani Rural District Council. A case in point is indigenous climate knowledge, which is now widely understood to be an effective livelihood sustenance strategy (Chanza and de Wit, 2015; Musarandega and Chingombe, 2018) in the backdrop of climate change phenomena. This militates against the African tenets of social giving, was used by Africans to combat poverty (Chipkin and Ngqulunga, 2008). The fact that most rural development projects come as blueprints, already packaged for communities, remove community members from buying in and develop the sense of community membership. Willer (2014), however, notes that, low levels of contribution leave the entire community worse off than if all had contributed.

Studies on the contribution of collective action to economic development are clear that investing in social capital, community collective action being one, correlates with economic development of community. Gupta *et al.* (201) confirms a continued positive role of social capital effects on economic performance of any society. The results of this article revealed a sense of dissociation of individuals from community activities, with only a small number (32%) of community members willing to participate actively in development programmes and projects within their wards. Women and girls have their roles underplayed, yet the United Nations recognises them as key players in various community development programmes (Brazier, 2015; Ray, 2016). However, the tendency to exclude disadvantaged members of the society has often proved to bear very negative impacts on the individual community members and community development in general.

Hobbes (1991) described the condition of an individual in the absence of civil society (collective action) as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. We remember when we were at school, singing this song in primary school and church Sunday school; “The more we are together-together, the happier we would be, your friends are my friends-my

friends are your friends, the happier we would be". Thus, the song lyrics highlight the essence of collective action. This was a preparation of what educational philosophers called young adults, who would be ready to stir future community development. The results, thus, give insights on the need for community empowerment, meaning empowering of individuals who, together, make up the community. This is done through participatory decision making. Chikerema (2013) sees citizen participation as a desired and integral part of community development, which should be present in policy-making, implementation and evaluation processes.

This study revealed that only 30% of community members were willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities such as repairing schools or roads without payment in their community. This indicates low level of trust among members that their contribution would be recognised. This also results in very low level of collective action. The World Value Survey alludes that people can be trusted basing on the results in countries such as Norway, Sweden and Finland. In these countries, more than 60% of respondents indicated that trust among community members is possible (Gould and Hijzen, 2017). In the absence of traditional collective action, platforms such as the *dare/inkundla*, individuals are not assured of any benefit out of their effort. *Dare/Inkundla* (singular tense), *matare/inkundla* (plural) (Shona/Ndebele) or *imbizo* (*SiSwati*) means a gathering of a family or community to examine and resolve issues of mutual interest. It is an institution of leadership and sets out rules that are binding on all. *Dare/Inkundla* is all-encompassing. It can be viewed as a platform for counselling and developing persons, families and communities. Also noteworthy is that it is a vehicle through which cultural norms and values are transmitted from one generation to another (Haruperi, 2003). As a platform for dialogue, *dare/inkundla* provides opportunities for effective communication. A *dare/inkundla* gives recognition as a positive incentive for good contributions made, and reprimand as a negative incentive to lazy and non-cooperating members.

From the theories of collective action, the best-known solution offered to the collective action problem is the administration of selective incentives (Olson, 1965). Olson notes that selective incentives

encourage contributions to collective action, while, on the other hand, discourages free riding. This implies that selective incentives are a form of payments (or negative rewards) to motivate individuals to contribute towards public goods. This is supported by one collective action theory, the Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) (Berger *et al.*, 1966; 1989). Berger *et al.* (1972) argue that SCT portrays status as an individual's relative standing in a group, based on prestige, honour and deference. The SCT then describes how the individual in the group becomes differentiated based on status. This then makes accurate predictions for the levels of influence one has as a result from differently configured status hierarchies (Berger *et al.*, 1992).

The study revealed an astronomically low level (14%) of collective action based on the statement that, "If an unfortunate event befalls one member of my community, for example attachment of property because of debt or non-payment of fees for a child, our community members are willing to cooperate and assist". This is a dangerous state of collective action in which the whole community can perish without anyone willing to act. It is a one man for himself and God for us all game. A good example is when there was a general folding of arms following typhoid outbreak in Harare in 2017. Some international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), came in and helped the government of Zimbabwe (WHO, 2017). Most locals maintained a wait-and-see attitude. Unfortunately, many people died due to the cholera. Later around mid-August 2018, the cholera spread to other parts of the country. It was only then that the government pleaded with various stakeholders to create a crowd fund in a bid to contain the outbreak. The general observation was that Zimbabwe, as a community of citizens, were ready to collectively contribute to the collective action initiative. This affirms the outcome of the World Value Survey (Gould and Hijzen, 2017), which asserts that collective action yields positive results. Several corporates and individuals contributed to the noble cause to contain the cholera pandemic. However, some stakeholders were sceptical that the funds were going to be misappropriated or diverted to individual people's pockets. The implication of the Chimanimani study on collective action can as well be discussed in the realm of a global pandemic such as the deadly Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The WHO has affirmed that such

deadly pandemics as COVID-19 require all parties to shun individualistic tendencies and come together to map viable ways of dealing decisively with the pandemics.

From a pessimistic view, one may say that the quick reaction may not have been the collective action spirit, but individualistic, since Zimbabwe had just experienced a highly disputed election. It could have been a strategy by the newly elected government to save itself from a political backlash. However, a good collective platform was set in the mobilisation of stakeholders to raise the much-needed funds. The concept of traditional *dare/inkundla* came into place, though it unfolded in a more modernised manner. This is when local companies and individuals came in to fight cholera collectively. Rukuni (2006), sees *dare/inkundla* as a relevant concept in development, the judiciary, conflict resolution and various ceremonies. It is important in the African context because it allows for democratic participation. *Dare/Inkundla* provides a platform for checks and balances, thereby allowing total participation by all members in arriving at consensus on a common issue. All over the world, the *dareinkundla* concept exists in a myriad of circumstances such as the family, community, business platforms, government gazettes, civic symposia and various global fora. *DareInkundla*, as places for arbitrary and frank discussion involving members of families and communities in Zimbabwe, has not received enough attention in development programmes and projects.

It was from the crowd funding *dare/inkundla*, that one telecommunications company went out of its way to ask for donations through its communications platforms. Due to the *ubuntu/unhu* spirit, many potential funders in the country eventually participated in the raising of cholera abatement funds. Key lessons were drawn from the cholera outbreak experience. When people sit down and discuss, the platform allows everyone to participate, giving rise to the realisation of huge benefits. While a number rose to the occasion, the social standing of the telecommunications' company stood out. Hence, the second

solution from the theory of collective action. The theory is called the Status Theory of Collective Action (STOCA) (Willer, 2014). In this theory, status serves as a selective incentive motivating contribution to the group. Taking the example of the telecommunications organisation, the status could have been positively impacted by increased demand for its products. This argument suggests that strengthening social capital and, in particular, collective action, would help reverse development regression in communities and re-engineer African societies.

In the specifically studied case of Chimanimani, community empowerment is the cornerstone to collective actions. Non-government organisations, as noted earlier, do not completely include the locals in project priorities despite the rich social capital that the local people are endowed with. Apparently, a wealth of citizen knowledge exists within local people, including the traditional leadership fraternity in Chimanimani, though not fully harnessed (Musarandega and Chingombe, 2018). This was evidently revealed by the constricted 20% willingness of NGOs to cooperate and implement community-initiated development programmes. The same applied to the local authority, the Chimanimani Rural District Council, which scored a 21% level of willingness to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals. This is why community members did not find any justification in paying rates to Council as shown by a limited 18% willingness to pay by community members.

CONCLUSION

Putting maximum effort in investing in collective action has a huge potential to achieve sustainable people-centred development. This can lead to the enhancement of capacities of individuals, families and communities to play more significant roles in amalgamated rural transformation. Social capital, which manifests through collective action, is not a natural phenomenon. Rather, it emerges and progresses on an on-going basis. Investing in community collective action is important to ensure that trust amongst members of the

community is enhanced. Eurocentric western value systems based on positivist paradigms, are crucial starting points for development initiatives. However, these should not supersede Afrocentric initiatives that are more contextual to local community settings. This article demonstrated that individualistic development theories alone fail to suffice within communities. Communities encompass a variety of interest groups that include disadvantaged population groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. Redistributive development amongst vulnerable groups calls for a humanistic collective action approach. Accordingly, it is possible to bring back the African tenets of working together to strengthen the sense of oneness and accountability within the community. It is therefore, not disgraceful to reclaim the traditional virtues of *ubuntu/unhu*, which promotes collective action. It is this clarion call we make to policy-makers and scholars to re-consider the traditional *dare/inkundla* concept, since it is not only a platform for collective action, but a platform for self-actualisation. This is so because the *dare/inkundla* has the effect of conferring status to those who participate more for the public good. Resultantly, rural development is propelled.

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PANDEMIC WITHIN A PANDEMIC: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN MARONDERA URBAN (2020-2021), MASHONALAND EAST, ZIMBABWE

PRINCE MUZUVA, NOMAGA MPOFU-HAMADZIRIPI AND PROMISE HLUNGWANI¹

Abstract

This article is a pilot study that is part of broader research on gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Marondera Urban District. Women in Marondera Urban have been on the receiving end of GBV from time immemorial. However, the problem appears to have increased during the COVID-19-induced lockdown in Marondera from April 2020 to February 2021. Physical, social, sexual and economic abuse were the most common forms of violence in Marondera urban. Using the Broken Windows Theory, this study is premised on the sad reality that GBV continues unabated in the 21st century with the pandemic worsening the situation. This is a qualitative study where eight participants were purposively selected. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the eight participants. The findings indicated that before the COVID-19 pandemic, GBV was already high, however, the situation further deteriorated during the COVID-19-induced lockdowns as couples were confined at home most of the time.

Keywords: *sub-Saharan Africa, violence, pandemic, COVID-19, Broken Windows, development.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a name given by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the 11th of February 2020 to the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2. It started in

¹ All Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Department of Development Sciences. Marondera.

Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide (WHO, 2020). Gender-based violence (GBV) is referred to any harm or suffering that is perpetuated against anyone, regardless of sex, harming the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the victim (SIDA, 2015). Globally, during the COVID-19 induced lockdown, women were exposed to GBV- than men, and this was exacerbated by limited access to protective services (WHO, 2020). This shows that, generally, women were more likely to be victims of GBV than men across the world. In a document released on 26 March 2020, the WHO underlined that restrictive measures enacted to contain and manage COVID-19. such as isolation, quarantine and social distancing, could worsen the chance of violence against women (*ibid.*). Resultantly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, there was a record surge in GBV during this period (UN WOMEN, 2020). Africa, as a region, was not spared as it has been revealed that in developing countries, other forms of violence, such as arranged and forced marriages, have increased, along with an aggravation of marital violence, paralleling the resurgence and increased frequency of practices such as female genital mutilation (Grown, 2020).

Africa having many developing countries explains a general picture of GBV fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe, GBV- was already an issue of concern. A survey by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) indicated that by 2019, 39.4% of women aged 15-49 had experienced violence, with 11% having experienced sexual violence, (ZIMSTAT, 2019). As the country introduced strict lockdowns, most stakeholders dealing with GBV recorded a 60% increase in GBV-related calls in comparison with the pre-lockdown period (OCHA, 2020). The Musasa Project hotline recorded a marked increase of 764 cases of GBV against an average of 550 cases a month before COVID-19 (Sachiti, 2020). It is of paramount importance to observe that of the total cases reported, about 94% were women victims (OCHA, 2020). This explains the

extent to which women have been victims of GBV during the period under review.

Psychological/emotional, physical, economic and sexual violence are four of most frequently reported forms of violence (*ibid.*). This is in tandem with evidence from the East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) where a UN Women study found that intimate partner violence against women and girls is one of the forms of violence that increased sharply during the COVID-19 period (UN Women, 2020). This points to a consensus that women suffered the most during the period in Sub-Saharan Africa too. However, due to socio-economic disparities, their experiences cannot be homogenous, hence this study sought to understand the experiences of women in the Marondera Urban District of Zimbabwe in the face of GBV during the COVID-19 period. Further, measures put in place to contain the spread of COVID-19, such as working from home, quarantines and restricted movement increased the risks of domestic violence (*ibid.*). This phenomenon is possibly explained by the fact that couples had to spend longer times together than before.

The drivers of GBV during the COVID-19 period exacerbated already existing ones such as patriarchy, socio-cultural religious practices, and the acceptance of violence as a mode of social interaction. One hundred and fifty-seven papers have been published on gender and COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries so far (McDougal *et al.*, 2020). Of these papers, 41% (65) are from China, and only 14 articles are from Sub-Saharan Africa, limiting the literature base towards the understanding of COVID-19 and GBV in Marondera. Most peer-reviewed publications focus on health and medical aspects, with little attention on socio-economic dimensions, particularly GBV, a pandemic in a pandemic, a gap filled by this study. The study was guided by the following main research question: What are the insights on incidences of GBV in Marondera Urban during the lockdown period?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE BROKEN WINDOWS THEORY

This study applies the Broken Windows Theory to understand the GBV experiences of women in the Marondera Urban District during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The Broken Windows Theory is an approach developed to help understand and analyse the drivers of criminal activities (Childress, 2016). The theory was first coined by Kelling and Wilson (1982) and is based on the assumption that disorder and crime are linked in a developmental sequence. To this end, disorder of extended periods of stay at home, limited travel and job losses, among other stresses brought about by COVID-19, can be linked to GBV crimes which have a huge impact on the development trajectory of the nation at large and Marondera Urban in particular. The theory further explains that vandalism on a window can occur anywhere once the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility are lowered by actions that seem to signal a lack of common concern to ensure conformity (Kelling and Catherine, 1997). This translates to the notion that GBV continued unabated during the COVID-19 lockdown period and women were victims daily. The theory is relevant in explaining the GBV experiences of women in Marondera Urban during the COVID-19 period under review, given that cases were increasing every day just like what happens when a window is left broken and no holistic action is taken to correct the anomaly.

The theory is premised on the understanding that if a window on a building has cracks and is left unrepaired, the rest of the windows will soon be broken. Since the unrepaired window is a signal that no one cares and so breaking more windows will not result in any official sanction. This can be contextualised to GBV criminal activities, where the perpetrators of violence commit the crimes against women due to factors such as culture, religion, patriarchy and poverty cases are not reported or not properly handled, hence motivating the perpetrator to go for the next victim (UN WOMEN, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The interpretivism paradigm was adopted and it provided the participants with room to tell their stories from their experiences about GBV against women during the COVID-19-induced lockdowns. The study was an exploratory case study. The design enabled the researchers to conduct a critical analysis of the GBV experiences of women in the Marondera Urban District in the face of COVID-19 lockdowns. The target population was estimated to be around 25 000, the estimated number of women in Marondera Urban during that time. (ZIMSTAT, 2012). The study used the purposive sampling technique. A sample of (eight) 8 participants was selected to represent the population of Marondera and, since this was a pilot study to the actual future research, the sample was big enough to cover the town. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data and the local Shona language was used and translated into English on the presentation of the data.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Given that the participants were from different backgrounds, families and societies, they had different experiences of violence from the perpetrators. The demographic distribution of the participants exposed how GBV has been experienced differently. The variables accounting for the different experiences include age, levels of education and employment status, among other factors. This contributed to the disparities in the lived experiences of victims of violence during the period under review. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic distribution presentation.

AGE GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 1: Age groups of participants

Age	Number
29 and below	2
30-39	2
40-49	2
50 and above	2

The data shows that all the groups were equally represented. There was need to include all age groups since GBV goes beyond age limits. Experiences and perspectives of various age groups, as far as GBV was critical in explaining the phenomenon in Marondera Urban District.

There was a balance in terms of representation of women participants employed and unemployed. Out of the eight participants, four were formally employed and four were unemployed. This selection was necessitated by the need to gather the experiences of these two groups of women. The statistics indicate that women are now well represented in the mainstream economy as their participation has improved.

Table 2: Participants' levels of education

Level of education	Number
Tertiary	2
Secondary	2
Primary	2
Non-formal	2

Table 2 indicates that there were eight participants in the study and all of them attained some form of education. There were four categories, namely tertiary, secondary, primary and non-formal with equal representation of two participants per each category. This enabled the researchers to widen their nets towards ensuring that the experiences of women with various education statuses were captured as they form the centre of the scope of this study.

INSIGHTS ON INCIDENCES OF GBV IN MARONDERA

Before COVID-19, women in Marondera were exposed to GBV, a situation worsened during the lockdowns. Various strategies were employed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Below are insights from the participants.

MANIFESTATIONS OF GBV IN MARONDERA URBAN DURING LOCKDOWNS.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Economic incapacitation was pointed out by most participants as the major reason they were being abused economically by spouses. It was pointed out that in most cases women were economically dependent on spouses who, during in this period, became jobless and unable to provide for them as usual. One of the participants had this to say,

“Since the start of the lockdown, my husband stopped giving me money for domestic use, saying he is the best person to do budgets in the family and will do the shopping, a situation that is persisting up to now. I am really worried about this development because he used to give me money and I don’t know where he thinks I am now getting the money.”

From the above excerpt the statement, “*I am really worried about this development because he used to give me money and I don’t know where he thinks I am now getting the money*”, indicates that participants were being economically deprived, particularly money wise. This could have been a consequence of low levels of education which resulted in unemployment of the participants and the closure of the informal sector, hence the depending on their husband’s salaries. This is in line with OCHA (2020) which argued that economic violence is one of the most common forms of GBV recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The Broken Windows Theory is applicable in this case given that just like when a window is left unattended. further damage will happen. When the husband began keeping the money to himself, he was not sanctioned for his behaviour, prompting him to continue with this behaviour even after the COVID lockdown period.

Almost all participants were in support of the comment above, with another participant commenting that,

“I learned the hard way, that as a woman, I should work on my own because my husband is in the informal sector and I thought all was well. During the lockdown period, the informal sector was immediately closed which made my spouse panic and took all the savings into his pocket and became very stingy. Despite that, I knew he was having money he could not give to me as usual and I suffered with children because we were no longer having access to the usual necessities”.

The above comment points to the fact that, generally, women were caught unaware, especially those who were economically dependent on spouses as the behaviour of the spouses changed due to the prevailing circumstances. The sudden turn of events resulting in a short supply of funds to the spouse as usual could also be linked to issues such as emotional violence, where the breadwinner, in most cases being the husband, would use harsh words to downplay the requests of the spouse.

However, there was one divergent view on this theme where one of the participants said,

“I am gainfully employed and my salary was coming with some additions during the lockdowns, so I didn’t have any problem in that regard, but my problem was with my husband’s family which expected a normal supply of groceries and money yet my husband was a taxi driver and his livelihood was cut off. We would argue with the spouse succumbing to his relatives’ pressure and trying to force me to use my savings to keep his family which I could not.”

The above excerpt indicates that there were different impacts of COVID-19 on those employed and those unemployed. However, this did not change GBV as one thing or something would lead to arguments resulting in physical, sexual or emotional violence. In this case, the welfare of the husband’s family became the bone of *contention.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Physical violence relates to physical force to injure, abuse, damage or destroy. In this context, physical violence is violence perpetrated against women during the period under review. Physical violence results in injury, psychological harm or death (UN Women, 2020). Physical violence is directly linked to other forms of violence as after the physical violence, the victim or the perpetrator is likely to suffer emotional and psychological stress, which is another form of violence. Also, sexual violence is highly likely following physical violence or it can be the cause of physical violence when sex is denied among intimate partners. Some partners tend to punish each other economically as a way of protesting physical violence and, in some instances, such economic behaviour can instigate physical violence. This explanation is evidence of the notion that physical violence cannot

be separated from most other forms of violence. Participants claimed that physical violence was the order of the day during the lockdown period. The Broken Windows Theory is relevant in this study as it is based on the assumption that disorder and crime are linked in a developmental sequence. The disorder created by COVID-19 resulted in crimes such as GBV in the form of physical violence and eventually affecting development. One of the participants stated,

“I realised that I didn’t know him well, because since we started staying together, he never laid a hand on me but this time I learned the hard way when I was beaten. Since we got married two years ago, everyone was busy at work, but because of spending time together, he exposed his true colours.”

From the above excerpt the statement that *“but because of spending time together, it exposed his true colours”* indicates that some partners stayed for a long time together without realising the violent tendencies of the other which was exposed when partners were now spending more time together due to COVID-19 restrictions. This evidence is also shared in other sources where partners end up involved in physical violence because of spending a lot of time together. For example, a study by UN Women in 2020 indicated that stay-at-home and work-from-home arrangements fuelled GBV as partners were now spending more time together.

All the participants agreed with the above participant on the issue of physical violence. However, the majority were of the view that physical violence was not because of COVID-19 but was, rather, worsened by the prevailing conditions during this period as women have been victims of GBV since time immemorial. One of the participants commented,

“I can confirm that during this period in Marondera, as women in general, we suffered a lot of physical violence and particularly myself. Sometimes I got assaulted for very trivial issues such as being accused of too much use of my phone instead of giving him attention, yet we were staying together from dawn to sunset, making it difficult to always be paying attention to him. However, what I want to emphasize here is that, yes, during this period, I saw increased violence against myself and others but this violence was not new and COVID-19 cannot be solely blamed for this predicament as physical violence against women can be traced back to many years ago.”

The above comment shows that despite the effects of COVID-19 in fuelling physical violence among women in Marondera, physical abuse was not a new thing as they have been abused for a long time and this has become another feature of discordant marriages. This resonates well with the Broken Windows Theory applied in this study which suggests that when a cracked window is left unattended, there is the likelihood that the crack will expand, and other windows may crack.

EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE

Participants indicated that they experienced a lot during the lockdowns as far as GBV is concerned. They all agreed that emotional abuse was the order of the day as violent perpetrators used hurtful language and shouting at women as a way of expressing their frustrations and the stress brought on by the pandemic restrictions. It is key to observe that emotional abuse, in most cases, is related to other forms of violence such as physical violence and sexual violence. This comes with the understanding that when one is a victim of physical violence, this can eventually lead to the emotional instability of the victim as recovering from the effects and fear of future violence can be hounding the victim. In the context of this study, emotional violence was viewed from a perspective where women in Marondera Urban experienced it during the period of the COVID-19 lockdown. One of the participants indicated that,

“He would scold me time and again. Had he verbally abused only me, it was going to be better but he would include my mother in the insults, yet she had nothing to do with our differences. I would not sleep as I was reminded the whole night that it was a horrible mistake to marry a woman who can only rely on selling vegetables on a small table yet those working in government were earning monthly salaries despite the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. I would cry every day.”

Further to the above comment, another participant weighed in when she indicated that she was emotionally suffering during this period as she was a victim of physical violence accompanied by further threats of violence and divorce. This explains the interplay and linkages amongst the forms of violence experienced by women in Marondera Urban during this period. One of the participants had this to say,

“Just for asking about money for food, I used to be assaulted physically with open hands and clenched fists all over the body, accompanied by emotionally impacting words like he would say I am just waiting for

COVID-19 to end, and I am going to divorce you. These threats affected me emotionally to the extent that I ended up failing to fulfil all my obligations like offering conjugal rights which worsened the situation”.

Consequently, as indicated, emotional violence was rampant as women were blamed for being a liability to their spouses. This could have been a trigger for some of the physical violence experienced by women. It is also noted that the women who were exposed to this gender-based violence could not answer back to these emotional assaults, leaving them between a rock and a hard place. This is in line with the Broken Windows Theory being employed in this study. The theory assumes that broken windows, likened to violence in this case, influence more breaking which is more violence in the context under study. In line with the assumptions of this theory preventing the breaking of the windows before the situation goes out of hand becomes critical, translating into the need to prevent all avenues that cause any form of GBV as it is likely to degenerate into multiple cases of violence which becomes difficult to control to the detriment of the community at large and women in particular. UN Women, (2020) in line with the above, argued that generally, emotional abuse was perpetuated by frustrations brought about by lost livelihoods and was common during the lockdowns.

GBV COPING STRATEGIES

As lockdowns were extended, there was more exposure to violence for most of the women in Marondera as explained by the participants. To this end, women ended up devising survival strategies to mitigate the impact of the GBV that was being perpetrated against them. The Broken Windows Theory assumes that the breaking of the windows continues when perpetrators have been left free. This then emphasises the need to address the plight of GBV victims as more violence is likely to take place. Indeed, punitive, deterrent and holistic measures are critical in ensuring GBV against women is avoided in the future. One of the participants said,

“The abuse was too much. At one time, I told him that I wanted to visit my mother who stays in Mutare because she is terminally sick. I was given a travelling letter by the police. I then lied to him that I had contracted the virus and hence could not come back early. This helped me in healing.”

The above excerpt "*I lied to him that my mother was critically ill*" shows how innovative the women of Marondera ended up being in trying to ensure that they escaped from the violence that was being perpetrated against them. This strategy was one of the best since staying away reduced daily confrontations but, still to some extent, the extended stay away perpetuated psychological stress because of being homesick.

In agreement with the above strategy, another participant said that she survived economic violence by engaging in transactional sexual encounters as a way of raising funds. However, it can be noted that in return in most cases, this was also the cause of physical violence when the transaction went wrong. Interestingly, married women were also engaging in this illicit strategy.

"I survived economic deprivation by my husband through engaging in prostitution. I can call it prostitution but it was transactional sex, where I was doing it for the sole purpose of getting money and meeting the daily needs which my husband was no longer providing. This method worked wonders for me and I don't regret it although I make sure that my husband does not know the issue because I don't want my marriage to collapse."

The above excerpt indicates how some women ended up engaging in unorthodox acts to survive. Despite this being a solution in the circumstances, it was a risky strategy as it exposed the spouse to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and the risk of physical violence and divorce.

Some women resorted to borrowing as a survival strategy to supplement their income through outsourcing from other colleagues who were better off. Such initiatives were meant to save families from the possibility of starvation. However, this behaviour is inseparable from psychological and emotional dissonance which came because of the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdowns. One of the participants intimated,

"For me to survive through this difficult time, I ended up adopting the borrow-Peter-to-pay-John style where I could borrow from another person so that I could pay the other because I had no savings at all. It worked so much but the only challenge was that the debts continued with me months after the relaxation of the lockdown which had a huge negative bearing on my social life."

From the above comment, it is evident that the strategy worked for some of the women in Marondera Urban. However, the challenge with this strategy is that when debts continue to accumulate one can be trapped in a debt cycle. This comes with the understanding that some women ended up being emotionally abused, and sometimes physically abused, due to over-borrowing and failing to service debts in time, creating further altercations in the family.

A different approach was raised by one of the participants who was sure that her strategy of fighting back as she was being assaulted was a game-changer in stopping the physical violence tendencies which were increasing every day. She disclosed,

“When the physical violence was increasing on me during this period, I devised a way of survival since I realised that he could kill me. One day I fought him back with strong intent, although I didn’t cause grievous bodily harm. I assaulted him enough to the extent that he surrendered, and from that incident, he no longer attempted such moves.”

The above comment points to the picture that during this time, women were being abused to the extent of employing desperate measures to save themselves from brutal physical violence. While it is commonly upheld that women are weak and are always on the receiving end of physical abuse from men, their abuse during the COVID-19 period changed the narrative as some women began to defend themselves. This strategy was effective in deterring some violent partners constantly abusing their spouses. However, the challenge with this approach is that it further stretches the relationship, which is not ideal for a healthy family setup as children can be directly affected by the fights.

CONCLUSION

The lockdown that was imposed to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe was a necessary evil, given that in as much as it was necessary medically, socially and economically, it brought misery to women. This can be evidenced by the drastic increase in gender-based violence cases, as partners were staying together for longer periods than before. The major forms of violence experienced by the participants included physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence. Participants ended up employing survival strategies which

worked to some extent, but came with some drawbacks. State institutions with the mandate of protecting citizens from these perpetrators of violence must be capacitated enough to deal with the GBV pandemic holistically.

Physical violence is the major form of violence that manifested in Marondera Urban. Women were exposed to physical abuse by their partners for various reasons, ranging from very trivial to mere abuse of women just to demonstrate masculine power. Physical violence is hugely interlinked with other forms of violence such as sexual, emotional and economic violence. Physical violence tends to ignite these other forms of violence and, at times, violence is a result of the triggers emanating from the environment or circumstances being experienced. In this study, it is argued that the lockdown restrictions accompanied by the storm and stress of boredom, and inadequate resources complicated relations in the families.

Sexual violence was common among intimate partners during the period of COVID-19 lockdowns in Marondera Urban. On the receiving end in most cases were women, who were often forcibly raped by their partners. Staying together for a long time, coupled with frustrations from prevailing socio-economic challenges during that time, contributed to the wayward behaviour exhibited as partners were using sex as punishment for failing to provide for the family, among other contributing factors.

Emotional violence was rampant during the period of COVID-19 in Marondera Urban as fear of the unknown and stress of thinking about how to provide for the family were weighing on the emotional state of the people. Further to the above, emotional violence was influenced by physical violence, common during the time.

There is an interlink between and among the various forms of violence which were perpetrated against women in Marondera Urban. There is a relationship between physical violence, emotional violence, economic violence and sexual violence which is very difficult to separate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that in times of similar disaster situations and other cases of emergencies, women should be treated differently compared to their male counterparts, particularly in the economic sphere. This comes with the understanding that women are naturally weak and unable to engage in difficult ways of sourcing funds, hence suffering more compared to the males. Further, there is need to offer social grants specifically towards alleviating women economically in situations like this.

Governments must have a proactive approach towards effects of disaster situations so that funds and other resources such as food and other amenities are made available and easily accessible to avoid desperate situations which breed all forms of violence. Women should compete for available economic opportunities so that they are not solely and economically dependent on their male counterparts for sustenance as that over-dependence results in them being exposed to GBV.

People should employ alternative dispute resolution methods amid disasters. This approach is essential given that violent approaches are destructive physically, mentally and socially. Development is also affected when partners are employing violent ways of solving disputes as it is characterised by sickness, poverty or even death.

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THE EMERGING WAR ON DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE: THE CASE OF HARARE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE

PRINCE MUZUVA¹, AARAM GWIZA² AND PLACXEDES MUDANGWE³

Abstract

The world over, particularly in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, there have been growing cases of drug and substance abuse that pose a serious threat to concerted efforts aimed at strengthening public health systems in the region. The upsurge in drug and substance abuse has distressing implications on the socio-economic lives of individuals and communities at large. This is epitomised by rampant cases of criminal activities, increasing healthcare needs, rehabilitative services and reduced labour productivity, all of which are detrimental to communities' public health sustainability. This study interrogates the implications of drug and substance abuse with perspectives from Harare, using a qualitative research approach. In-depth interviews and document searches were also conducted. Major findings indicate that the uptake of most drugs being abused is meant to treat particular ailments, and prevention and treatment are the major adopted strategies to arrest the scourge, as awareness campaigns on dangers associated with drug abuse have increased. This study suggests the imperative need for punitive measures to be harnessed to deter perpetrators and promoters of drug and substance abuse that will ultimately assist in strengthening public health systems in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan Africa, goals, sustainable development, illicit, sex.*

INTRODUCTION

Global surges in issues of illicit drugs both signal and culminate in international tensions. The sources of some of these tensions are

¹ Department of Development Sciences, Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Marondera, Zimbabwe.

² Department of Development Studies, Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe.

³ Department of Development Studies, Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe.

evident: rapid transformation in political orientation, declining family and community cohesiveness, growing joblessness and/or under-employment, economic and social segregation, and increased crime (UNDCP, 1995). These factors are among the driving forces behind the growing levels of drug and substance abuse that have become endemic in recent years. (Kim *et al.*, 2017). The challenge with this menace is that it affects the young generation that is still productive and serves as the pivot of the future generation (*ibid.*). The alarming levels of drug and substance abuse have far-reaching effects on the well-being of individuals that remains a major issue of concern. Issues such as addiction, reduced productivity, mental illness,] and subsequent death are among the undesirable manifestations of drug and substance abuse (Volkow, 2020). International organisations such as the United Nations and its subsidiaries, among others, and the Interpol and the World Health Organisation (WHO) and others, have made considerable strides in raising awareness and enforcing international, regional and local laws against drug and substance abuse. However, the scourge continues unabated (Batsell, 2018; Maraire and Chethiyar, 2020). Particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, statistical evidence on drug and substance abuse is indicative of an upward trend, defining Africa as the dominant continent compared to other regions across the globe (Donnenfeld *et al.*, 2019.)

Cognisant of the above scenario, Africa is faced with the mammoth task of rehabilitating, educating and preventing further substance and drug abuse in the continent. However, this noble course of action is likely to be compromised by the negative effects of globalisation in the global South. Zimbabwe has ratified and domesticated international programmes on drug and substance abuse. The country, taking a leaf from the WHO, developed the National Strategic Plan for Mental Health Services (2019-2023) (MoHCC, 2019). Despite the availability of this intervention in Zimbabwe, drug and substance abuse continue to increase. Commonly used drugs in Sub-Saharan Africa include, but are not limited to, illicit alcohol products, methamphetamine (*mutoriro*), cough syrups containing codeine, marijuana and sex-enhancing drugs that flood African streets (Zivira, 2016). This study sought to establish the major drivers of drug and substance abuse cases and suggest better ways to address such illicit activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Particular

attention is paid to the Harare Central Business District (CBD) in Zimbabwe to generalise Sub-Saharan Africa's perspectives. The section below presents a description of the key terms to put this study into perspective.

THE CONCEPT OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug and substance abuse are terms commonly used interchangeably in contemporary public health and development literature. The extensive use of these concepts reflects the global commitment to understanding their root causes and implications on the lives of people within communities. While there are various definitions of these terms in the extant literature, the WHO (2011) defines substance abuse as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. The most commonly abused substances are alcohol, marijuana (*ganja*), bhang, hashish (*charas*), various kinds of cough syrups, sedative tablets, brown sugar, heroin, cocaine and tobacco (cigarette, *gutka*, *pan masala*), etc (Sahu and Sahu, 2016). Substance abuse is also appreciated as part of drug abuse. In this case, a drug is defined as a pharmaceutical preparation or a naturally occurring substance principally utilised to affect changes in an existing process or state (physiological, psychological or biochemical) (*ibid.*). In simpler terms, any chemical with the capacity to change the physical or mental functioning of a person is referred to as a drug (*ibid.*). Thus, the use of a drug to cure an illness, prevent disease or improve health is often referred to as 'drug use' (*ibid.*).

However, when a drug is taken for purposes outside medication, in any amount, strength, frequency or way that results in damage to the physical or mental functioning of an individual, it then becomes 'drug abuse'. Any form of a drug is prone to abuse. That is, even drugs designed for medication can be used. Illegal drugs such as brown sugar and *ganja* have no medical value. Thus, if one uses them, drug abuse can occur. Drug abuse was defined as a disease in 1956 by the WHO and the American Psychiatric Association, a

the illicit consumption of any naturally occurring or pharmaceutical substance to change the way in which a person feels, thinks or behaves, without understanding or taking into consideration the damaging physical and mental side effects that are caused". (Childline India Foundation, 2012).

The above definitions highlight that substance and drug abuse are a worrisome growing health threat, especially in young populations. If no stern measures are taken, this worsening phenomenon will become a serious threat to the lives of future generations on a global scale.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article applies the Broken Windows Theory to explain the phenomena of drug and substance abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa, the case of Harare. The Broken Windows Theory is an approach developed to help understand and analyse the drivers of criminal activities (Childress, 2016). The theory was first put forward by Kelling and Wilson (1982) and is based on the assumption that disorder and crime are linked in a developmental sequence. This contextually entails that drug and substance abuse as disorderly behaviour can be linked to public health concerns that have a huge impact on community development, particularly looking at meeting sustainable development goals generally in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Harare in particular.

The theory further explains that vandalism on a window can occur anywhere once the sense of mutual regard and obligations of civility are lowered by actions that seem to signal a lack of common concern to ensure conformity (Kelling and Coles, 1997). This translates to the understanding that when drug and substance abuse is left unaddressed, more people continue to be victims of the scourge as a lack of attention to addressing this illicit behaviour signals a wrong message of condoning the behaviour. The theory is relevant in explaining the scourge of drug and substance abuse in Harare as drug abuse is on the rise and everyday people are abusing drugs, some getting addicted, some falling sick and others dying, just like what happens when a window is left broken and no holistic action is taken to correct the anomaly. The problem spreads.

The theory is premised on the understanding that if a window on a building is broken and left unrepaired, the remaining windows will soon be broken as well. Because the unrepaired window is a signal that no one cares, breaking more windows will not result in any official sanction. The above assumption of the theory can be related to the

context in which drug traffickers and consumers continue their behaviour because they feel no threat from the law and hence the scourge continues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature related to the study was consulted with the rationale of building a strong case concerning drug and substance abuse in the Harare CBD. The literature reviewed covered focused mainly on the causes of people indulging in drug and substance abuse, the types of drugs and substances being abused and the subsequent social and health implications related to the abuse of drugs and substances.

THE INSURGENCY OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE HARARE CBD

This study revealed that illegal drug and substance uptake in Zimbabwe has dramatically reached crisis levels, especially in the post-COVID-19 era. Of great concern have been the age categories of adolescents and youths involved in these harmful activities. Focusing on the Harare CBD, the study established that commonly abused drugs and substances include glue, bronchoclear, *mangemba*, cane spirit, marijuana, codeine and methamphetamine (crystal meth) (Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan, 2020; Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). In this study, researchers investigated the worsening of substance use and abuse during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe and how the unfolding scenarios pose a serious threat to public health in the country. The study noted that an increase in illegal drug and substance abuse is fuelled by porous national borders that have witnessed drugs such as bronchoclear (containing codeine) finding their way illegally into the country in huge volumes (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). The situation is compounded by emerging local production that is now also rampant with drugs such as *musombodiya*, a colourless, highly intoxicating drink made from ethanol and emblem powder being illegally manufactured and distributed throughout Zimbabwe (Jakaza and Nyoni, 2018).

Over the past years, drug and substance abuse has been a common phenomenon among homeless children involved in this illicit behaviour for different reasons, including relieving themselves from stressful circumstances, boosting courage for involvement in criminal

activities and sedating themselves to help them sleep (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). However, very high unemployment rates in Zimbabwe, coupled with poverty and despair, have resulted in an increasing number of youthful citizens also turning to using drugs for entertainment (ZIMFACT, 2021). This has been exacerbated by the ready availability and affordability of these substances to adolescents and youth as they interact within their social circles (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). In-depth interviews suggested that the COVID-19 lockdowns and subsequent extensions could have worsened the situation given that the youth population, including those of school-going age, were doing nothing in their respective homes, with limited entertainment facilities, particularly in high-density suburban settings such as in Harare. Furthermore, as argued by ZIMFACT (2021), the COVID-19 era has witnessed Zimbabwe experiencing a steep rise in methamphetamine use. Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant commonly referred to as crystal meth, or locally as *mutoriro* (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). This drug affects the central nervous system and can leave users in a deep stupor (*ibid.*). There has been a steep rise in the number of hospital admissions due to methamphetamine use among adolescents and youth compared to other conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic (United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)), (2021).

This scenario is an emerging public health disaster. A documentary search confirmed that some substances are significant factors for risky sexual behaviour and cardiovascular and neurological diseases, and predispose to short- and long-term psychiatric complications, including addiction, stress, depression, anxiety, suicide, and even psychosis (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021). School-going children who turn to use illicit substances are also at risk of conflict with the law and dropping out of school. Additionally, drug use has serious socio-economic repercussions and is associated with a higher burden of violent robberies, increased unemployment, and the need for rehabilitation services (Mukwenha *et al.*, 2021).

Addiction is loosely understood as a chronic, usually relapsing, brain disease that leads to compulsive drug-seeking and use, irrespective of negative effects on the addicted person and those people around them.

Even though the first decision to take drugs is voluntary for most individuals, the resultant brain changes over time affect an individual's self-control and capacity to resist huge impulses, forcing them to take drugs. Treatments are readily available to allow individuals to withstand the powerful damaging effects of addiction. Research points to the fact that merging addiction treatment medications with behavioural therapy is necessary to ensure the success of many patients (National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), 2011). In effect, treatment strategies designed specifically for each patient's drug abuse patterns and any co-occurring medical, psychiatric and social problems, will go a long way in sustaining recovery and life without drug abuse. Similar to other chronic relapsing diseases, such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease, it is also possible to successfully manage drug addiction (*ibid.*). As with other chronic diseases, it is common for a person to relapse and begin abusing drugs again. Relapse, however, does not signal treatment failure; rather, it indicates that treatment should be reinstated and adjusted, or that an alternative treatment is needed to help the individual regain control and recovery (*ibid.*).

METHODOLOGY

Researchers have adopted interpretivism in their research philosophy. This paradigm provided participants room to tell their story in their understanding based on their experiences, reflections and perceptions, concerning how drug and substance abuse in Harare is unfolding. The paradigm informed the choice of relevant qualitative research design. Therefore, an exploratory case study was adopted for the research design. The design enabled researchers to explore the nature, architecture and dynamism of the increasing rates of drug and substance abuse in the Harare CBD. Target respondents were selected using purposive non-probability sampling that enabled the researchers to discuss the subject matter under study with well-exposed, experienced and knowledgeable participants. The sample size adopted in this study comprised 14 participants drawn from the target population of 300, an estimated figure that includes government departments, civil society, families and victims within the Harare CBD. In-depth interviews and document searches were used as data-collection instruments. Non-participant observations were equally

utilised to complete the data collected using the above-mentioned instruments. In this study, qualitative data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach as propounded by Cohen *et al.* (2007). Thematic approaches are centred on generating natural units of meaning, classifying, categorising and ordering these units of meaning, structuring narratives to describe the interview contents and interpreting the interview data.

FINDINGS

The study came up with various findings about the scourge of drug and substance abuse in the Harare CBD. Results were centred mainly on public awareness and perceptions towards drugs and substances and the interventions which could be employed by the government to combat the situation.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Revelations of the study point to the fact that society understands drug and substance abuse is not allowed and that it has reached crisis levels in the country. Drug abuse is a crime in Zimbabwe under the Dangerous Drugs Act [Chapter 15:02, 1956] (Zimbabwe Legal Information Institution, 2013). One participant said,

Here, in Zimbabwe, the law is very strict regarding the possession, selling, and consumption of drugs. However, we look at what we can do, considering few economic opportunities. We continue to use them because we can relieve stress and eke out a living through these illicit deals. We always negotiate with the police caught on the wrong side of the law, as they are human beings as well.

The excerpt above indicates that the country has strong laws for dealing with drug and substance abuse (Nhapi, 2019). However, the lack of economic opportunities has forced some drug abusers to continue as they have no option but to seek stress relief from drugs and substances. It is also indicative that they are no longer afraid of law enforcement agencies because they are ready to negotiate with them. This unfolding scenario sends a strong message to the government regarding the imperative need to further strengthen law enforcement agencies if the fight against drug and substance abuse is

to be won. Roles of such agencies can be seen as complementary to government efforts in addressing the crisis levels of drug and substance abuse that grossly undermine national development efforts.

The above suggestion does not discredit current efforts to address the issues of drug and substance abuse. As argued by Maraire *et al.* (2020), law enforcement agents in Zimbabwe have responded to the issue of drug abuse by enforcing various legislative frameworks. For instance, the Voice of America (VOA) Africa confirmed that police in Zimbabwe record more than 100 cases of drug abuse every month in the capital city of Zimbabwe, Harare, alone (Kundwei and Mbwire, 2020). A substantial number of youths were arrested for drug abuse in Zimbabwe, some of whom, after such an encounter with the law, completely refrained from the crime (Matunhu and Matunhu, 2016). The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Departments of Drugs and Narcotics and Community Relations and Crime Prevention Departments regularly conduct awareness programmes on drug abuse and its effects on communities (Magaya, 2017). These police departments have been raising awareness and educating youth drug abusers together with their families. These awareness programmes are usually full-day programmes that offer vibrant teachings to the community, schools and church organisations regarding drug abuse.

The police awareness programmes on drug abuse are very informative and easy to comprehend, as they make fun of the taught concepts through dramatisation, catchy phrases and winning competitions (Nhapi and Mathede, 2016). The police also plays a significant role in addressing drug abuse issues by supporting drug abusers to live in harmony with their families (Matunhu and Matunhu, 2016). Often, families seek support from the police to address a member of the family who has become hostile due to drug abuse (Mafigu, 2018). The police help by advising and warning estranged drug abusers. Some youth drug abusers refrain from drug abuse after only caution and advice from the police, together with their families (Makande, 2017). The police also help to reintegrate and reconcile youth drug abusers and their families (Matunhu Matunhu, 2016). Some families become impatient and fed-up with a member of the family who has turned to

drug abuse Police and other institutions then play an active role within society to educate the affected families and encourage reconciliation and the reintegration of that member into the family (Mugwenhi, 2017).

GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR COLLABORATION TOWARDS DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Government of Zimbabwe is known for taking the lead and underlining a multipronged approach to fight against drug and substance abuse in the country. Zimbabwe responded principally to the issue of drug abuse by working on a drug abuse master plan that ensures that drug abusers receive necessary treatment and rehabilitation at an affordable cost (ZCLDN, 2020). In effect, the President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, on February 1, 2019, appealed to all stakeholders and offered recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Child Care in drafting a National Drug Control Master Plan (ZCLDN, 2019). This plan involves various stakeholders and collaborates with the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the church (*ibid.*). In particular, the rehabilitation processes and structures of victims of drug and substance abuse were made available by the Zimbabwean government. This proffers a lifeline for victims to free themselves from the clutches of drug and substance abuse. One of the participants said,

I appreciate the Zimbabwean government for coming up with rehabilitation programmes for people suffering from the effects of drug and substance abuse. Some people end up mentally unsound, and some [having] hallucinations, among other undesirable consequences of using drugs. The reintegration of the victim into society appears to be a challenge and needs attention as a successful process and procedure for the rehabilitation process.

Taking a leaf from the sentiments above, one can conceive that personnel in the health sector is well trained, available and ready to assist victims and families of victims of drug and substance abuse through counselling and therapy among other approaches (Nhunzvi *et al.*, 2019). However, it is evident that despite the interventions, taking the victim back into society is a challenge, as communities usually resist and discriminate against recovering or recovered abusers.

The Ministry of Health and Child Care has also shown its commitment to addressing the mental health impact of drug and substance abuse in the Harare CBD through the creation of mental health institutions and capacitating these institutions with human and logistical resources. Those who develop drug abuse-related mental illnesses are admitted to mental health institutions where they undergo detoxification programmes and medical care and receive in-patient rehabilitation such as cognitive behaviour therapy, family counselling if necessary, and occupational therapy (Nhunzvi *et al.*, 2019). The challenge lies with those who require rehabilitation services for drug abuse but have not developed mental health illnesses; the public health system of Zimbabwe does not have such rehabilitation programmes for such (*ibid.*). ZCLDN (2018) affirmed that Zimbabwe does not support People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) and does not have specific treatment facilities for them. There are public hospitals that offer mental health services and detoxification, but no harm reduction services (ZCLDN, 2018). However, Kumuterera (2019) claims that those recovering drug abusers after discharge from public mental health institutions in Zimbabwe seek pastoral care or visit other institutions anonymously for help.

Awareness campaigns on the rise of drug and substance abuse continue to be conducted by law enforcement agents, emphasizing the need to refrain from illicit and health-threatening substances. One participant said,

We can't blame lack of public education on the issues of drug and substance abuse in this country because almost every day different teams from law enforcement agencies are in the streets and other public areas educating and campaigning against drug and substance abuse. The blame is, therefore, on our attitude as community members for not responding positively to the noble call to desist from drug and substance abuse.

Based on the above, one can argue that information has been passed on to the communities on the need to desist and refrain from abuse of drugs and substances. The above comment resonates well with the view that law enforcement agencies play a key role in raising awareness of drug and substance abuse (Magaya, 2017). Therefore, this

entails and reflects a true picture of cooperation on the part of the communities to support the plea from these agencies.

Civil society in Zimbabwe, particularly churches, is in the leading pack in terms of contributing to the rehabilitation and revitalisation of victims of drug and substance abuse. The church in Zimbabwe generally has an open-door policy and those repenting are given more care while being counselled to map the way forward in a drug-free way, One of the participants argued;

As the church, we are more than ready to accept people from different social groupings and, in particular, people who are considered social outcasts, such as drug addicts. It is within our hearts to help, such as winning those souls that is critical for the community's safety and development and the kingdom of God. We offer counselling, social outings and prayers to ensure the rehabilitation of such people.

It can be observed that civil society organisations such as the church are readily available to assist in the rehabilitation and re-integration of drug and substance abuse victims in Zimbabwe. This resonates with the view that most drug abusers seek assistance from the church (Zimoyo, 2020). Therefore, civil society's role is critical and is freely available. However, the question remains as to why there has been a rise in cases of drug and substance abuse with detrimental effects on the community, yet there are several private, public and civil organisations ready to assist for free.

To some extent, communities play a key role in the prevention and rehabilitation of drug abusers. Some potential drug abusers avoid indulging in drugs for fear of the responsible community that can reprimand them. In support of this, one of the participants stated:

I have been using sex-enhancing products in the streets of Harare that have been said to have come from India for the past three years. I normally buy the ones that make me last longer and strong in bed, but without these substances, I am no longer able to do it naturally by myself. I was assisted by a community member who was observing my frequency at these dealers to desist from the use of such substances as they affect the natural reproductive system in the long run as I have been experiencing lately.

The above excerpt suggests how communities can provide oversight duties on the behaviour of other community members regarding drug and substance abuse (Mtemeri and Nhamo, 2019). The above, therefore, translates to Ubuntu African Philosophy that is summed as “I am because we are”, in describing how communities belong to each other and co-exist as a unit in transforming the communities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the foregoing, it emerged that prevention and treatment are the major strategies adopted to arrest the scourge as awareness campaigns focusing on prevention and the effects of drug and substance abuse have increased. The message of educating the general populace to refrain from drug and substance abuse has reached its peak, and it is now up to society to heed the call. The population currently engaging in drug and substance abuse is doing so out of resistance to the call to abstain from these illicit behaviours, and the law should descend heavily on them. This study suggests the imperative need for punitive measures to be harnessed to deter perpetrators and promoters of drug and substance abuse, ultimately assisting in strengthening public health systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. If fully complied with, concerted efforts aimed at achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal number Three (3) - Well-Being and Good Health by 2030, will bear anticipated fruits.

- The study recommends future studies across various CBDs to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in drug abuse rehabilitation in Zimbabwe and drug abusers, and to establish what works in terms of drug abuse rehabilitation in the Zimbabwean context.
- There is need to establish a psycho-religious module for all drug and substance abusers in Zimbabwe, as religion is widely recognised as a necessary voice with authority, respect and love in the Zimbabwean community.

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HUMAN CAPITAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPIRIT OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY IN ZIMBABWE

NICOLE ZIMUNYA¹, NYASHA NDEMO² AND RUMBIDZA MPAHLO³

Abstract

Recent discussions have stressed the need for improved human capital development (HCD) in Zimbabwe and other developing nations on the grounds that, a nation's human capital is vital for future technological breakthroughs, international competitiveness and sustainable economic development towards the improvement in service delivery. This research study explains the importance of human capital, programme and project development strategies towards improving service delivery in the country. The article adopts a desktop study in formulating the relevant meaning of HCD, project and programme development towards effective service delivery in the country. The key findings and emerging issues indicate that investing in HCD is a key factor in developing projects and programmes in the spirit of industrialisation towards improving service delivery in Zimbabwe as it promotes entrepreneurship, job creation, wealth creation, youth empowerment, peaceful society and economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Initially, human capital development is an important factor for innovation and economic development in modern industries. In the long run, the impact of project and programme development on service delivery is also a critical factor as it supports innovation,

¹ Marketing and Communications, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

² Faculty of Social and Gender Transformative Sciences, Women's University of Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe

³ Department of Development Programming and Management, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe

creates employment and improves capacity utilisation through improved levels of production in the industries, hence economic development will be achieved in less developed countries like Zimbabwe.

CONCEPTUALISING THE DISCOURSE: DEFINING AND SCOPING TERMS

Human capital recognises intangible assets and qualities that improve worker performance and benefit the economy. These qualities cannot be separated from the people who receive or possess them. Human capital is the economic value of abilities and qualities of labour that influence innovation and productivity through educating the economically active workforce in the country (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). Investing in these qualities produces greater economic output and improves economic performance and service delivery. The investments are called human capital because workers are not separate from these assets. In a corporation, it is called talent management and is under the Human Resources Department.

Project Development is the systematic use of resources, knowledge and practices to design and implement a given project and meet its goals and objectives under specific requirements (Raheem, 2018). It is also defined as the process of transforming available project inputs into desired outputs by consuming available resources.

Programme Development is the process of formulating, improving and expanding an educational, managerial or service-oriented work plan, programme, programme a series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished. The concept of programme management is about deciding priorities (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001), managing a portfolio of projects, the availability of resources, their skills, and how they work on different projects. It can be a mix of product development, service management, account management, pre-sales activities, solutions and support. The priorities should be agreed upon with the client and their management. Managing inventories and developing adoptive solutions and trade-offs, among various product features, is also part of programme management and development.

In many countries, projects vary from initiation to completion, which are very key to a functional economy. In most cases, projects and services delivery in this Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) are very key in HCD as they improve the roles of service delivery managers that lead cross-functional teams, integrated skills and capabilities from across organisations to deliver services to various clients around the globe (Tanaka, Spohr and D'Amico, 2015). The nature of the projects enhances a wide range of services and specialist skills. The African Bank is one of the key funders of projects on the continent as it has the vision for HDC in Africa to create jobs, provide equal opportunities and harness the potential of over one billion people, to promote inclusive growth. This vision is very much in line with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s vision which is that of a continent with the human capital to build and sustain vibrant, competitive economies that can reduce poverty and ensure sustained high levels of growth. In current global economies, service delivery and management are a huge challenge, hence the need to promote human capital development in collaboration with project and programme development, is a key success for improving levels of service delivery in the economy (Sofoluwe *et al.*, 2018). In this case, service delivery management requires strong leadership, managerial and techno-functional skills and that is what the current industry is looking for, so that well-skilled personnel will deal with challenges experienced in developing economies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In developing economies, unorganised sectors in the country cannot provide gainful employment as productivity in the industrial sector is very key and, in this case, they are very low, hence the need for HCD and mechanisation to improve the level of output (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). The level of skill development influences the level of productivity in functional industries. As a result, many governments that have been neglecting human capital lose on both counts. Human capital can be substituted by mechanisation to increase output and to increase the level of service delivery in the country. There is need for adequate training of staff. From a global perspective, many developing countries are well known for exporting human capital/skilled labour to developed countries and the remittances are sent back to original

countries, but in the case of Zimbabwe, the government is not promoting HCD for export purposes, hence most of experienced people left the country for self-gain (Shizha and Kariwo, 2012).

The importance of human capital exportation to the economy is that remittances play a significant role in poverty reduction and increase in per capita consumption levels in the country. In addition, remittances, unlike foreign direct investments and portfolio investments, contribute to project and service delivery in the country as they are less erratic and are not influenced by a slowdown in the world economy (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). In developed nations in Europe and the USA, there is a high demand for skilled labour and developing countries must be able to supply their skilled labour to those nations for their gain. This indicates that the government has a critical role in directly running education institutions to develop well-skilled labour for both local industries and meet international labour market demand.

The results indicated that, to fully achieve HCD in the country to boost productivity and output in the industry, there is need for the government to subsidise the education sector so as to promote entrepreneurship development. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education, job creation, wealth creation, youth empowerment, economic development, technological progress and service delivery.

Innovation and project development are recognised as the key economic concern, as it represents the greatest societal concern associated with the 4IR. The largest beneficiaries of innovation tend to be the providers of intellectual and physical capital, the innovators, shareholders and investors, which explains the rising gap in wealth between those dependent on capital versus labour (Alpkan *et al.*, 2010). Technology is, therefore, one of the main reasons' incomes have stagnated, or even decreased. For a majority of the population in high-income countries, the demand for highly skilled workers has increased, while the demand for workers with less education and lower skills has decreased. The result is a job market with a strong demand at the high and low ends, but a hollowing out of the middle.

The current project development in Zimbabwe has several aspects of human capital in this modern industrial revolution. The role of HCD influences productivity, employment and growth of employment, through several projects being done in the country. Consequently, employment cannot be increased without investing in the construction sector of the economy since many projects are versed in this sector (Geoffrey and Bischoff, 2020). Project development provides gainful employment as productivity in this sector is low and is also declining. This helps in improving service delivery. Human skill in project delivery influences productivity mainly in the construction sector, hence the need to educate people to get the best out of them (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001).

Realising this vision requires measures to increase youth employment opportunities and competitiveness as part of an integrated approach across sectors, including support for private sector engagement, and the use of new and productive technologies in project development (Jones and Romer, 2010). This will also require high quality, accessible service delivery at the different levels of the systems, accountable and responsive to the end-users. Innovative safety nets that respond to particular circumstances in Zimbabwe are needed to cushion vulnerable populations against shocks. These interventions have the potential to reduce poverty, to be responsive to the needs of the rural and urban poor and to empower women to build sustainable livelihoods (Motolani, 2018).

Programme development is one of the key essential cost-efficiency of service delivery in an economy. Effective programme development in the modern industry helps in the provision of services across municipalities in the country, as the level of pooling or joint provision of services among municipalities; the saliency of local taxes, as compared with regional grants, in its operating budget; the presence of external public comptrollers; and the magnitude of the municipality's accumulated past investment in infrastructures (Brian, 2007). This helps in improving governance through clear and well-structured programmes that use information and communication technologies (ICT) in delivering services to the people that improve efficiency, accountability and transparency, and reduce bribes in the delivery of services.

The available literature has been published by different scholars suggesting that ICT can be used in diverse applications to accelerate information dissemination, improve the efficiency of public services, increase the transparency and accountability of government administration, reduce corruption and facilitate citizen participation in local governance. However, there are few analytical studies or impact assessments confirming that such benefits have been delivered in large-scale projects (Bhatnagar and Singh, 2010). Bhatnagar (2013) recognises the important role of ICT in reducing corruption but points out that it has not been easy to harness this potential. In assessing the status of e-governance (i.e., ICT use in delivering government services) the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) survey of 2012 noted that, while it is important to continue with service delivery, governments must increasingly begin to rethink terms of e-government and e-governance.

The scope of e-government should be widened for a transformative role of the government toward cohesive, coordinated and integrated processes and institutions (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). Since the e-governance activity in developing countries in Africa is, at best, at a moderate level, there is scope to expand the deployment of e-governance in programme and project development. It is important to understand the full potential of deploying ICT to improve delivery of services. It is equally important to understand the challenges in harnessing this potential by identifying the critical success factors for wide-scale deployment.

As underdeveloped countries of the world progress and gradually catch up with the more established nations, conventional wisdom has it that the advanced nations will lose their competitive advantage. The shift in developing nations from craft to industrial labour, and from hand to machine work, produces great increases in productivity (Anyanwu, 2018). Meanwhile, in the advanced nations, affluence and discretionary spending, shift consumer and industrial demand increasingly into low-productivity, labour-intensive service activities automotive repair, travel, commercial lodging, entertainment, restaurants, shopping, insurance brokerage, medical care and

education, to name a few. The result, so the argument goes, is that the advanced nations lose their advantage even faster than the developing nations expand their manufacturing industries.

In the advanced nations, this has, of late, produced the paradoxical proposition that their expanding service appetites shift demand in directions that are little susceptible to the employment of mass-production efficiencies. This, in time, leads to rising general price levels and, finally, to reduced living standards. Since it costs more to buy less-efficiently produced services, one's money does not go as far (Anderson and Hussey, 2000). Those are the supposed cybernetics of world economics advantage that ultimately lead to demand for costly service amenities, while producing a parallel no-frills catch-up effort among the less advantaged. The latter, finally, not only catch up, but surpass the original leaders because, for one reason, their technology is more modern.

Zimbabwe's current industrial policy is rightly focused on attracting large firms through the development of special economic zones and improving trade logistics. At the same time, it is important to build links with smaller firms that make up the local economy, to improve service delivery through meeting the current demands of people. In Africa, the level of growth in the local and regional economies is increasingly pulling local manufacturing too (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). As in many other African countries, Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania have not yet had a full discussion on digital economy and what it could mean for the manufacturing sector of the economy. In more advanced African countries like South Africa, Rwanda and Botswana, these measures of digitalisation are being implemented as a foundation on which to build the economy. In this case, it is crucial to still grow 'traditional' industrial capabilities while it still can, for example, by attracting and developing the manufacturing sector targeting foreign markets such as the US and European markets although it takes time and effort.

EMERGING ISSUES AND DEBATES

While public employment service delivery in many developed countries is rendered in a differentiated, needs- or profile-based

approach, it remains entrenched in a traditional one-size-fits-all, first-come-first-served approach (Contractor and Mudambi, 2008). The right servicing model offers a system of continuous assessment and determination of the “right” level of service delivery that achieves a specific socioeconomic outcome following organisational attributes, citizen preferences and resource availability. For developing countries typically faced with data and resource limitations, the model can be operationalised through the cognitive information processing approach to career problem-solving and decision-making that has an established record of successful HCD in the world.

Digitalisation is one-way African countries can leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), boost the manufacturing sector and create more productive jobs to improve their service delivery. By lowering the unit costs of production, information exchange and transactions, digital technologies can help African economies to develop new value chains and strengthen existing ones. In the future, technological innovation will also lead to a supply-side miracle, with long-term gains in efficiency and productivity (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). Transportation and communication costs will drop, logistics and global supply chains will become more effective, and the cost of trade will diminish, all of which will open new markets and drive economic growth.

A persistent digital divide can lead to re-shoring of manufacturing tasks, limited offshoring of digitally advanced production in the future and a slowdown in technology diffusion. All this can harm development in African economies. A key trend is the development of technology-enabled platforms that combine both demand and supply to disrupt existing industry structures, such as those seen within the “sharing” or “on-demand” economy (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). These technology platforms, rendered easy to use by the smartphone, convene people, assets and data, thus creating entirely new ways of consuming goods and services in the process. In addition, they lower the barriers for businesses and individuals to create wealth, altering the personal and professional environments of workers. These new

business platforms are rapidly multiplying into many new services, ranging from laundry to shopping, from chores to parking and from massages to travel.

Investments in human capital can provide increased returns on a bank's investments in infrastructure. Ensuring that the requisite skilled workforce is in place to install and maintain infrastructure investments will help ensure the sustainability of, and returns to, the bank's infrastructure investments (Wood and Bischoff, 2020). The Support to Higher Education, Science and Technology projects can build capacity to train engineers, technicians and managers to run the infrastructure investments. In return, the many of the bank's infrastructure investments have potentially large high definition (HD) outcomes as reflected in several bank infrastructure sector strategy documents. Urban infrastructure projects can focus on supplying basic education and nutrition and health services in underserved environments. Rural energy projects can assist education and health by ensuring energy supplies to schools, clinics and hospitals and deploying household energy solutions that improve early childhood education and the livelihood of mothers (Wallenborn, 2010). The 2007 Operational Strategy of the African Water Facility notes the need to expand access to improved sanitation, with enhanced hygiene promotion and education components.

CONCLUSION

Africa is a continent with remarkable economic potential yet is the least developed continent largely due to its inadequate human capital to transform this potential into social and economic development. The focus is on the provision of adequate education in entrepreneurship programmes since it is the cornerstone of human capital development in other developed countries and, in Zimbabwe, it has not produced a desirable outcome to revive economic performance. The important role of HCD towards effective service delivery is helping in reducing the mistakes within government departments and it assisting in transparency and accountability, hence the importance of recognising the role of human resource professionals in HCD in Zimbabwe deserves serious attention. Therefore, this article has elaborated on the importance of HCD in the economy towards service delivery.

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INDUSTRIALISATION IN ZIMBABWE: SHAPING THE DEBATE AND PRACTICE THROUGH SOCIAL SCIENCES

HALLELUAH CHIRISA¹, PATIENCE MAZANHI, ROSELIN KATSANDE-NCUBE² AND
TAWANDA ZINYAMA

Abstract

Sustainable development anchors on meeting societal needs through service provision and economic development. Social sciences unleash the important aspects of meeting society's needs through broad literature and scholarship. However, there is a scarcity in the literature that conjoins industrial development and the social sciences. A myriad of ephemeral scholarship exists on how Zimbabwe fares in service provision and industrialisation. To avoid a demise in socially sustainable development, the article seeks to coalesce the aspects of social sciences, industrialisation and service provision in the context of the Zimbabwean experience. The article explores efforts and challenges to service provision for the country from the colonial era to the present day to capture various perspectives that build up on the country's present situation. It compares the efficiency of the private sector to the public sector in service provision and posits recommendable insights that provide a way forward for the betterment of service provision in the country. It describes the efforts, challenges and opportunities for local organisations towards fulfilling their mandate to efficiently provide services to the public.

Keywords: *industrialisation, service provision, social services, Zimbabwe*

INTRODUCTION

The provision of quality social services is one of the defining parameters of a successful state and economy. The Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) (2014:7) alludes that, “social

¹ Directorate of Research and Innovation, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe.

² Faculty of Social and Gender Transformative Sciences, Women's University of Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe

service delivery is one of the core mandates of local authorities in Zimbabwe". However, Zimbabwe's local authorities have been struggling to meet such obligations. Whereas the potential for quality services and industrialisation could be harnessed for public benefit, the impetus for change seems to have taken a down twist since Zimbabwe's attainment of independence (Ndlovu, 1994). Sociology, Psychology, and Urban Planning are among the social sciences fields that provide social services and improve urban management (Chigara *et al.*, 2013). In light of that, the study explores the extent to which Zimbabwe is providing quality social services and its level of industrialisation. It is imperative to trace the industrialisation in the country to understand its dynamics from the colonial era to the present state. The article makes use of desktop research through intensive and extensive utilisation of secondary data sources to proffer a tangible argument. It provides a descriptive analysis of the contribution of social sciences towards encouraging service provision and economic development through industrialisation. If the country is to provide social services efficiently, what efforts are being taken in the context of industrialisation to achieve social justice? What role does academia play towards industrial development?

BACKGROUND

During the Africa Industrialisation Week celebrations from the 16th to 20th of November 2020, the Government of Zimbabwe launched the Industrial Policy 2019-2023. These frameworks are important in setting the scene.

With the rapid influx of population into cities, there is need to match growth in the economic sector through industrialisation. The quest for economic prosperity is to meet social challenges due to rapid urbanisation. Zimbabwe has been experiencing economic turbulence affecting economic revitalisation partly due to poor economic policies (Ndlovu, 1994). Munzara (2015) highlights that poor economic policies harm the economy yet with or without economic prosperity, social services remain a need in every nation and thus industrialisation must take precedence. Zimbabwe has made various efforts to foster economic growth. Some of these are the land reform programme and the indigenisation policy which, however, led to capital flight (Chirisa,

Bandauko and Kawadza, 2015). The private and informal sectors make efforts in contributing to economic development through investment. With decentralisation through privatisation, private players can provide adequate services, though at a cost unaffordable to the poor majority. Privatisation is a form of decentralising government functions through transferring authority and activities to the private sector (Heywood, 2002). However, with a less effective public sector in the provision of services and low to non-existent industrialisation, the provision of services remains a dream and the evidence manifests through slum settlements, housing shortages, high social crime rates and social unrest (Khalifa, 2010).

Industrialisation and economic development are pivotal to the provision of services by local organisations in Zimbabwe. With industrialisation and economic growth, there is a smooth flow of finance and local authorities are able to meet the costs associated with providing social services (Adams, 2002). Many local boards in developing countries lack finance, hindering service provision (CCMT, 2014). With industrialisation, development and finance, service provision is easy and efficient. Adams (*ibid.*) argues that where there is economic growth and development, there is social transformation. Therefore, it is important that as nations work out policies on sustaining and improving the social welfare of people, industrial development should be included. There exists a salient relationship between service provision and industrialisation as industrialisation enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision in most countries.

Marumahoko *et al.* (2020) allude that poor economic development in Zimbabwe has been due to hyperinflation, international isolation and high unemployment rates, stripping the government of its revenue and failing to support service provision in the country. Lack of industrialisation in an economy is due to low economic development and this affects the income levels of citizens, hindering their ability to pay rates for services (*ibid.*). With economic growth and expansion, there is increased public expenditure through enhanced public service provision by the government (Adams, 2002). Moreover,

industrialisation has positive effects on both the government and the local citizens. It capacitates local citizens through enhanced income levels to pay taxes and rates for services provided by the councils (Glewwe and Jacoby, 2004).

Gukurume (2011) highlights that the unstable political and economic environment in Zimbabwe has significantly affected social service delivery. The more the economy deteriorates, the greater the extent service provision falls as opposed to successful economic development that boosts human and societal development (Glewwe and Jacoby, 2004). Marumahoko *et al.* (2020) highlight that with economic development comes improved income levels, thus increasing the tax base of the country that helps to finance public services. Sustainable development is facilitated through regular payments of services “monthly” which is only effective when citizens have reliable incomes (Marumahoko *et al.* 2020:44). Therefore, economic development is crucial for the provision of quality services and, as such, cannot be detached from each other. The bulk of the literature consulted is archaic except for Murumahoko *et al.* (2020) yet industrialisation is very topical. Referring to higher ministry documents, national budgets, etc is important.

SOCIAL SCIENCE, SERVICE PROVISION AND INDUSTRIALISATION: A REVIEW

The argument on the level of economic development requires a comprehensive review of scholarly approaches to the practising field. The provision of social services is an obligation of local authorities whose mandate is to provide social services such as waste management, water supply and maintenance of infrastructure among many other duties (*ibid.*). However, the existence of challenges like water contamination, poor refuse collection and burst sewer pipes is proof that local authorities are struggling to meet their obligations of service delivery (Musekiwa & Chatiza, 2015). The government takes the role of overseeing the performance of local authorities by making “service provision the standard against the relevance of local authorities” (Marumahoko, 2020:42). The performance of local authorities hangs on various factors, including the performance of the economy, government policies and the wealth of knowledge embodied

in the social science fields. When these are not favourable, local authorities' performance is affected and the social well-being of the people is compromised.

Any development in the world has a direct and indirect effect on the social lives of humanity. The social sciences reflect on the past, present and future status of the surrounding environment (Sheppard, 2004). Thus, the emergence of social science disciplines has come with a mandate to display the social world from the influence of both the natural and the artificial world on humanity (Imhonopi, 2019). Industrial development has an undeniable relationship with social science disciplines, and this has had a noticeable impact on the general economic development regarding industrialisation. Geography, as one of the social science disciplines, has influenced service industry globally. It is explained by Simandan (2009) as a set of practices scientifically held together by the common factors of space, distance and society. Such distance has influenced service industry by influencing the networking of people. Most of the first-world countries industrialise before the Second World War, whereas third-world countries are still struggling to find a stable ground to stand on economically (Ndlovu, 1994).

Despite the geographical distance between the two distinct classes, the service industry has had a positive influence through globalisation, rendering physical geographical distances unimportant (Yasin, 2007). The service industry brings educative information to humanity that influences their social well-being and way of life through communication and networking that has improved development globally. Various scholarly articles have argued that with the emergence of social learning disciplines, most third-world rural dwellers (Simandan, 2009). Simandan (*ibid.*) states that industrialisation has been regarded by policy-makers and scholars as one of the most effective ways to reduce the population through education and increased levels of awareness.

As the industry grows and economic development expands, most of social problems are reduced. With economic development, lack of finance is to some extent, curtailed. Challenges that come with "rapid

urbanisation, financial crisis and increasing urban populations” (Chirisa *et al.*, 2020: 3) exert pressure on governments in most African countries. Overpopulation and urbanisation are a reality that demands urgent action before it overhauls the states with their impacts. The Government of Zimbabwe (2015) affirms that the population growth in the country’s cities is expanding at an approximate rate of 4.3% annually. Because of the rapid population increases in urban centres, more social challenges such as overcrowding, congestion, the fast spread of diseases and the mushrooming of slum settlements, have affected social development (Tacoli *et al.*, 2015). Thus, with the improvement in economic development, such problems are lowered. Moreli (2006) highlights that the business world has had a great impact on the socio-cultural development of countries in the southern African region. There is an exchange of cultural norms brought about by the expansion of the service industry. A good example is tourism and hospitality which has resulted in cultural exchanges among countries as most of the English tourists are attracted to the African culture, bringing in more development in the service industry (Hampton, 2005). Social sciences cannot be disentangled from the business sector as they have an impact on the general development of economies (Moreli, 2006).

Academia has played a huge role in influencing and informing the industrial and practice field. There is a continuous existence of a theory-practice gap in various practising and learning fields, both globally and locally (Pissourios, 2013). Various academic fields work in an interdisciplinary linkage to inform the industry. There exists an interchange of knowledge and expertise between academia and the industry as research informs practice (Watson, 2008). Academia has played a huge role in trying to fix the practice gaps in the industry and this, to some extent, has been downplayed by the practitioners who may not fully comprehend and implement recommendations from various academic disciplines (Murmman, 2012). If all the scholarly research were implemented, there would have been a massive global improvement in the economy and development sector. There is plenty of information from research that helps inform the practice fields and this calls for a strong partnership between the researchers and the practitioners.

Academic disciplines have influenced the formation of civil society groups that debate issues on policy formulation and implementation. The social sciences influence human behaviour and empower them to appreciate policy frameworks. This helps civil groups know their rights and fight for them to well-implement policies (Imhonopi, 2019). Most African countries suffer from corruption and mismanagement of resources (Chigwata *et al.*, 2019). With social awakening, there is enhanced commitment and quality policy formulation that satisfy the majority. Social scientists play a major role in regional economic development through their think tank teams that delve into the exact needs of people and work on solutions (Imhonopi, 2019).

Research has shown that Africa is lagging technologically as compared to some European nations (*ibid.*). Thus, with social science research in Africa, more emphasis can be given to enhancing the adoption of technology in the practising arena. This will help rescue the region from underdevelopment despite the abundant resources the continent has. Africa has abundant resources, both natural and human, that can enhance successful development (Mullainathan, 2004). Social scientists need to take positions of influence to have well-thought-out socially sustainable policies (Imhonopi, 2019). Gunder and Hillier (2004) emphasize that development is difficult to separate from politics and governance as the development decisions lie in the hands of policymakers and when these are not socially aware, poor development solutions are given.

THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE

Various scholars have researched the aspects of social sciences, service provision and industrialisation and need to explore the dynamics dating from the pre-independence era. Marumahoko *et al.* (2020) allude that the provision of services is linked closely to the lifestyle and well-being of the citizens whose knowledge is found from appreciating social sciences. As the social sciences inform development practitioners, industrialisation and economic development improve service delivery through financial resources. Ndlovu (1994) highlights the efforts to service provision and economic development in Zimbabwe, tracing from before the attainment of independence. The thrust is towards revitalising service provision in Zimbabwe by exploring one of the driving forces of industrialisation.

PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA: SERVICE PROVISION AND INDUSTRIALISATION (1965-1980)

The period between 1965 and 1980 is described by Ndlovu (1994) as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period. During this period, the country Rhodesia's, present-day Zimbabwe, active industrial sectors were agriculture and manufacturing. Because of the diversified economy, the country exported cotton, tobacco and sugar for foreign currency for economic development. However, the liberation war, especially around 1975 to 1978, crippled infrastructure such as roads and clinics (*ibid.*). The existence of racial segregation meant that proper service delivery leaned towards the white society and this was evidenced in high unequal and inequitable distribution of social services between blacks and whites (Walks and Bourne, 2006).

The development of services was done in urban areas, and these were restricted to whites and the black populace could access these privileges only after independence when there was a relaxation of restrictive movement laws (Chirisa *et al.*, 2020). Before that, there was a geographical separation of these two classes of people with white people enjoying access to social facilities such as schools and hospitals in urban centres (Gukurume, 2011). The provision of social services during this era cannot be entirely attributed to the economic development of that period. Access to the services depended on race, hence unequal distribution of social services.

POST-INDEPENDENCE (1980 TO PRESENT), URBANISATION, SERVICE PROVISION AND INDUSTRIALISATION

The attainment of independence saw the need for necessary social and economic transformation to deal with the many social and economic challenges that had arisen in the country (Ndlovu, 1994). Independence and democracy encouraged the need for social reforms that included decolonising the once-segregated urban centres to accommodate the black majority (Wamukaya and Mbathi, 2019). Some of the reforms brought together local authorities that had been previously divided on racial grounds into more united and organised single municipalities (Gukurume, 2011).

The need for sustainable development calls for inclusive governance that removes discrimination (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). Therefore, the principle behind the merging of local authorities was to make municipalities more democratic and accountable to their citizens to ensure efficiency and equity in service provision, thus ensuring sustainable urban development (Gukurume, 2011). After the attainment of independence, the economy required complete restructuring and reconstruction, and this needed tangible investment. The Zimbabwean government had to inherit the economic structure from the colonialists due to its “inability to radically break away from the past organisation and management practices” (Ndlovu, 1994:16). Around the 1990s, the country became the breadbasket of Africa, producing enough for local consumption and exportation. The notable achievements of the independent government were leaning towards the social sector as they worked to ensure the provision of social services. However, this led the economy into huge debt in a bid to fund social programmes (Ndlovu, 1994).

Way after independence, Zimbabwe still has not fully disentangled itself from the colonial standards of service provision as social classes that have emerged have unequal distribution of social services among the residents (Agere, 1990). Apart from the challenge of unequal distribution and access to social services, most of the populace fail to afford social services such as health facilities. Glewwe and Jacoby (2004) highlight the struggles faced by the poor and disadvantaged groups of society and how they fail to pay the minimum for essential services. The country has made attempts since independence to foster equity and equality in the distribution of social services. However, as explained by Agere (1990), the quality of services tends to be differentiated geographically. Rural areas access poor quality services as development is biased towards urban centres. This differentiation by geographical location is experienced in various service sectors including health, housing, education, communication and transport systems. In most rural areas, some places are still impassable as there are inefficient road facilities while some are still in a rudimentary state. One of the contributing factors to the misdistribution and inaccessibility of social services is the cost of accessing the services (*ibid.*). A good example is in the health sector. Health services and

facilities are taken as commodities and thus given at a market price unaffordable to the majority poor and unemployed (*ibid.*). Thus, the distribution of social services inevitably becomes uneven.

Poor industrialisation and economic underdevelopment are not solely responsible for the inefficient and unequal distribution of social services. Rapid urbanisation and the influx of population into many urban cities are also a cause for concern as they pose a negative effect on the quality-of-service delivery by municipalities (DESA, 2013). With the rapid increase of people in urban areas, there is much pressure imposed on the available resources that are failing to expand at the same rate as the increasing population because of financial challenges (UNECA, 2017). A good example is the rapid increase of population in Harare that is not being matched by an improvement in service delivery by the municipality. The evidence is thus witnessed by shortages and inefficient distribution of sanitation and water facilities and housing, and infrastructure inadequacies. The looming slum settlements, overcrowding and congestion are real issues that expose the inefficiency of the municipality in meeting the needs of the increasing population (Tacoli *et al.*, 2015). Stren (2014) posits that poor governance, coupled with inadequate technical, administrative and financial resources, has crippled local municipalities and fails to offer quality social service provision.

Rapid urbanisation contradicting the low to non-existent industrialisation and economic development has been challenging for local authorities in distributing social services (Adams, 2002). Cities experiencing rapid urbanisation and industrial challenges need to ensure that they harness the potential that comes with an increase in population as their base becomes a plausible breeding environment for innovation and economic development due to a widened market for various economic activities (Luebker, 2008). Poor service delivery is also a result of poor management of resources, poor urban governance and polarisation of resources in the urban areas, leading to the deterioration of service delivery in the country (Mapuva, 2013). Critical efforts to revitalise industrialisation in the economy need to be employed to improve service delivery in the cities. Industrialisation and urbanisation need to grow at an even rate or with industrialisation

growing faster than urbanisation. This enables municipalities to close or reduce the huge gap between service demand and supply (Ahmed and Dinye, 2011).

There were high inflationary periods between 2007 and 2009 where Zimbabwe later adopted a multi-currency system. During this period, the economy was hit hard affecting municipalities that found it difficult to provide services to the residents and, at the same time, residents could not afford to pay rates for a continuous supply of services, such as water and electricity (Gukurume, 2011). It is becoming a norm that when the economy is at its lowest, service provision suffers greatly as the financial crisis cripples both municipalities and the residents. In 2009, the country embarked on dollarisation in a bid to revitalise the economy. This multi-currency system in the country had an impact on the economy's operations as it came with stability of the economy. Urban councils and municipalities utilised foreign currency in their budgetary endeavours for service provision. Despite the promising success of dollarisation, municipalities still found it difficult to independently provide social services to the residents (*ibid.*). Service provision continued to decline and this was attributed to the absence of decentralisation, devolution and the interference of the government in the operations of municipalities.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS IN SERVICE PROVISION

It is a basic mandate of all municipalities and public authorities to provide social services to their citizenry. When public organisations fail to provide services efficiently, the involvement of the private sector through partnerships is another alternative of ensuring quality service provision (*ibid.*). The private sector works efficiently as it is driven by profit-making. As long as profits are made from service delivery, the private sector would be very willing to participate. This hints at the limitation of leaving the work of service provision only for the private sector. Municipalities must retain the sole responsibility of providing and delivering service (*ibid.*). Torrance (2008) points out the inclination towards privatising the financing of public services such as infrastructure after many decades of reliance upon the public sector for public service provision. The notion of ceding the responsibilities of

service provision to independent or private providers is debatable and highly criticised as it compromises the entitlements of economic and social rights of the less privileged. This is because the private sector is commercial with everything it operates, thus making only the rich minority access social services (*ibid.*).

SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINES AS THE ANCHOR OF THE SERVICE INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

Imhonopi (2019) defines social science disciplines as the academic or learning fields that major in understanding human beings, their relationships and their interaction in society. They focus on the behaviour of people in their social and cultural setup. Development is for and by the people, and the disciplines of social sciences enhance the understanding of how development ought to be done in a manner that satisfies the recipients. These disciplines include anthropology, political sciences and sociology, among many (Klein, 2007). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the social sciences enables efficiency in development.

Understanding demographic patterns is pivotal to the economic development of any country. As the business sector booms, its growth is targeted towards satisfying the market (Storm, 2006). Demography brings in the understanding and classifications of the population. This helps in industrial targeting in the business world and enhances profitability (Barkely and Henry, 2001). Demography plays a complementary role in the service industry, providing relevant information such as the dominant age groups and whether the population is youthful or aged (Bloom and Sachs, 1998). Immigration and rapid urbanisation have increased the population of the cities and this has influenced consumption patterns of the people (Moreli, 2006).

The emergence of the services industry has made work easier for people as they are relieved of various tasks performed in everyday life. Expansion in demography or population sizes has a positive impact on the industry as it leads to optimum utilisation of idle resources (Bloom and Sachs, 1998). Most African countries, Zimbabwe included, are dominated by an unemployed youthful population, and of these youths, many have moved to other countries and continents for

greener pastures with many within the country migrating into big cities (Dube and Chirisa, 2012). Harare is a good example of a city experiencing “growth without development” (Dube & Chirisa, 2012:17). Having obtained such demographic information about a population, it becomes easier for industries to segment their markets and offer services that are relevant to a particular group. This aids continuous economic development.

Kanbur (2001) explains sociology and anthropology as ways people get to understand the world in which they live. Mooney, Knox and Schacht (2007) highlight that sociology has a relevant impact on human development as it provides various perspectives for humans to view their world or social environment. This means that in any policy concerning development, the target population has the right to question and constructively build on it through public participation (Brown *et al.* 2012). Sociology and anthropology are very important disciplines in industrial development. They are complementary to the development of the economy as they bring an understanding to the human being (Kanbur, 2001). When humans get to understand their environment, they can make well-informed choices and this influences their spending patterns (*ibid.*). This knowledge influences the economy of a country as industries also make informed decisions about the service they ought to provide, depending on consumption patterns.

It is argued that “the economy cannot be divorced from psychology” (Surkov, 2014:40). Economic development and success depend on the behaviour of humans for their success. Thus, it is imperative to have an understanding of human behaviour of humans regarding their spending habits, buying power and choices (Gwartney *et al.*, 2009). Humans respond almost the same when it comes to their spending behaviour as they strive to obtain optimal utility and satisfaction from any consumption they make (Lipsey, Ragan and Storer, 2008). Therefore, psychology becomes an important discipline that works on understanding the behaviour of humans and, with such relevance, industrial development cannot work without it (Surkov, 2014).

Mullainathan (2004) brings to light that economics and businesses expect their success from assuming availability of human or

psychological resources. Psychology's absence can lead to poor economic development as businesses may fail to predict consumer patterns and choices (Storm, 2017). Therefore, social scientists must make their ground known and visible as they have a huge role to play in aiding economic development. Humans respond positively to incentives and promotions. Their motivation and spending behaviour change. The state and public bodies must improve incentives for their workers to motivate them to provide quality services and to work for the good of the public (Mullainathan, 2004). However, in the Zimbabwean context, most of these fields have a demotivated workforce, leading to poor quality and intermittent service provision.

Spatial planning plays an important role aimed at planning for and providing solutions to social challenges faced globally. Planning influences industrial development to bring about economic development that helps reduce the social challenges experienced by the economy. Mohamed *et al.* (2015) allude that planning and smart city development enhance the effectiveness of service delivery through improved performance of water services and transportation design. This is achieved through enhancing urban design to be aesthetically pleasing and relevant to a particular place and needful to the people (Radford, 2010). Planning also influences the administration of land for development and acts as a neutral tool for inefficient land allocation for development that is sustainable (EASRD, 2004). Therefore, it ensures that meaningful industrial and economic development meets the needs of the populace by providing socially responsible solutions (Moreli, 2006). Planning influences policy-making in the country and, as such, needs to ensure the formulation of market-driven and sustainable policies. This means that the service industry should not only bring services that meet the needs of individuals but also equip and empower the consumer with long-lasting skills. Moreli (2006) argues that lasting solutions to social development cannot be addressed through physical production alone but must be met by mobilising human development skills.

An educated and well-equipped person is important for the development of any industry. The human resources social science discipline is important to the service industry in the Zimbabwean

economy. When citizens are well-trained, they become a resource base for employment and they become productive (*ibid.*). Glewwe and Jacoby (2004) argue that an educated nation is resilient in harsh economic conditions. This is because they can utilise the knowledge and skills to must earn a living. Human resources ensure that there is a trained human resource base that fits perfectly with the required expertise in a specific industry. It ensures the mobilisation of individual skills, knowledge and expertise. When a large part of the population is trained and equipped, it reduces the social challenges emanating from unemployment as relevant trades can enable the population to make a living (Moreli, 2006). This helps to shift consumers from passive receivers of services to active players in the process, thus becoming co-producers. This ensures that people gain skills to solve their problems and even satisfy their own specific needs, thus achieving social sustainability through capacity-building (*ibid.*).

Social sciences are the anchor to economic development in the country, with every aspect of the disciplines having a huge contribution. This is evidenced by the active role of political-administrative power in the management of economies (Grant, Coen and Wilson, 2010). Politics can be positive or negative the development of an economy, depending on the level of participation of the political hand. Storm (2017) explains that the role of politics in an economy needs to be clarified to understand the extent of participation of the government in economic development. The Zimbabwean government has had a huge impact on the economic development of the country, with many of its policies scaring away investors from the country. A good example of these policies is the indigenisation policy that saw the exodus of many investors from the country and the closure of many businesses (Chirisa *et al.*, 2015).

Understanding the political economy of industrial development is pivotal to the growth of any sector of development. If the state is welcoming, conducive economic policies are created that lure investors. There is need for politics to work hand in hand with the business sector so that conducive policies are introduced, for example Zimbabwe in 2009 (Storm, 2017). When a state negatively dominates the business environment, it leads to e poor policies, thus regulations should not be overly hostile (Grant, Coen and Wilson, 2010).

Administrative studies entail the management and administering of any work related to development. Good administration and governance in any field of work lead to quality results that satisfy the citizenry as such management involves all stakeholders participating for a common good (Brown *et al.* 2012). Thus, despite the existence of a well-growing economy where there is poor administration by the state, the economy crumbles. In the case of Zimbabwe, the economy has been suffering due to poor administration by the state (Sims, 2011). Despite the country being endowed with many natural and other resources and receiving foreign aid to assist in economic development, poor administration has about challenges. Mismanagement of funds and corruption have become the norm in Zimbabwe (Bonga *et al.*, 2015). Thus, without proper and good administration, the economy faces a brick wall. Daniels and Hutton (1991) suggest that Africa is one of the continents that has been trailing behind in terms of development and a reshaping of policies is required. However, with a new understanding of administrative studies as a social science discipline, it is important to improve administration in the management of the country. The administrative activities need to be changed and the vices of resource mismanagement are plugged (Bonga *et al.*, 2015). For successful development, there is a high need for administrators with integrity who work for the social and common good.

Social work helps disadvantaged minority groups (Sheppard, 2004). Economic development fosters inclusivity, equality and equity. It is also a discipline that works towards uplifting and fighting for the social rights of disadvantaged groups. Therefore, a development approach that is well-informed from the discipline by social work helps in the formulation of policies that satisfy all classes of people. Thus, informed economic development will not only be limited to the manufacturing of goods and services but also the provision of health facilities, rehab centres and other services that improve the well-being of people. However, this requires intensive and extensive participation of all groups of society to appreciate all the development needs of the society (Brown *et al.*, 2012). Dube and Chirisa (2012:24) advocated for the “participation of the marginalised groups” to have inclusive development solutions that cater for all the needs of every member of

society. In light of that, urban and rural governance need to appreciate that social science discipline has a huge contribution to development. Economic development requires an interdisciplinary approach to formulate sustainable and long-lasting development policies.

DISCUSSION

Service provision in Zimbabwe is deteriorating at a fast pace with the increase in population and the expansion of cities. The country has been relying on infrastructure built in the colonial era. However, these have collapsed and have been outweighed by the increase in population growth. There is a continuous cry for basic water and sanitation facilities in many cities in the country. Most issues can be attributed to failure of public service provision and these include the mismanagement of funds. The health sector is one of the sectors that have suffered over the years as many public hospitals are understaffed and thus the private sector has taken control and yet its services, such as housing, are not affordable to the poor and marginalised groups.

The level and quality of service provision in the country is the yardstick of the success or failure of municipalities and local authorities as they are mandated to provide social services. Public services are an essential part of life, hence there is need for better and more efficient strategies. Incrementalism can be applied to improve the provision of public services in the country. This is done by way of widening public services already existing through increasing the expert workforce such that when the market floods, more human resources are transferred to marginalised areas.

Knowledge has always empowered people. Academic disciplines have educated the practice field with intensive and extensive research that has contributed to the improvement of human capital development (Watson, 2008). In Zimbabwe, academic disciplines have played an honest part in informing the industrial sector. The research and scientific information is formulated based on technology gaps and needs of the industry and the socio-eco-cultural concerns of the people (Murmman, 2012).

Despite the research efforts in the academic field, there is always an existing research-practice gap in the country and even the world at large. To try and lessen the gap that exists between research and practice, Imhonopi (2019) highlights the importance of forming “industrial-academy” partnerships. These help in the exchange and dissemination of information between academia and practitioners. However, this can be successful only in an eco-politically conducive environment. Academia has always been ahead in terms of research. But there is need to strike a balance between academic research and practice in the country.

CONCLUSION

Bridging the research-practice gap is an important way to influence development in the economy. Social scientists are playing a big role in researching the best and most modern ways for successful economic development... Every aspect and discipline in the field of social sciences has proven to be relevant in economic development for human-centred and socially sustainable economic development and industrialisation.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM IN THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES USING NETONE CELLULAR (PVT) LTD, ZIMBABWE AS A CASE STUDY

ROGERS TAKURA NAMALAWA¹

Abstract

This study investigates the role of a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) in effectively managing human resources, with a focus on NetOne Cellular (Pvt) Ltd (NeOne), a government-owned telecommunications concern. The research addresses a gap in the literature by examining the specific contributions of HRIS in developing countries. Utilising a qualitative research approach, the study collects data through interviews, surveys and document analysis involving human resource (HR) managers and employees. The findings demonstrate that the implementation of an HRIS at NetOne has significantly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management (HRM) processes. Notably, the HRIS has streamlined recruitment and selection procedures, resulting in faster and precise candidate screening and selection, enhanced performance management practices by automating performance appraisals and enabling effective feedback and goal setting. The study concludes that adopting an HRIS has positively impacted HRM at NetOne, leading to enhanced organisational performance and employee satisfaction. It emphasizes the importance of utilising technology to optimise HR processes and recommends that other organisations, both in Zimbabwe and beyond, consider implementing HRIS to improve their HRM practices. This research contributes to the existing literature on HRIS and its role in effective HRM, particularly in the context of the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: *implementation, employee, performance, efficiency, technology, data*

¹ Human Resources Auditor, Righthand Investments, Harare, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

The study is primarily aimed at investigating the contribution of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in the effective management of human resources (HR) at NetOne Cellular (Pvt) Ltd (NetOne). The study also ascertains the extent the HRIS has afforded the HR Department at NetOne to be effective and identify loopholes that will be noted by other organisations in Zimbabwe during the implementation of the system as this study also focuses on recommending the system as a paradigm shift from an administration perspective to strategic HRM perspective. Lytrasa *et al.* (2010) submit that despite the growth in HRIS use, research, on its use, has been fragmented and, therefore, has not been focused on this field like other HR concepts. This assessment is especially true in the Zimbabwean context. Despite the adoption of HRIS by some Zimbabwean firms, there have been few studies done in the field to investigate the impact of the technology on HR functions. At NetOne, HRIS was adopted as cloud-based systems years ago. In its use at the company, very few challenges have been encountered and the HR management are of the view that the system has made their processes even more efficient and productive. As such, this study ascertains the extent this system has afforded the HR Department at NetOne to be effective.

BACKGROUND

The performance of any organisation is dependent largely on the performance of its Human Resources Department (Troshani and Hill, 2011). Of significant importance is the HR Department's function's ability to gather relevant information concerning its employees, the organisational processes, its environment and the industry in which it operates to facilitate informed and sound decisions (Obeidat, 2012). To achieve such effectiveness, HR departments are adopting the use of advanced HRIS.

Meanwhile, Kavanagh *et al.* (2012) define HRIS as a system used to acquire, store, manipulate, analyse, retrieve and distribute information regarding an organisation's HR to support HRM and managerial decisions. The use of HRIS in organisations is not entirely a new trend but, rather, it is an old concept that has existed for centuries except that now it is more advanced technologically due to the computer

movement of the 21st Century (Johnson *et al.* (2016). The use of HRIS can be traced back to the period before the Second World War when there were mere automated employee record-keeping systems until now as they have evolved to be more complex reporting and decision-making cloud-based enterprise-wide systems (Johnson *et al.* (2015).

In tracing this history of HRIS Johnson and Kimberly (2015), presented the history and evolution of HRIS based on the technology that was used at the time. Commenting on this history of HRIS Johnson *et al.* (2015) submit that what started as a simple mainframe system to automate payroll has now touched all areas of HRM, including recruitment, selection, training and compensation. With HRIS becoming so crucial, many organisations since the 1990s have adopted the use of HRIS (Ngai *et al.*, 2009). Recent estimates indicate that nearly all large organisations have adopted HRIS to support core functions, processes and decisions (Lytrasa, 2010), and smaller organisations are increasingly using HRIS to support HRM functions.

Several studies have examined the impact of HRIS on various aspects of HR functions, highlighting their effectiveness and efficiency. Patil's (2014) study, conducted in India, focused on pharmaceutical companies, concluded that HRIS positively affects functions such as recruitment, job analysis and communication. Similarly, Chumo's study in 2014 aimed at establishing the relationship between HRIS and staff development in international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Nairobi. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between HRIS and staff development, emphasizing the role of HRIS in fostering employees' professional growth. Another study conducted by Mahapa and Chirasha in 2012 assessed the effectiveness of the HRIS adopted by the Midlands State University, Zimbabwe. The findings suggested that the Human Resources Department could achieve higher effectiveness through the implementation of the HRIS, provided there were no challenges encountered during the implementation process.

Overall, these studies highlight the benefits of HRIS in enhancing HR functions and processes such as recruitment, job analysis, communication, staff development and overall departmental

effectiveness. By leveraging HRIS effectively, organisations can optimise their HRM practices and achieve improved outcomes. However, very few of these studies on HRIS have been done in Zimbabwean organisations. As such, this study aims at covering that gap by focusing on one organisation in Zimbabwe. NetOne is one of a few companies in Zimbabwe with a fully integrated HRIS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of the evolution of HRIS, Johnson *et al.* (2015) observe that HRIS initially emerged as a simple mainframe system, primarily focused on automating payroll processes. However, over time, it has expanded to encompass various areas of HRM, including recruitment, selection, training and compensation.

The historical development of HRIS can be categorised into four distinct periods. The Mainframe Computing Period (1940s-mid-1980s) coincided with the growth of organisations and the need for more effective data recording and processing, driven, in part, by the demands of World War II. During this period, the U.S. Government and organisations had to collect and classify job-related data for employees (Kavanagh *et al.*, 2015). The Client Server and PC-based Applications period (mid-1980s-mid-1990s), as echoed by Lengnick and Moritz (2003), witnessed the emergence of computer networks and the migration of HRM databases to personal computers. Organisations established local area networks (LANs) to connect hardware, enabling the capture, storage and management of HR data across multiple locations. Thus, showing the technological shift on the development and competencies of HR professionals.

The enterprise resource planning (ERP) or Web-based Systems period (mid-1990s-2010), supported by Bondarouk and Brewster, (2016). saw the integration of web-enabled ERP systems to support HR activities such as recruitment, selection, training, performance management and compensation. This led to the introduction of new software offerings by vendors and the impact of these systems on HR practices and processes. The Cloud-based Applications period (2010 to the present day) witnessed the rise of cloud computing that prompted HR professionals to transition HRIS capabilities to the cloud, offering software as a service (SaaS) that provides a standard software product to all organisations. The benefits and challenges of cloud-based HRIS

emphasizes its impact on global talent management strategies. Thus, given the increasing importance of HRIS, numerous organisations have adopted its use since the 1990s (Ngai *et al.*, 2009). Recent estimates indicate that nearly all large organisations have implemented HRIS to support core HR functions, processes and decision-making, while smaller organisations are also embracing HRIS to support their HRM practices (Lytrasa *et al.*, 2010).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

In 2016, Khashman carried out a study that aimed at investigating the impact of HRIS Applications on Organisational Performance (Efficiency and Effectiveness) in Jordanian Private Hospitals. The study had a sample population of 170 employees working in the targeted hospitals. The result of this study showed that there is a positive impact of HRMS applications on organisational performance, positive attitude from employees working in HR sections in private hospitals towards all HRIS applications. The result of the study also indicated that such employees have positive attitudes towards organisational performance, which includes efficiency and effectiveness. In another study, Chumo (2014) established the relationship between HRIS and staff development among INGOs in Nairobi. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey form of research design. The population of the study consisted of 40 INGOs operating in Nairobi in the health sector.

The researcher collected primary data by use of a structured questionnaire that had both closed-ended and open-ended questions, administered through a drop-and-pick-later method at an agreed time with the researcher. In its findings, the research concluded that HRIS had a great positive relationship with staff development. As such, the researcher recommends other organisations to adopt its use. Another study was carried out by Mahapa and Chirasha in 2012 with the aim of assessing if the Midlands State University had adopted a fully integrated HRIS and the challenges being faced, and the benefits accrued. The study used a combination of research instruments like interviews and participant observation. The study had a sample of six selected using the purposive sampling method. In its findings, the study concluded that the HR Department at the Midlands State University had not adopted a fully integrated HRIS, but they had incorporated some of its areas such as salary administration,

advertising and employee personal records in the current system. The study concluded that the HR Department was not vested with the system. The researcher, therefore, recommends that more training programmes should be conducted and experts in the area should teach the employees how the system operates.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As argued by Miller (1998), the Theory of Change model is a method and an approach that has been used in recent years, for evaluating and monitoring development programmes and technologies, and as a framework for use in evaluations. It describes the processes of change by outlining the causal pathways from outputs (goods or services delivered by the project/technology) through direct outcomes (changes resulting from the use of outputs by key stakeholders). The adoption and use of HRIS as a form of technology by organisations is a change process aimed at improving the way the HR functions are carried out.

The HRIS will, therefore, bring in inputs in the way of its various applications that will, in turn, produce outputs in the form of HR deliverables. The adoption and implementation of the system in the organisation is, in itself, a project being undertaken by the organisation and, like any other project, it is expected to yield results. A Theory of Change sets out the intended outcomes of a project and the steps between intervention activities, and these outcomes, indicating underlying assumptions about how activities are expected to work, the same applies to HRIS which sets out new ways to carry out activities and the outcomes to be expected from those activities. For instance, HRIS have modules that firms can use in their various HR processes, like recruitment. The modules will then produce HR deliverables in the form of candidates best suited for the organisation through the recruitment module.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Robson (2011) defines a conceptual framework as “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs research.” To be able to effectively carry out research, one needs to establish a conceptual framework of the subject under study.

The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1. Each conceptual framework consists of independent and dependent. In this case, the HRIS is the independent variable and HR effectiveness is the dependent variable. The independent variable is that variable that cannot be affected by the other variable, in this case HRIS is the independent variable.

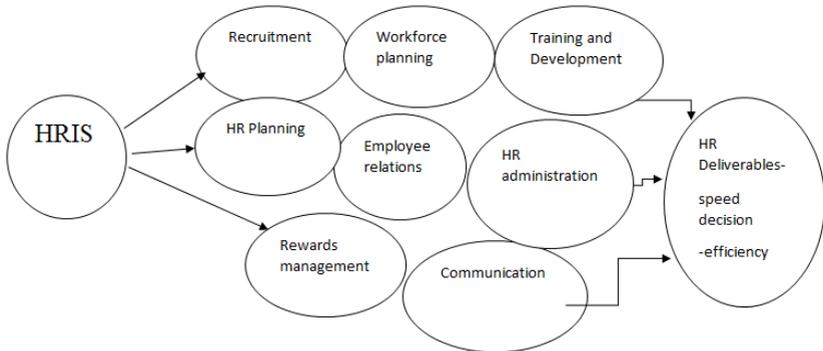


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

HRIS APPLICATIONS

As argued by Wiblen (2012), a **Job Analysis Application** is a web-based job analysis application with software that helps HR professionals to establish job analysis. It is usually performed using an online questionnaire that collects information directly from employees, supervisors and, if need be, outside consultants. **Recruitment Application** is used to get the best applicant for a job, by applying procedures that provide a large pool of qualified applicants, paired with a reliable and valid selection regime. Recruitment procedures have a substantial influence over the quality and type of skills new employees possess. All positions in the organisation are expected to adhere to all legal obligations linked to employment and equal opportunities by utilising approved codes of practice and providing justice and fair treatment for all candidates (Delorme *et al.*, 2010). As argued by Gerardine (1986), the selection process entails picking qualified people to fill particular positions.

Desanctis (1994) defined **HR selection** as the process of collecting and evaluating information about an individual to extend an offer of

employment. The selection process in any company or organisation will determine who is hired. **Employee self-service** module allows employees to query HR-related data and perform some HR transactions over the system. Employees may query their attendance records from the system without asking the information from HR personnel. **Payroll Application** is used for calculating each employee's remuneration, auto increment, transfer of salary to individual bank account and generating statutory reports required (Perry, 2010).

MODEL FOR HRIS INPUT AND OUTPUT

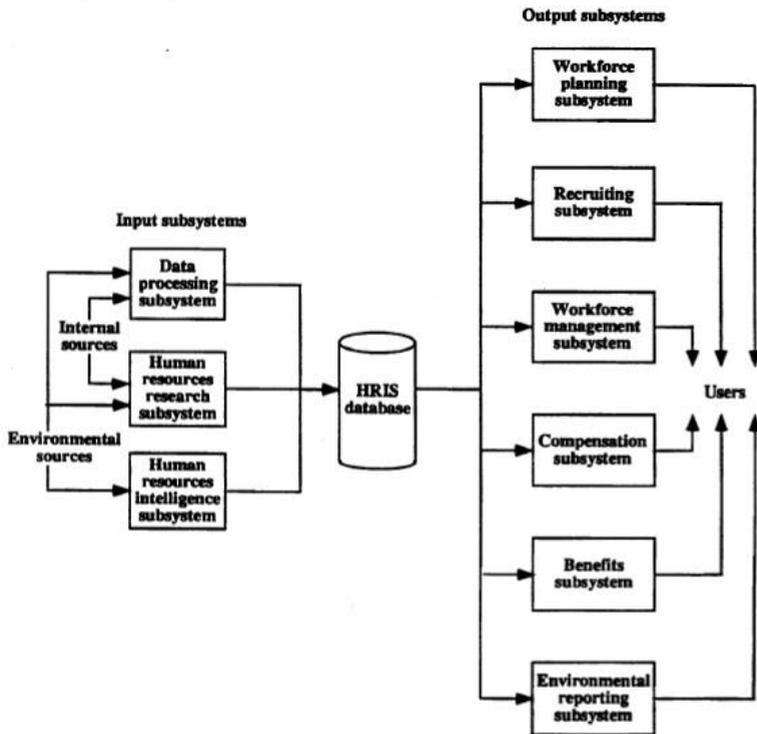


Figure 2: A Resource-Flow Model of the Human (Raymond,1995)

RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM: THE JOURNAL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Input Subsystems Three input subsystems enter data into the database. There are data processing, human resource research and human

resource intelligence. Each of these subsystems can include all types of data entry processes such as those involving keyboard and mouse input and optical scanning. In certain cases, the input subsystems also include software that transforms input data into the required format for storage. *Data Processing Subsystem* consists of those systems residing both in the accounting department and HR, that process data relating to HR. The data consists of personnel data describing HR transactions that occur during the resource flow, and payroll data. The data processing subsystem gathers the data from both internal and environmental sources. *Human Resources Research Subsystem* has the responsibility for conducting special studies to provide data on the firm's human resource-related activities. For example, such data identifies employees who are good candidates for positions becoming available because of transfer or termination and describes job content and the knowledge and skills that are required.

In essence, the human resources research subsystem is the introspective view taken by HR of its actions. As with the data processing subsystem, input data can come from both inside and outside the firm. *HRIS Database* articulates that all of the data and information provided by the input subsystems is held in computer storage. The storage units can reside in IS, HR or other locations. The data relates primarily to the firm's employees, but can also describe the environmental elements with that HR interface. **Database management system (DBMS)** software performs the main tenancy processes. *Output Subsystems* consist of various types of software that transform data in the database into information outputs. The software can include report writers, mathematical models, office automation packages such as E-mail and desktop publishing and applications of artificial intelligence such as expert systems. The *Output Subsystems* represent six groups: workforce planning, recruiting, workforce management, benefit, compensation and environmental reporting. For example, all of the software that supports management as they engage in workforce planning is included in the workforce planning subsystem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to outline the research methods employed by the researcher in carrying out this study, that is, the

research paradigm, design and targeted study population, interviews and ethical considerations. The researcher used a case study as a research design. The setting of this study is NetOne. The target population for this research comprised all 196 employees, made up of management, line managers and general employees. All these permanent employees came from various departments. The researcher used these employees as primary sources of data and such a population produced information the researcher used to derive conclusions from.

Table 1: Population Target Table (HR)

Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Top Management	1	1	Purposive
Line Managers	8	4	Purposive
General Employees	9	5	Convenience
TOTAL	18	10	

RESULTS

This section focuses on the presentation and analysis of the collected data from NetOne using semi-structured interviews. Some of the data was presented using tables and graphs. The researcher used thematic analysis on the data collected by semi-structured interviews to get a clearer measurement of the opinions of the participants.

The researcher analysed the responses from the interviews to determine the active response rate. The response rate was given as a percentage. The study had a target sample size of 10 individuals. The researcher was able to conduct interviews with all 10 individuals, giving a response rate of 100%. The demographics of the participants in this research are presented along gender lines, age of participants, years of service to the company and level of education.

Table 2: showing gender demographics, Source: Primary data (2019) n=10

Gender	No. of respondents	Response (%)
Male	4	40
Female	6	60
Total	10	100

From the indications of Table 2, it shows that this study had slightly more female participants than male participants. The researcher sought

to balance gender proportions so that the research may not be biased towards a particular gender.

The results in Table 3 indicated that four of the participants were between the ages 25-35, two/ were aged 36-45, three were between the ages 46-55 and only one was between the ages of 56-65. It can be concluded that the organisation is trying to recruit younger employees and retire older employees. This was important to know that part of the employees were more involved in the use of HRIS.

Table 3: Age demographic (Primary data, 2019 n=10)

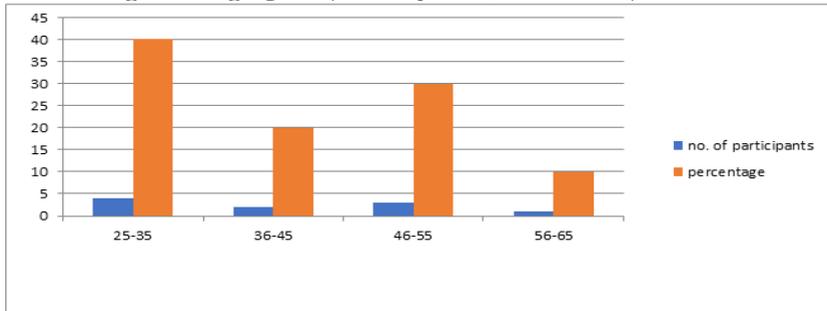


Table 4: A span of service demographics (Primary data (2019) n=10)

Span of Service	No. of respondents
2-5 Years	5
6-10 Years	4
11 Years and above	1
Total	10

Table 4 shows the demographics of this study's participants in terms of the span of their service to the firm under study. Five of the participants had been in service of the firm for a span of 2-5 years, while four had been in with the firm for a period ranging 6-10 years. Only one had been in the firm for a period of over 11 years.

Table 5: showing a level of education demographics (Primary data (2019) n=10)

Level of Education	No. of respondents
Degree	6
Masters	4
Total	10

Table 5 shows the demographics of the participants in terms of their level of education. The participants in this study, six participants had undergraduate degrees and the remaining four were holders of master's degrees.

DATA COLLECTED FROM INTERVIEWS

Features of HRIS being used at NetOne (Pvt) Ltd

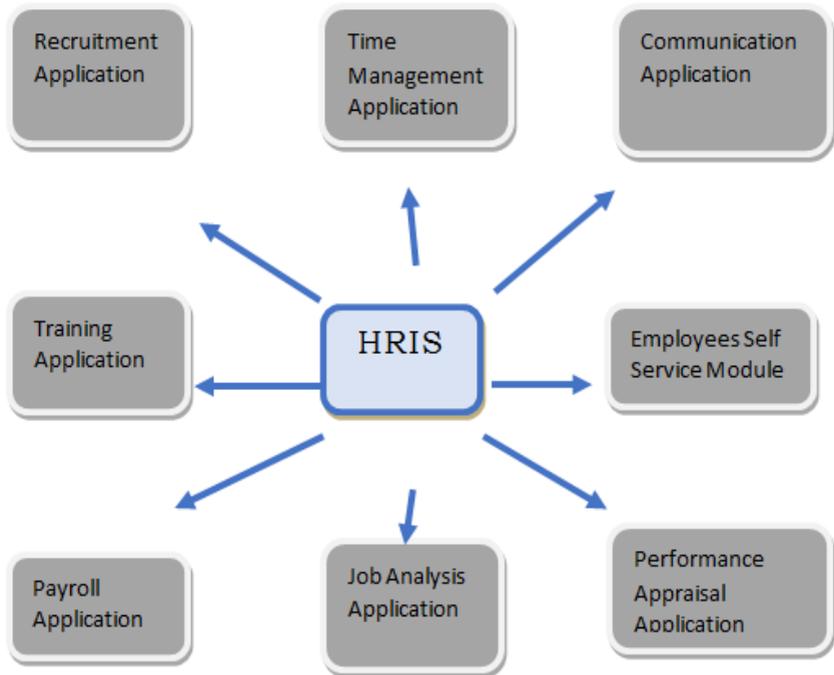


Figure 2: showing identified features of HRIS being used at NetOne; (Primary data, 2019) n=10

Figure 2 shows the features of HRIS being used at NetOne. These identified features include a recruitment application, training application, time management application, payroll application, job analysis application, performance appraisal application, employee's self-service module and communication application.

EFFECT OF HRIS ON THE SATISFACTION OF INTERNAL CUSTOMERS (EMPLOYEES)

Table 6 shows interview extracts to the question that aimed to establish the effect of HRIS on the satisfaction of internal customers and employees.

Table 6: Interview extracts (effect of HRIS on satisfaction of internal customers and employees (Primary data, 2019) n=10

THEME	EXTRACTS FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p>Fast attendance to employee's grievances, complaints and issues</p>	<p>In this research, it was discovered that using HRIS, HR officials and managers at NetOne can and timeously attend to issues and complaints raised by employees. This was seen from the response of a line manager (Participant 3) who concerning this said:</p> <p>“HRIS allows for the real-time tracking of problematic areas that are being reflagged throughout the organisation. This, therefore, allows HR officials and supervisors to attend to these issues as they are raised by employees, thus allowing them to find a solution before the issue becomes too problematic.”</p> <p>Another participant from general employees (Participant 8) shared the same sentiment as he noted that:</p> <p>“HRIS allows us as employees to forward our grievances and even requests to management and HR personnel using the communication feature in the system. This saves individuals on both ends time as the request or issues can quickly be resolved without having to sit face to face.”</p>
<p>HRIS awards employees' flexibility and autonomy in carrying out their duties</p>	<p>The research discovered that the use of HRIS can allow employees some degree of flexibility and autonomy in carrying out their duties. This was demonstrated by the response by participants from general employees who had the following to say about this issue:</p> <p>Participant No. 6</p> <p>“HRIS, through its self-service module and other features, allows us as employees to access certain information on our own in carrying out our duties as we can easily have access to the information we need to do so. As such, we must not constantly consult with our superiors on procedures and standards.”</p> <p>Participant No. 10</p> <p>“HRIS not only allows us flexibility in carrying our duties, but also allows us the same in managing our leave days and other work-life balance issues as we can request and manage our leave days in the system without having to ask the HR officials for information in this regard.”</p>

EFFECT OF HRIS ADOPTION ON THE COST OF DELIVERING HR SERVICES

Table 7 shows the interview extracts to the question that aimed to establish the effect of the adoption of HRIS on the cost of delivering HR services.

Table 7: Interview extracts (effect of adoption of HRIS on cost of delivering HR services) (Primary data, 2019) n=10

THEME	EXTRACTS FROM PARTICIPANTS
<p>HRIS Minimises Recruitment costs</p>	<p>This research was able to find out that the adoption of HRIS in an organisation can significantly lower recruitment costs. This was evidenced by the responses of the following participants from top management and line managers who had this to say:</p> <p>Participant No. 1 “Yes, indeed, HRIS can lower recruitment costs as it utilises more effective and modern means to reach job applicants that are less expensive compared to the traditional conventional job advertising means.”</p> <p>Participant No. 3 “Of course, HRIS minimises recruitment costs. You know as we say, time is money, HRIS saves time when recruiting as most of the processes are done through the system in an automated manner. This, in turn, saves resources and the firm’s time. As such, you would say it minimises costs.”</p> <p>Participant No. 4 “Before the adoption of HRIS, recruitment was a long and costly process as we had to advertise through newspapers, TV adverts and so on, but now advertising of vacancies is mostly done through social media and applications are received and processed through HRIS. This has proved to be less time and resources-consuming. Therefore, costs are reduced.”</p>
<p>HRIS minimises training costs</p>	<p>This study found that the adoption of HRIS by an organisation can significantly lower the training expenses of an organisation. This was noted through the responses of two of the participants in this study who had this to say:</p> <p>Participant No. 1 “Indeed, training costs have been significantly lowered since the adoption of HRIS. I cannot tell you exact figures from the back of my head, but it has been noted that since we</p>

	<p>adopted the use of HRIS, training costs have greatly been reduced.”</p> <p>Participant No.5 “Through HRIS, issues to do with management and coordination of training programmes are made easier and faster to manage. From issues like training needs analysis, HRIS is of great help. As such, naturally this convenience saves time and resources, in turn, lowering the overall training costs.”</p>
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DISCUSSION

Most of the respondents reflected that the following were the features of the HRIS being used at NetOne: Recruitment application, training application, time management application, job analysis application, performance appraisal application, communication application, employee self-service module and, finally the payroll feature. These findings are supported by many scholars who have noted some basic features common to most HRIS. Lengnick-Hall (2003) identified job analysis application as one of the features common to HRIS and defined it as a web-based job analysis application with software that helps HR professionals to establish job analyses. Handrickson (2003) also identified recruitment application as another feature common to HRIS that uses recommended codes of practice to ensure justice and fair treatment for all applicants. Casico (2006) also noted that HRIS has a communication feature that supports regulatory communications inter-organisationally to coordinate all the various organisational activities and changes. He also identified performance appraisal applications as another feature common to HRIS. Other scholars have also identified time management applications (Mathias and Jackson, 2010), training applications, payroll modules and employee self-service modules (Mayfield, 2003).

The findings of the study indicated that HRIS had a positive effect on the satisfaction of internal customers (that is the employees) in an organisation. This was shown by the use of HRIS resulting in fast attendance to employees’ grievances, complaints and issues. Participants noted that HRIS allowed management and HR personnel

to not only respond to complaints raised, but also identify areas that could result in grievances and complaints being raised and addressed before they become contentious issues. They also noted that HRIS also allowed them to raise these issues with management in a timeous and swift manner that also affords management the same opportunity to respond to these issues much faster. These findings are in line with Beadless and Kovach (2009), who observe that HRIS use results in administrative effectiveness and efficiency through faster information processing, improved employee communications and greater information accuracy.

The study also found that the use of HRIS awards employees flexibility and autonomy in carrying out their duties and this is very crucial to the satisfaction of employees (Wiblen, 2012). Participants noted that HRIS allowed them to be less dependent on their superiors in carrying out their duties as they had access to the information, they would require to carry out their duties. This induces satisfaction as noted by Wiblen (2012), who concluded that autonomy and a flexible work environment are some of the factors that can result in job satisfaction. These findings, as indicated, shows that HRIS results in satisfaction of employees as they are allowed autonomy and flexibility and faster redress to issues and grievances they would have raised.

Costs associated with HR can be significantly reduced because of HRIS implementation. This was evident in the comments of the participants, who mentioned that HRIS led to a decrease in recruiting expenses. Participants pointed out that by using HRIS, an organisation may cut expenses associated with hiring new employees since HRIS uses more cost-effective, cutting-edge methods than traditional methods of job advertising to find qualified candidates. They said that HRIS cuts down on recruiting time, which lowers the number of resources needed and, in turn, lowers expenses. Furthermore, the participants mentioned that employing HRIS cuts training costs. As argued by the participants, HRIS greatly reduced training expenses by simplifying the management and coordination of training programmes. This convenience saves time and resources, in turn lowers the total cost of training. The implementation of HRIS can reduce HR expenses, as

argued by these findings, which agree with the opinions and research of other academics. The adoption of HRIS, as argued by Kovach *et al.* (2002), enables the organisation to retain reduced HR expenditures, in turn increasing total productivity. HRIS has a significant influence on the HRM sector by improving the efficiency of HRM operations since it lowers costs and lessens the administrative responsibilities present in most HR departments, as argued by Kavanagh *et al.* (2015).

CONCLUSION

The study successfully identified the common features and applications found in the HRIS utilised by NetOne Cellular (Pvt) Ltd. These features/applications encompassed various areas such as Recruitment, Training, Time Management, Job Analysis, Performance Appraisal, Communication, Employee Self-Service and Payroll.

Utilising HRIS can lead to internal customer satisfaction. The study's findings indicated that by employing HRIS, HR managers can promptly and effectively address the concerns and grievances raised by employees, meeting their expectations and desires. The implementation of HRIS empowers employees with greater autonomy and flexibility in performing their responsibilities, thereby, enhancing their overall satisfaction.

Moreover, the adoption of HRIS can contribute to cost reduction in HR service delivery. Participants in the study acknowledged that HRIS plays a role in reducing recruitment and training expenses, and other HR-related costs. Streamlining processes and automating tasks through HRIS enables organisations to minimise their financial resources dedicated to HR functions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATE AND UPDATE THE HRIS

Regularly evaluating the efficiency of NetOne's HRIS is essential as technology and HR procedures change. The system's features, functionality and user satisfaction should all be examined as part of

this evaluation to make sure they correspond to the organisation's evolving demands.

ENHANCE EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND UTILISATION OF HRIS

NetOne employers, managers and HR personnel should all receive thorough training on how to utilise the HRIS. To fully benefit from the system's features and applications and boost overall effectiveness, encourage and support their usage.

STRENGTHEN DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY MEASURES

To safeguard critical HR data kept in the HRIS, NetOne should use strong security mechanisms. Regular data backups, access restrictions, encryption and adherence to pertinent data protection laws are all included in this. To find and fix any possible vulnerabilities, conduct routine audits.

FOSTER A CULTURE OF DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

Encourage and assist managers and HR professionals in making educated decisions by utilising the data insights supplied by the HRIS. To find trends, patterns and opportunities to improve HR processes and strategies, encourage the usage of analytics and reporting tools inside the HRIS.

SEEK FEEDBACK AND ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Regularly gather feedback from employees, managers and HR staff regarding their experiences and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the HRIS. Actively involve stakeholders in the decision-making process and consider their input when making system improvements or introducing new features.

STAY UPDATED ON INDUSTRY TRENDS

To guarantee that NetOne stays at the forefront of HR management techniques, keep an eye on industry advancements and new technological breakthroughs in HRIS. To keep up with the most recent developments in the industry, think about going to conferences, joining professional networks and interacting with HR technology providers.

FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

By exploiting the data insights provided by the HRIS, managers and HR professionals may be encouraged and helped to make informed decisions. Encourage the use of the analytics and reporting tools included into the HRIS to identify trends, patterns and opportunities to enhance HR procedures and initiatives.

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WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF ZIMBABWE

NICOLE K CHAWATAMA¹

Abstract

This study focused on assessing the impact of workforce diversity on employee engagement at the National Railways of Zimbabwe. The consistent world changes raised by factors, such as globalisation, new technology development and the increase in migration movements, have generated an increasingly diversified workforce. A diversified workforce is an important organisational resource, regardless of whether the goal is to be an employer of choice, to provide excellent customer service or to maintain a competitive edge. The data used in this research was acquired from a sample of 30 respondents who represented various departments and, from the data that was collected using Likert scale questionnaires, the researcher discovered that there is a statistically significant positive relationship in elements such as gender and age diversity on the engagement of employees. Workforce diversity is an element that should not be overlooked in the functions of an organisation because it is a crucial aspect that can affect the engagement of employees. Organisations are not operating in a vacuum, hence an organisation operating in the 21st century must acknowledge that the business world is changing and the calibre of employees that are being hired in organisations.

Keywords: *employee, engagement, gender, age diversity, workforce mobility, millennial*

INTRODUCTION

The world of work is gradually evolving because of high workforce mobility that has promoted a coalition of diverse individuals with different backgrounds in the modern-day working environment. This has posed major concerns in contemporary organisations in a bid to

¹ Human Resources, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

sustain competitiveness (Agrawal, 2016). It has called for organisations to embrace employee differences in championing the cause of sustainable growth of their entities. This means that in the ever-changing business world, characterised by stiff competition, employees have emerged as the sole competitive advantage for many organisations due to their inimitability. Hence organisations that value and embrace diversity, have managed to inculcate a high sense of creativity and innovation in their employees, leading to high organisational performance and a distinct competitive edge over its rivals (Kerga and Asefa, 2018).

Because of increased differences in the workplace in terms of gender and age, organisations are finding it hard to cope with diversity practices in managing and sustaining highly engaged employees (Marcus and Gopinath, 2017). One must observe that keeping diverse employees engaged in the workplace is a complex task that requires top management to pay particular attention to individual differences and devise effective measures to satisfy their diverse needs. The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) is not immune from these adverse effects of workforce diversity. The awareness of diverse management is quite limited at the NRZ because of the patriarchal African culture that promotes gender and age imbalances.

BACKGROUND

Employee engagement is defined by Santos (2017) “as the passion, energy or motivation that influences work-related activities”. When employees are actively engaged, they exert that discretionary effort that has a bearing on the quality of work that they produce. Employee engagement is a crucial aspect that affects both the organisation and the employees, resulting in researchers, such as Narayanan (2018), acknowledging the fact that the lifespan of an organisation is influenced by the level of engagement with the employees. The more employees are engaged, the more an organisation can last in this ever-changing business environment (Downey, 2015). Osborne (2017) revealed, that only 13% of employees in the world are actively engaged at work, which should be a major cause of concern for all the businesses. His research also showed that disengaged employees make

up almost twice the employees who are engaged and that disengaged employees are end up turning to deviant behaviours. A survey carried out by industrial psychology consultants in 2016 revealed that only 34% of the workers in Zimbabwe are engaged. The employees of an organisation contribute to the success of any organisation, hence there is need to determine ways of engaging the workforce to be creative and being profitable in the business environment.

Narayanan (2018) states that old workers in an organisation are often a stigmatised group and that affects their identity in the organisation and influences their level of engagement. The stigmatisation of old workers has led to research revealing that these employees exhibit lower engagement levels. However, a study carried out by Lapoint and Liprie-Spence (2017) revealed that employees that were satisfied with their colleagues younger than 40 and older than 55 years of age also tended to report greater engagement. If employees are subjected to discrimination because of their age, it might affect the way they work because they will not be comfortable engaging in the activities of the organisation. The old employees are associated with lower productivity most of the time, resulting in them being stigmatised whereas they can work despite their ages.

Moreover, old employees are stereotyped mostly because they are associated with an increase in health problems as they age, which affects their output as argued by Busolo (2017). Old employees are perceived to be unable to adapt to changes in technology and, at the end of the day, are associated with poor returns. Macdonald and Levy (2016) revealed that old employees want to secure their jobs because it is difficult for the old generation to be employed in new organisations, so one has no choice but to be engaged. Old employees might have no choice but to be engaged because they have much to lose by leaving the present organisation since they would be about to retire.

In contrast, employees who are new entrants tend to be stereotyped as “job hoppers” as revealed by research carried out by Agrawal (2016), because younger employees have ample options when it comes to the career paths they can explore. As a result, generation Y workers tend

to have lower engagement compared to generation X and baby boomers who are associated with loyalty to the organisation. This shows how different generations perceive the workplace because generation Y is driven by curiosity and the drive to explore compared to other generations that have established themselves in their careers, hence the differences in the levels of engagement are noticed.

Furthermore, apart from age affecting the engagement levels of employees, Marcus and Gopinath (2017) suggest that as employees grow older they have fewer opportunities to attain employment elsewhere, apart from the organisation that they are serving, which leads to them valuing their current place of employment (Rizwan *et al.*, 2016). Hence this study revealed that employees are highly engaged when they reach the age of 60 compared to when they were younger. Most of the time, the old generation would have acquired the skills that make them relevant in that particular organisation. For example, an employee at the NRZ cannot use the skills they acquired as a train driver in many places in Zimbabwe. Hence, their skill is limited and customised and it becomes difficult for them not to be engaged because they have no other choice than to be engaged if they are working.

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Garg (2014) asserts that gender differences have been found to determine an employee's engagement level in the organisation. The issue of who is more engaged, male or female, is a controversial issue leading to research being conducted by researchers such as Narayanan (2018), who reveal that male employees in the manufacturing industry are relatively more highly engaged within the workplace than female employees. This could be because of different aspects that include stereotyping and female employees not being given equal opportunities to advance themselves in the organisation. However, Rizwan *et al.* (2016) asserts that organisations that had mixed gender were found to be performing extremely well compared to organisations that had homogenous gender groups. This might be true considering that society views women as inferior. It is hard for women to advance because it has been a norm that a woman's place in society

is specialising in domestic chores rather than a boardroom. Hence women might end up facing challenges when they are working because they would be stereotyped which might affect the way they work and get disengaged in the process.

Further, Industrial Psychology Consultants (2016) reveal that board compositions in companies in Zimbabwe is male-dominated. Their research showed that in executive positions. Mutangi (2016) has acknowledged that women are represented mostly in lowly paid and low-skilled occupations as those jobs happen to be characterised by low job security. This contrasts with males who happen to have a large representation in all the spheres of the job, from executive positions to lowly paid jobs in the organisation. Hence this can reflect how, in some research, it is found that women are more engaged in their workplaces. It can be attributed to women having to work hard when they want to be part of executive positions. However, Nair and Vohra (2015) acknowledge that it is not the case that female employees are discriminated against in the workplace, but that female and male employees in organisations happen to be treated equally in the workplace and there are no “exceptions” when it comes to that. The research also argues that in organisations, male and female employees are competing for similar jobs because companies are operating in a global environment that promotes the equality of all genders. Hence one can say that both men and women are engaged in the workplace because they get equal opportunities in the workplace and can work well together.

A report that was written by Mutangi (2016) for UNICEF reveals that in Zimbabwe, men are earning more than their woman counterparts for the same job. The Global Gender Gap Report (2018) shows that Zimbabwe ranks number 71 out of 115 countries in terms of wage differences between females and males in an organisation. This reveals that women are still facing hurdles in the industry because of the

inherent patriarchal societal beliefs that have also been practised in organisations. Fapohunda (2016) alludes to the view that existing social norms have affected the way women work by stating how women should act and spend their time. This has led to women, particularly in Zimbabwe, being undervalued. This view shows the discrepancies between females and males in organisations, which may have an impact on how women and men are engaged.

THE BENEFITS THAT AN ORGANISATION STANDS TO GAIN FROM AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Agrawal (2016) is of the notion that employees that are engaged are more inclined to stay in the organisation than leave it. That can provide employees with opportunities to contribute to the work that they are doing. Adding on. Nair and Vohra (2015) assert that employees actively engaged in an organisation are said to be a “key ingredient” when an organisation needs to maximise its productivity. One should realise that engaged employees have the basic knowledge of key activities in the business and how to attain favourable results in those activities. When employees are engaged, they are attached emotionally and work with a passion in advancing the mission, vision and goals of that firm.

A firm that has an engaged workforce stands to enhance its organisational image by keeping its talented employees from leaving the organisation. Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) posit that an engaged workforce impacts the organisation positively by portraying the image of an ideal and responsible company. In most instances, if an organisation is an employer of choice, most people would want to be associated with it, even the employees in the organisation are proud to be working for that particular organisation, leading to increased productivity, the ultimate goal that must be attained in a firm.

An engaged employee provides improved services and benefit both the individual and the organisation (Osborne, 2017). Engaged

employees are associated with profitability, customer loyalty and business growth which is the aim of organisations at the end of the day. Itam (2018) indicates that a study carried out by Tower Watson on 50 companies revealed that organisations that had an engaged workforce experienced a 19% increment in share price, compared to the firms that had low engagement levels. Companies that low engagement levels had a drop in their share price by a margin of 32%. Rizwan *et al.* (2016) suggest that when employees are engaged, they are more likely to have feelings of satisfaction with their current occupation in the organisation. When they possess these traits, employees are motivated to improve their performance, by exceeding their set targets and will be persuaded not to leave the organisation in the long run.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

The Social Exchange Theory was propounded by Homans in 1958. The theory predicts that in “reaction to positive initiating actions, targets will tend to reply in kind by engaging in more positive reciprocating responses and fewer negative reciprocating responses” Cropanzano, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2014). Employees who feel appreciated in the organisation will perform well and if they are not treated well, they will retaliate and show signs of deviant behaviour. This theory is based on a relationship between two individuals through a cost-benefit analysis.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is a concept that assists in clarifying the research that is being undertaken (Dickson, Adu-Agyem and Emad Kamil, 2018). The conceptual framework is going to be premised on the notion that workforce diversity is an independent variable that influences employee engagement. Employee engagement is going to be

a dependent variable in the research. The moderating variable in this study is going to be culture, which may be a dominant factor in the structure of the organisation in terms of age and gender.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The quantitative research approach was used in the study. Silverman (2013) asserts that the deductive approach develops a hypothesis from a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it. The study used a cross-sectional research design. The researcher carried out the study at the NRZ to find out the influence of workforce diversity on employee engagement. The target population were employees in managerial and non-managerial positions at the NRZ Headquarters in Bulawayo.

The sample size of 30 employees for this research, including managerial and non-managerial staff, was extracted from the headquarters of NRZ because of ease of accessibility. Probability sampling was used in the study because, in a population, every item has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Hemed, 2015). The sampling technique used is the simple random sampling technique.

The researcher used a questionnaire to conduct the research. The research was based on structured questionnaires. The reason the study was based on a structured questionnaire was because a structured questionnaire is quantitative in nature and quantitative data needed to be utilised to get quantitative output that is going to be used for data analysis (Maponga, 2015). The study's questionnaire was guided by a Likert scale questionnaire.

The validity of the research design was measured using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Validity is a critical aspect of research as it addresses issues to do with the quality of the

research design and how accurate, clear and concise it must be. Reliability is when results in a quantitative study are found to be having attributes of consistency and stability (Heale and Twycross, 2015). The results in the study must be consistent in identical situations. In this study, data was checked using Cronbach's Alpha which is calculated using the SPSS software. The researcher used the Likert scale questionnaire for the respondents in that the questions will be structured the same way, and the respondents will be given the same amount of time to answer the questions.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.719	.654	9

Reliability testing was done in this research using the SPSS 23 software. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in SPSS 23 was utilised to determine the reliability of the Likert scale questionnaire used. Cronbach's Alpha is used in most studies as a way of determining the consistency of the instrument. Taherdoost and Group (2017) state that for a research instrument to be considered in the category of high reliability, it must fall in the range 0.70 to 0.90. The questionnaire used in this research totalled 0.719 Cronbach's Alpha which shows that the research questionnaire is reliable.

Table 2 illustrates the reliability of each instrument per construct. The lowest item in the table has a value of 0.646 and the highest is 0.738. The reliability of these constructs is positive as it ranges between moderate and high in the context (Taherdoost and Group, 2017).

Table 2: Total Item Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is your gender?	27.97	17.606	.075	.232	.734
What is your age?	26.14	10.695	.618	.748	.646
What is your current level of education?	26.03	11.606	.601	.476	.647
Indicate the range of years you have been working in the organisation.	26.69	11.436	.738	.742	.610
Female employees who perform better are promoted.	26.10	15.596	.258	.222	.720
Employee engagement promotes organisational growth.	24.86	16.623	.311	.336	.710
Employee engagement increases the profitability of the organisation.	24.93	15.924	.493	.456	.691
Employee engagement reduces labour turnover.	24.90	15.882	.428	.283	.695
The policies in the organisation necessitate equality in terms of gender	27.41	18.394	-.161	.136	.738

FACTOR ANALYSIS

A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) and Bartlett's factor analysis test was done. The adequacy test showed that it was 0.705, falling in the range that is satisfactory for this particular study. The significance level is 0.001, showing a significant value. The significance value should be <0.5 and the results of the factor analysis show that the significance is satisfactory.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.705
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	669.277
	Df	15
	Sig.	.001

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4 Gender composition

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Female	17	56.7	56.7	56.7
Male	13	43.3	43.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The gender composition of the respondents who answered the questionnaires distributed particularly for managerial and non-managerial staff at the NRZ showed that 57% of the respondents are female employees and 43% are male. There are more female than male employees which might mean that more women are getting opportunities to work in the organisations. Even though women are found in the workplace, they happen to be occupying low positions (Sathyanarayana and Nair, 2018).

THE AGE OF THE EMPLOYEES

Generation Y employees range from 19 to 39 years of age. Employees aged in the range 18-24 years account for 16.7%. Those in the millennial generation are in the range 25-35 years (13%). Generation X employees comprises those aged from 40 to 54, followed by the Baby Boomers who are in the age range of 55 to 75 years. In the railways, the baby boomer generation (56- 60 years) in this research makes up 20% of the population. These results show that there is a representative of each generation at the NRZ making it diversified.

THE CURRENT LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 5 Level of Education

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Ordinary level	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
Advanced level	6	20.0	20.0	26.7
Diploma	8	26.7	26.7	53.3
Degree	8	26.7	26.7	80.0
Post Graduate Qualification	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The questionnaire intended to find out the current level of education possessed by employees in the NRZ. Results show that 6.7% of the employees have an Ordinary Level certificate and 20% have an A Level certificate. While 26.7% of the employees have a Diploma, the same percentage (26.7%) as those of the employees who possess degrees. A fifth (20%) of employees have a postgraduate qualification.

INDICATE THE RANGE OF YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE ORGANISATION

The study intended to find out the number of years that employees have been in the company. Almost seventeen percent (16.7%) of the employees have been working for one to five years, followed by 27% of the employees who have worked for six to 10 years. Most the

employees have been working in the organisation for more than 10 years. Some employees (23%) have been with the company for 11-20 years and 33% of the employees have been working for 21-25 years. The employees who have been working for a few years in the organisation could be the new entrants in the organisation.

OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

The research used the SPSS version 23 to do cross-tabulation to see the relationship between the variables to be researched. The researcher cross-tabulated the variables that were found to be reliable by Cronbach's Alpha on SPSS 23 in Table 2. The researcher followed the order of the set objectives and the questionnaire to get accurate results.

SPSS 23 was used to establish the relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. The questionnaire directed a question to the employees where they were supposed to indicate whether they found it hard to bond with their colleagues from different generations. The results show that 14 (47%) employees agree that they find it hard to bond with other age groups. Of those 14 employees, four (13%) of them, who are the majority, are millennials. Three of the employees from the population were neutral, meaning they were not sure whether they find it hard or easy to bond with other age groups at work. Twelve (40%) of the employees disagree that they find it hard to work with others and only one (3%) strongly disagreed that it is difficult to be bonding with other employees from different generational backgrounds. These results are consistent with Deloitte (2019), who did a study on the engagement of millennials in the workplace, revealing that millennials found it hard to bond with the older generation in the workplace. Five (17%) of the employees in the age range 18-24 agree that they find it hard to relate to the older generation. This could be because of the way the different generations are socialised. Younger employees have the zeal to explore and were brought up in an environment where they can embrace change easily

whereas the older generation is believed to be loyal and committed to their organisation. Hence employees tend to associate themselves with other similarities.

Table 6: Emotional conflicts caused by generational differences

What is your age	Emotional conflicts caused by generational differences				Total
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
18-24	1	0	3	1	5
25-35	1	0	2	1	4
36-45	3	1	3	0	7
46-55	4	1	2	1	8
56-60	2	0	4	0	6
Total	11	2	14	3	30

The relationship between age and emotional conflicts that may occur was established using SPSS. Fourteen (47%) employees agreed that there are emotional conflicts that are caused by differences in age. Three (10%) strongly agreed, two (7%) were neutral and 11 (37%) employees disagreed that there is a relationship between the two. Most of the employees agreed that there are emotional conflicts which means that different generations behave in different ways that could contribute to employees not understanding how to relate to others. This concurs with Kerga and Asefa (2018) who show that, if there are emotional conflicts in the organisation, it affects the level of engagement of employees.

Table 7: Female employees who perform better are promoted

What is your gender	Female employees who perform better are promoted				Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Female	1	3	6	7	17
Male	0	2	3	8	13
Total	1	5	9	15	30

From the questionnaire, 15 (50%) employees agreed that female employees who performed better in the organisation were promoted at work, nine (30%) were neutral, five (17%) disagreed and only one(3%) respondent strongly disagreed. These results are constant with Nair and Vohra’s (2015) research that states that in the workplace, male and female employees are treated fairly. Hence, this research reveals that female employees getting opportunities to advance themselves might contribute to them being engaged in the organisation. Sathyanarayana and Nair (2018) corroborate the results of this research stating that male and female employees are given the same platform to compete for open vacancies in the organisation.

Table 8: Employee engagement promotes organisational growth

What is your gender	Employee engagement promotes organisational growth			Total
	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Female	0	10	7	17
Male	1	4	8	13
Total	1	14	15	30

The results show that 15 (50%) respondents strongly agreed and 14 (47%) agreed that employee engagement promotes organisational growth. Only one respondent disagreed with this statement. This shows that when employees are engaged, they tend to channel their energy into making the organisation successful. This is consistent with the results from Rizwan *et al.* (2016) who reveal that even if an organisation is facing economic challenges the organisation can grow, as long as the employees are engaged.

Table 9: Employee engagement increases profitability of the organisation

		Employee engagement increases profitability of the organisation		Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	
What is your gender				
	Female	9	8	17
	Male	7	6	13
Total		16	14	30

The next question was whether employee engagement can be said to increase an entity’s profitability. From the responses, SPSS showed that 16 (53%) people agreed and 14 (47%) strongly agreed that an organisation's profitability is enhanced by the engagement of employees. This is consistent with the Gallup report conducted of companies in the 500 Fortune that showed that companies that had an engaged workforce realised an increment in terms of the profits.

Table 10: Employee engagement reduces labour turnover

What is your gender		Employee engagement reduces labour turnover				Total
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
	Female	0	1	7	9	17
	Male	1	0	6	6	13
Total		1	1	13	15	30

This cross-tabulation reveals if employee engagement reduces labour turnover. From the responses obtained, 13 (43%) agreed and 15 (50%) strongly agreed that if employees are engaged, they are less likely to leave the organisation. One respondent (3%) was neutral, and another one disagreed with the statement. Research conducted by Bibi (2016) shows that when employees are engaged in the organisation, they tend to be committed and loyal and tend to think less of leaving the organisation.

REGRESSION

Regression analysis refers to a method that is used to establish a relationship that exists between two or more variables (Schaufeli, 2018). The analysis was conducted to assess the relationship found between workforce diversity and employee engagement. The regression analysis is based on Pearson regression where $P < 0.005$ and $R > 0.5$, signifying the strength between correlations in the study. The analysis is going illustrated using linear graphs showing the regression equation based on the equation $y = a + bx$. In this particular equation, Y represents the dependent variable and is a value linked to Y when $X = 0$ and b in the equation represents the slope of the line.

Table 11: Regression Analysis

Regression analysis for factors of workforce diversity and employee engagement

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 ^a	.566	.224	.223

a. Predictors: (Constant), BOE5, BOE4, BOE3

b. Dependent Variable: FWD4

The relationship found between the variables tested how policies used in an organisation can influence employee engagement. The model summary shows that there is a positive strong relationship because the value of R^2 is 0.566. ANOVA test shows the significance level of the relationship that is found between policies in the organisation and employee engagement. The statistically significant value of P is 0.022 of that $P > 0.05$. This shows that there is a relationship between these two variables. The coefficients table was then used to determine the significance level of the different variables that determine engagement in an organisation. The relationship that exists between the two concurs with the study conducted by Shifnas and Sutha (2016). If an organisation wants to reduce factors like labour turnover and increase

its profitability, then there is need to adjust the policies in the organisation to accommodate different employees.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR AGE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

SPSS 23 tested the coefficients and showed a strong relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. The value of R^2 is 0.270, showing a 27% difference between the two variables, the significance level is 0.024. The coefficients are constructed using the **B** section to show the regression equation $y = a + bx$. The dots in Figure 1 are seen to be dotted on the line, which shows a significantly strong relationship between these two variables. The results concur with results from research by Surekha (2019) that revealed that the engagement of employees in the organisation depended on their age. The older generation seemed to have lower levels of engagement during the course of their career but when they are close to retirement age, their engagement levels would be high.

Table 12: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.520 ^a	.270	.044	.777

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE4, AGE1, AGE3, AGE2

b. Dependent Variable: BOE1

Table 13: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.223	4	.806	1.336	.024 ^b
	Residual	15.077	25	.603		
	Total	18.300	29			

a. Dependent Variable: BOE1

b. Predictors: (Constant), AGE4, AGE1, AGE3, AGE2

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

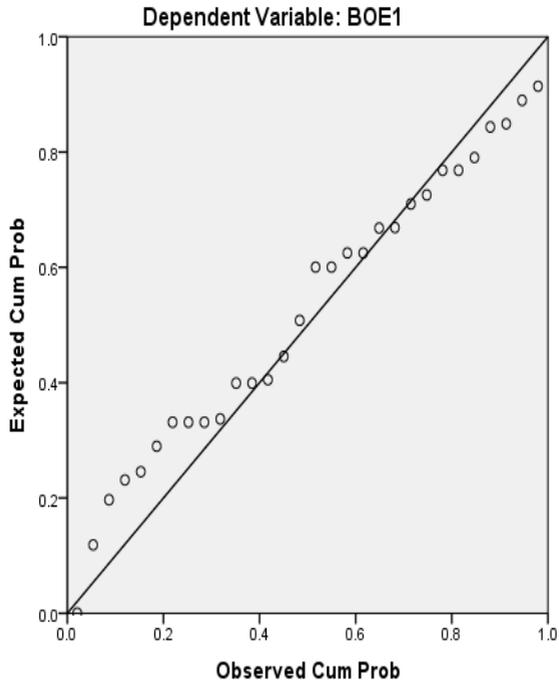


Figure 1

REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR GENDER DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The model summary reveals the relationship between gender and employee engagement. It shows that R^2 is of the value 0.584, which shows a positively strong relationship. The ANOVA test showed that there is a significance level of 0.001, giving a reason for acknowledging that there is a relationship between gender diversity and employee engagement. The coefficients table shows the different constructs under gender diversity and employee engagement and their significance. The results show that if female employees are given a chance to perform in the organisation, they are competitive. If female employees are not presented with the opportunities to perform in the organisation it can affect their engagement levels, leading to negative

outcomes such as absenteeism, high labour turnover and low productivity. The other factors that affect the engagement of female employees are factors (GEE3, GEE4, GEE5 and GEE6) that have significance levels of 0.002, 0,005 and 0,065. B values are 0.068, 0.81 and 0.006, respectively, which shows the regression line in Figure 2. This shows that there is a relationship between gender diversity and employee engagement using the regression equation formula $y = a + bx$. The graph shows the dotted lines that are close to the line in the graph showing a positive strong relationship between the variables.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

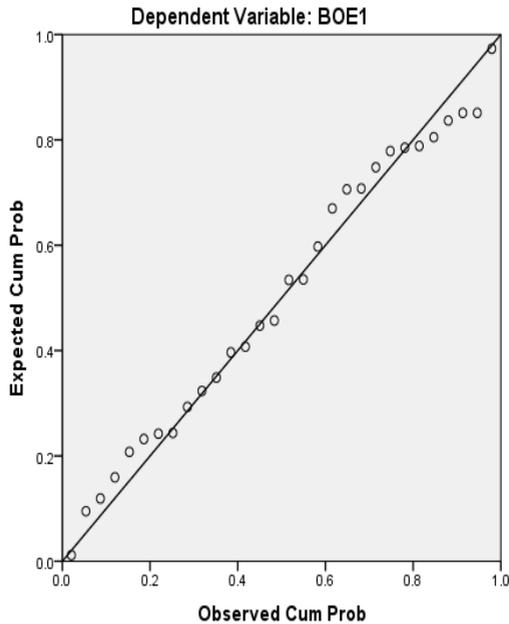


Figure 2
Table 14 Hypothesis Test Summary

Dependant Variable	Independent variable	Significance	Accept/Reject
Gender diversity	Employee engagement	0.001	Accept
Age Diversity	Employee engagement	0.284	Accept
Diversity policies	Employee engagement	0.022	Accept

FINDINGS IN ORDER OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

The research intended to find out the nature of the relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. From the results analysed by SPSS 23, employees at the NRZ find it hard to associate with employees in different generations, 47% finding it difficult to bond with others which makes it most the respondents compared to the 40% of the employees who disagreed. Despite having a small difference (7%), significantly, employees at the NRZ find it hard to be engaged in the workplace. The findings also show that emotional conflicts caused by the differences in age are existent in the organisation. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents agreed that there were emotional conflicts in the organisation that could have had a direct impact on their engagement at work. Age diversity and employee engagement were regressed and the results showed a strong positive relationship between the two. This shows that, if age diversity in the organisation is not managed well, it can influence the engagement of employees at the NRZ.

The research also revealed that female employees who perform better in the organisation are being promoted. From the results, 50% of the respondents, comprising female and male employees, concurred that at the National Railways of Zimbabwe, employees are given opportunities to be promoted when they perform better in the organisation. In the questionnaires issued, 60% of the respondents acknowledged that female employees are competitive in their work roles. This shows that female employees can perform in the organisation despite their gender. There is a relationship that exists between gender and employee engagement because when employees are given opportunities for advancement, they tend to be actively engaged in their work roles.

The results show that the organisation can experience organisational growth from engaged employees. Respondents strongly agreed (46%) and 50% of them agreed that the organisation stood to have

organisational growth if employees were engaged. This is because when employees are engaged, they expend discretionary efforts at work. To add on, if employees are actively engaged, the organisation was bound to experience low labour turnover. This is shown through the results showing that 54% agree and 47% of the respondents strongly agreed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENDER EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

The National Railways of Zimbabwe can benefit from investing in gender empowerment programmes. These programmes help to reduce gender inequalities between men and women, which promotes productivity and efficiency within the organisation. This can be done through training because knowledge is power. The organisation can find ways of up-skilling or doing a cross skill to redefine roles and merge them into the broader scope of the work.

Entrusting individuals to small or big projects can be a way of empowering an employee. Letting an individual be accountable for their decisions can help them learn from their own mistakes and help the individuals if they need help.

This is because, as much as women who perform better are being promoted, there is need to have equal representation of men and women in the boardroom setup. Female employees in the organisation are found to be in lower-level occupations, whereas in managerial positions, women are less. The organisation can gain from having different perspectives from either female or male employees being incorporated into board positions and enhance its brand as well.

DIVERSITY TRAINING

The National Railways of Zimbabwe needs to conduct diversity training initiatives for its employees. This is because the employees indicated that there is much stereotyping when it comes to gender and age diversity in the organisation. Hence employees will find it hard to be engaged when stereotyping is rampant in the organisation.

Employees need to know how to co-exist to achieve the mission, vision and goals of the entity.

CULTURE CHANGE

The organisation needs to formulate initiatives to change the culture of the organisation. The entity must acknowledge that the business is evolving, affecting the operations of the organisation also in terms of its human resource. Diversity exists because different people coexist in the organisation, hence the way that employees are engaged tends to differ.

REVIEW OF POLICIES IN THE ORGANISATION

The organisation needs to review its policies to accommodate its employees to keep abreast with the changes in terms of its workforce. When the organisation reviews its policies, the organisation stands to gain from it if they capitalise on finding ways of keeping its diversified employees engaged and integrating with the business objectives at the same time.

RECOGNISING DIVERSITY AND IMPLEMENTING ANTI-OPPRESSIVE AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES INTO PRACTICE IN THE ORGANISATION.

The management of the National Railways of Zimbabwe needs to have a buy-in into the policies that embrace diversity and equality to influence employees to embrace it. A code of ethics should be established that recognises that the workforce is multi-dimensional in terms of age and gender.

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EFFECTS OF E-HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ON ORGANISATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY: THE CASE OF THE ZIMBABWE REVENUE AUTHORITY

PAIDAMOYO SAMUEL ZVEUSHE¹

Abstract

Although the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) has adopted electronic human resources management (e-HRM), it has been experiencing high financial cost and high wastage of resources. There is also reduced quality of human resources (HR) service because workers are overwhelmed with work and, therefore, are going stress that affects their health and, at the end of the day, also affects their performance and production. This study sought to find out how the adoption of e-HRM affects organisational production. The focus was on finding factors that hinder e-HRM adoption, the effects of e-HRM on production and recommendations for positive outcomes. The study is qualitative and compiled using the interpretivist paradigm. A purposive sampling method was used for the collection of data and the researcher chose a sample size of 30 participants that includes HR staff and general employees. The effects of e-HRM on productivity were also discussed. From this research, it has been shown that e-HRM promotes individual and organisational performance, reduces costs, improves training and attracts and retains the best employees, thereby increasing quality HR service that, in turn, promotes the productivity of the company. It is evidenced that the participants showed knowledge of the advantages of e-HRM. However, it was found that at ZIMRA, e-HRM is not fully implemented and is underutilised, negatively affecting organisational productivity.

Keywords: *electronic human resource management, relational electronic human resources management*

¹ Human Resources, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, Harare, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Technology is an integral part of our daily lives. Routine tasks and problems have been simplified by the use of computers and the Internet. It has sped up some processes and increased the efficiency of performing assignments. In contemporary business, information technology (IT) tools are fundamental to realise processes in a faster and more efficient way. HRM adopted IT systems for it to be efficient and increase organisational effectiveness.

Human resources management's function in any organisation is crucial because it deals with very important and difficult-to-manage resource: human capital. Firms need to recruit, find the best person-job fit and retain talented employees (Laumer, Eckhardt and Weitzel, 2010). In the last decade, HRM has been adapting to various changes and improvements, one of them being technology which has greatly affected the way HRM departments in organisations work. The development of the Internet and other IT tools drive companies to utilise its possibilities in doing business and improving performance. e-HRM conducts HR transactions using the Internet or intranet (Lednick-Hall and Moritz, 2003). Consequently, from such a definition, it could be argued that the value created by e-HRM would likely be assessed as an improvement of the administrative HR processes. Voermans and Van Veldhoven (2007) aver that 'e-HRM could be narrowly defined as the administrative support of the HR function in organisations by using Internet technology'. There are three types of e-HRM, i.e relational e-HRM, operational e-HRM and transformational e-HRM.

ZIMRA has adopted e-HRM by use of the internet, intranet and HR software-SAP and the researcher will focus on the actual outcomes of e-HRM. As argued by Foster (2010), one of the biggest advantages of e-HRM is cost reduction. As Voermans and Van Veldhoven (2007) indicate that 'e-HRM could be narrowly defined as the administrative support of the HR function in organisations by using Internet technology'. Thus, e-HRM improves service delivery (Lengnick-Hall and Moritz; 2003). However, Strohmeier (2007) suggests that e-HRM in some organisations created extra organisational barriers like work

stress, more HR administration and disappointment in technological properties if not fully utilised. Stone and Lukaszewski (2009) believed that if the workforce is not properly trained in the usage of those systems, it may result in slower task performance and increased long-term costs. Though ZIMRA has moved to e-HRM, they have been facing conditions like increased costs through wastage of time and resources and increased workload, resulting from underutilisation of e-HRM properties.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF E-HRM

In 2003, several models related to the Technological Acceptance Model, were unified into one model, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Eight dimensions were identified to be determinants of the intention to use IT (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003). Four dimensions were theorised by Venkatesh *et al.* (*ibid.*) to be direct determinants of user acceptance and user behaviour: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTANCY

Venkatesh *et al.* (*ibid.*) posit that performance expectancy is "... the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in job performance." It is the strongest predictor for intention of use and remains the strongest indicator at all points, in voluntary and mandatory settings. The relationship between intention and performance expectancy is moderated by gender and age. The effect of performance expectancy is especially salient to young people.

EFFORT EXPECTANCY

"Effort expectancy is defined as the degree of ease associated with the use of the system (*ibid.*)." Three moderators are expected to influence effort expectancy, namely age, gender and experience in work. The effect of effort expectancy was more salient to older women, the effect decreasing when experience increased.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

According to Venkatesh *et al.* (*ibid.*), “Social influence is defined as the degree to which an individual perceives how important others believe he or she should use the new system.” Results showed that social influence was more important to women, more so, to older women. Social influence’s effect also decreased with experience.

FACILITATING CONDITIONS

“Facilitating conditions are defined as the degree to which an Individual believes that an organisational and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of the system (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003).” Aspects included technological and/or organisational environments designed to remove barriers to the use of a system. The influence of facilitating conditions on usage will be moderated by age and experience, such that the effect will be stronger for older workers, particularly with increasing experience. Facilitating conditions were moderated by age and the effect was stronger with increasing experience in technology.

BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION

It is expected that behavioural intention will have a significant influence on technology use. This results in the following hypothesis, “Behavioural intention will have a significant positive influence on usage (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003).” Results have proven that behavioural intention has a significant influence on technology usage (*ibid.*).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review shows factors affecting the successful implementation of e-HRM and consequences of adopting it in an organisation. Factors that affect the implementation of e-HRM include technological factors, organisational factors and people factors.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF E-HRM

TECHNOLOGY FACTORS

Many authors have commented on factors relating to the technology itself or existing technology within the organisation (Magnus and

Grossman, 1985). Computer capability in an organisation was reported to directly influence the extent of computerisation of personnel departments (Mayer, 1971). Several key technological factors were identified as influencing HRIS adoption: data integrity, system usefulness, system integration and in-house development versus using external HRIS software.

ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Organisational factors consist of a wider spectrum with four categories influencing e-HRM adoption: organisational characteristics; planning and project management traditions; data access, security and privacy; and capabilities and resources.

Organisational characteristics: most organisational adoption factors studied in the 70s and 80s relate to organisational size (*ibid.*). Organisational size was found to be positively related to computerisation since the administrative burden increases with an increase in personnel (*ibid.*).

Planning and project management: lack of planning from the corporate level to the divisional level was reported to negatively impact the coordination between personnel and IT departments, making HRIS adoption difficult. The growing consensus was that effective adoption requires close alignment of HR, IT and corporate goals (DeSanctis, 1986).

Data access, security and privacy: concerning organisational policies and practices, restricted access and possibilities for employees to edit personal information were found to impact user acceptance of digitalised data (Eddy and Stone, 1999). Taylor and Davis (1989) in Individual Privacy and computer-based HRIS observed that violating ethical concerns impacts employees' attitudes and beliefs and can have legal ramifications, leading to the call for efforts to secure privacy when adopting HRIS.

Capabilities and resources: delays in computerising personnel departments (Kossek *et al.*, 1994). Waiting for innovation in human

resources resulted from budget limitations due to the economic recession (Martinsons, 1994). Shortages in technical personnel were seen as a key obstacle to the computerisation of a typical personnel department (Magnus & Grossman, 1985).

PEOPLE FACTORS

Managing people factors surfaced as most essential for successful e-HRM adoption. This indicates an amplified awareness of the human aspect in computerising personnel departments. People factors included: top management support; user acceptance; communication and collaboration between units; HR skills and expertise; and leadership and culture.

Top management support: Mayer (1971) reports a lack of top management support as the most limiting factor for successful HRIS adoption. Other research has shown a lack of priority given to HRIS (Tomeski and Lazarus, 1974). In this context, Magnus and Grossman (1985) show that needs incongruence puts a serious limitation on effective adoption. Mayer. (1971) confirms that advocates of HRIS had to go to higher managerial levels than was the case in other functional areas.

User acceptance: at the employee level, DeSanctis (1986) shows that involving users during systems development positively influenced satisfaction in personnel departments. She suggested that the larger the organisational investment in HRIS, and the greater the system's influence, the more it was valued by the organisation. Olivas-Lujan, Ramirez, and Zapata-Cantu (2007) have investigated employees' different mindsets toward e-HRM, finding that employees resisted accepting new systems if they thought it would increase their workload after adoption.

Communication and collaboration between units: incongruence between needs of IT and personnel departments (Magnus and Grossman, 1985) and difficulties of personnel departments in communicating with computer technicians (Tomeski and Lazarus, 1974). *Computerised information systems in personnel:* A comparative analysis of the state of

the art in government and business were also shown to be important. Crucially, e-HRM adoption should be termed an HR project rather than an IT project, given that HR staff have knowledge of HR processes.

HR skills and expertise: other people factors studied in the 90s were employee and management skills vs. training needs and user involvement. Hannon *et al.* (1996) claims that HR professionals are usually able to solve micro-level problems (data entry, editing, and retrieval), but lack a more macro viewpoint and the technical skills required for using HRIS for reports or analysis. Therefore, training HR professionals in using new systems reinforces successful adoption (Martin and Reddington, 2010).

Leadership and culture: the most studied people factor in the last decade centres around organisational culture, leadership and psychological variables (Panayotopoulou *et al.*, 2007). In general, IT-friendly cultures reported greater adoption success. Visionary, supporting and encouraging leaders (i.e., transformational leaders) who advocate e-HRM adoption were found to contribute to the acceptance of new systems (Hustad and Munkvold, 2005).

e-HRM AND ORGANISATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

ONLINE PERFORMANCE

Irving (1986) observes that earlier computerised performance monitoring systems were able to count the number of work units completed by employees in a specific period, record the idle time of each terminal, calculate error rates, capture time spent on different tasks or even count the number of times an employee strikes the keys, etc. E-HRM use is positively related to perceptions of general HRM effectiveness in line managers and employees. E-performance appraisal was studied by Danialari (2013), focusing on advantages, disadvantages, feedback and implementation tips. He concluded that e-HRM be used for providing feedback, and not just gathering social information and determining the type of data based on what employees believe.

ONLINE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

During this period, HR is moving to talent management and recruiting, maintaining talented people's data and information on a personal network through wireless technology. As argued by Florkowski and Lujan, (2006), "most companies used one of the following E-HRM technologies, HR functional applications, integrated HR suite applications, interactive voice responses (IVR), HR intranet applications, employee self-service (ESS) and manager self-service (MSS) portals, HR extranet applications or HR portals".

COMMUNICATION

The idea of initiating internal employee communications by using portal technology to provide means for interactions – such as chats, fora and news groups, and additional content such as health or sports – aims at the improvement of communications, knowledge transfer commitment etc. observed by Fandray (2000). The swift development of e-HRM resulted from the combination of the need to work more efficiently and the possibilities of current information and communication technology (Stanton and Coovart (2004). Further, Stone. (2005) suggested that technological innovation has played a leading part in E-HRM, such as self-service systems, interchangeable devices, cognitive software, non-technology and the convergence of the internet, digital TV and wireless technology communication into a vibrant network like YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and so on."

ONLINE TRAINING AND LEARNING

Kaplan-Leadsperson (2002) states that the American Society of Training and Development defines eLearning as "a wide set of applications and processes, such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration". This process is being implemented in companies since it does not have the limitations of traditional training, such as time and location (Bell, 2007). e-learning is also less expensive than traditional training because companies do not book training rooms or pay for travel costs and trainers (Strother, 2002). As mentioned, time and location restrictions have been eliminated with the help of technological advances. In addition, the standardisation of training, self-learning, and the

availability of learning content has made eLearning an attractive option for organisations that have the necessary resources.

ONLINE RECORDS

Globetronics Multimedia Technology (2003) proclaimed that “installing System Manager, HR Manager, Time Manager, Payroll Manager, and Report Manager will lead to success E-HRM”. Large organisations use e-HR because it is qualified to collect, store, process and manipulate a large amount of data inputs, reduce the cost of maintaining human resource data and provide accurate information about human resources anytime and anywhere.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is premised on the interpretivism paradigm because it specifies the conditions under which themes seem to be held. As argued by Maxwell (2011), interpretivism is:

“associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness”.

The research method appropriate for this study is the qualitative method. In this research, the study population includes 50 ZIMRA staff from different divisions, excluding management. The research will focus on 20 members representing HR staff and 30 general employees in ZIMRA, using purposive sampling. Since this research is based on primary data, interviews were used to collect data. The interviews were done using face-to-face interviews and phone interviews and use of Zoom and Skype.

DISCUSSION

The respondents argued that ZIMRA is failing to implement e-HRM because it has no sufficient resources to stand all the costly financial outlay in setting up the e-HRM system. To add to this, there is even lack of training material resources. Therefore, e-HRM application is

seen as a cost to the organisation. However, the respondents recommended that the organisation should seek funding from strategic partners so that they can launch a full implementation of e-HRM systems.

On lack of management commitment, the respondents commented that the managers are not committed to driving and seeing through e-HRM implementation. Rather, they are passive in driving the organisation to change and take the initiative for e-HRM application. The respondents also recommended that management should prioritise the implementation of e-HRM and incentivise those who use it. Lack of planning from corporate level to divisional level was reported to negatively impact the coordination between personnel and IT departments (DeSanctis, 1986), making e-HRM adoption difficult. The growing consensus was that effective adoption requires close alignment of HR, IT and corporate goals. Mayer (1971) reported a lack of top management support as the most limiting factor for successful HRIS adoption. Other research has shown a lack of priority given to HRIS (Tomeski and Lazarus, 1974). In this context, Magnus and Grossman (1985) showed that needs incongruence puts a serious limitation on effective adoption. Mayer (1971) confirms that advocates of HRIS had to go to higher managerial levels than was the case in other functional areas. Technology usage in personnel departments was often perceived by top management as not important. Therefore, if management does not see the need for e-HRM, it cannot be adopted.

The organisational culture of ZIMRA is traditional, hence, HR staff or division are finding it difficult to go through a change from traditional to modern HR practice. Top management is afraid of the unknown and, therefore, the organisation is not willing to invest in technology change in HRM. On the other hand, the respondents recommended training to expose the organisation to the positive effects of e-HRM and be equipped with the competencies to use e-HRM systems. This would foster change in a phase-by-phase manner, ensuring that it is cemented. In addition to training, it was also advised that policies that discourage the use of manual HRM processes should be put in place, so that the organisation can change and move as necessitated by the

changing trends in the HR field. As argued by Magnus and Grossman (1985), shortages in technical personnel were seen as a key obstacle to the computerisation of a typical personnel department. Therefore, the assumption that HR personnel are illiterate can be one of the contributing factors hindering e-HRM adoption.

Some participants argued that a lack of knowledge is hindering the implementation of e-HRM. Top managers and those in control of implementing change are perceived as being unaware of the benefits that e-HRM brings. Therefore, there is no urgency or even motive to implement the e-HRM system. On the other hand, the respondents recommended that super users of SAP in the organisation should conduct awareness meetings with management and other employees who will be using e-HRM. These meetings will be to present the benefits that could come from the full implementation of e-HRM systems. Hannon *et al.* (1996) claims HR professionals are usually able to solve micro-level problems (data entry, editing and retrieval), but lack a more macro viewpoint and the technical skills required to use HRIS for reports or analyses. Accordingly, organisations are well advised to train employees in-house rather than relying on self-training. Training HR professionals in using new systems reinforces successful adoption (Martin and Reddington, 2010).

ONLINE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

E-recruitment is the use of the website of a company as a recruiting tool via attracting candidates and receiving e-applications (Swaroop, 2012), while e-selection is the use of the website to facilitate the selection of staff, particularly in long distances. When used over the Internet in the early stages of the selection process, video conference interviews can reduce and have (Khashman and Al-Ryalat, 2015). Most participants understood and agreed that e-recruitment and e-selection improve the attraction and retention of the best employees. This benefits the organisation as a diverse high calibre workforce of can be easily recruited at a reduced cost. It is evident that if e-recruitment and e-selection save time. If the HR staff fail to recruit, the organisation suffers in terms of meeting targets since there would be a production gap because of a vacant post. Hence, HR needs to notice and cover

vacant posts in time to ensure that production is not interrupted. HRM plays the crucial role of mediator between the workforce and organisational goals, therefore failure of HR to recruit means that the organisation may not achieve its goals.

However, with ZIMRA, e-recruitment and selection do not exist, They use traditional recruitment and selection methods. Advertisement of vacancies and shortlisting of papers are done manually. The staff is overwhelmed mainly during this shortlisting process since they must go through all the applications one by one. And as mentioned by one of the interviewees, sometimes there could be 1 000 to 3 000 responses to the advertised posts. On the other hand, some interviewees argued that the organisation casually uses e-HRM on special cases, for example, video conference or phone interviews are sometimes conducted with candidates in other nations, but it has not been fully implemented. Working under such workloads is strenuous and causes stress that eventually negatively affects the employee's health and performance, ultimately also affecting production negatively.

ONLINE TRAINING AND ONLINE LEARNING

E-training is the use of a company's website to carry out learning or training, where e-devices, applications and processes are employed for the creation of knowledge, management and transfer (Swaroop, 2012). When an organisation uses online training facilities, its training department is enhanced. The participants strongly agreed that e-training provides competent training to the employees. Chen (2008) defined e-learning as combining technology with learning, delivered using telecommunication and information technologies, and a type of training delivered on a computer supporting both learning and organisational objectives. This revolution enables employees to obtain an intimate learning experience without attending a brick-and-mortar facility. Online training can also lead to cost reduction, as in costs related to training rooms, travel, catering and materials. For e-learning, on the other hand, employees will only need access to a computer or a mobile phone and, some time, to complete their training. In addition, it reduces learning time for employees, as they cannot leave their post for days to attend training, rather all the time that is taken in preparation,

breaks and travel can be diverted to actual work. Lastly, it ensures training consistency and standardisation, there is a guarantee for high-quality training for the employees, no matter where they are, and setbacks and postponements of training are reduced since it is an automated function.

However, regarding e-learning, participants also declared that e-training and learning did not exist at ZIMRA. This is because trainings are still an instructor-led traditional method. On the other hand, some of the respondents believed that e-training and learning have been implemented. This is because some tasks have been automated in ZIMRA, for example, booking for training, notice to all on available courses, and their respected commencement dates, venues, starting and concluding times. Instructor-led trainings increases costs and to cut costs, organisations conduct selective training, as some of the participants were arguing that regional staff is excluded when it comes to some important training like the use of SAP. In the end, the organisation will have a staff incapable of using the electronic systems available, leading to the underutilisation of the system. Therefore, the organisation will conduct parallel system use (both traditional and technological) to accommodate those who cannot use the system. However, this affects the overall division as this brings the need for constant reviewing to see if physical data matches that on the system. This has been the cause of backlog filing and it doubles work for HR staff, wasting much of their time and, therefore, affecting divisional performance and quality of service, thereby affecting production negatively.

ONLINE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Online performance management is the use of a company's website to conduct an online evaluation of the employees' skills, knowledge and performance (Swaroop, 2012). From the conducted research, all participants strongly agreed that e-HRM improves overall performance in an organisation. Online performance's main benefits are that it improves employee engagement and managers become coaches. Employees feel engaged when they participate freely without threatening faces (supervisors). Secondly, performance issues are

tackled more readily and on time. With physical performance reviews, there is much paperwork, and the process is very long. HR staff sometimes have difficulty analysing the data collected and there is much of inconsistency in numerical values and mistakes. Online performance saves time as feedback is immediate and participants freely fill in information truthfully.

Again, all participants said that there was no online performance management at ZIMRA. The organisation is still conducting paper-based performance reviews, using the BSC system. The HR staff compiles the performance data and types it in the system for record-keeping and analysis of data. This is problematic as some documents are lost and never reach HR for capturing. Some are even misplaced and have to be redone, risking mistakes and errors when capturing the data. Therefore, HR is overloaded with work each day. This causes stress and a stressed employee is always not good for the organisation. At the end of the day, the organisation experiences a workplace environment that is tense in terms of relations between employer and employee and among employees themselves.

ONLINE COMPENSATION

Online compensation is the use of the website of a company for planning employees' compensation (*ibid.*). All respondents agreed that e-HRM improves performance through an effective and consistent compensation structure. It is believed that the internet delivery of staff benefits, if carried out correctly, requires significant savings for the management of human resources. The manager self-service enables the manager to confirm payroll, rewards and stock management changes. As shown by the findings, ZIMRA has an effective salary administration system. There is the use of payroll software such as Berlina and SAP systems.

ONLINE SELF-SERVICE RECORDS SYSTEM

This is the use of technology to store personal data of employees electronically in databases. All respondents strongly believed that e-HRM can improve access to information. Information can be placed on the intranet so that all can access it, although it may require certain

authorisations for security reasons. Information can be personal records and work forms. This can be done using self-service, where every employee can serve himself. This reduces the time lost looking for documents from other people. Instead, the employee can access the documents from the intranet for various uses in different divisions from in his office. Therefore, performance is increased. Self-service can be given so that employees can personally update their records as and when necessary. This also reduces the administrative work of HR and they can move to contribute strategically since HRM is changing from traditional HRM to the Business Partner Model (SHRM), as a result increasing the organisation's productivity.

All respondents refuted the existence of an online self-service records system at ZIMRA. However, during interviews, it was clear that the organisation is changing to e-filing in the SAP system. This has not been fully implemented since they are using parallel systems, both the SAP and manual filing systems. This means personal information is recorded and filed on systems. The employees feel that they are duplicating work, by resorting to both traditional and technological record-keeping. This has been dividing the performance by half as the effort that could have been invested somewhere else is used on this duplication of work, thereby, impacting the quality of HR service and reduction in production. Strohmeier (2007) suggests that e-HRM, in some organisations, created extra organisational barriers like work stress, more HR administration and disappointment in technological properties if not fully utilised. Stone and Lukaszewski (2009) believe that if the workforce is not properly trained in the usage of those systems, it may result in slower task performance and increased long-term costs.

From the discussion, if e-HRM is fully implemented, it offers a wide range of advantages, boosting individual and team performance, reduction of costs, improving information access and, in the end, positively affecting productivity by meeting set targets yearly in production and cost reduction. However, at ZIMRA, because e-HRM is not fully implemented, there has been performing the same tasks twice

or more and, therefore increasing individual workload, that in the end may affect the employee's health and performance, and productivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although ZIMRA has adopted e-HRM, it has been experiencing high financial costs and high wastage of resources because of using of paperwork. There is also reduced quality of HR service because workers are overworked, are stressed and that affects their health and at the end of the day affecting their performance and the organisation's production. From this research, it has been shown that e-HRM; promotes individual and organisational performance, reduces costs, improves training and attracts and retains the best employees, therefore increasing quality HR service, that as a result promotes productivity of the company. It is evidenced that participants showed knowledge of the advantages of e-HR. However, it was found that at ZIMRA, e-HRM is not fully implemented and is underutilised, negatively affects organisational productivity. It is, therefore, recommended that:

- ZIMRA should seek funding from strategic partners so that they can fully implement e-HRM systems.
- Management should prioritise the implementation of e-HRM. The attitude of management towards change is the one usually followed, therefore, there is need for management to be fully supportive.
- Management should incentivise all users of SAP through training so that the organisation is exposed to the positive effects of e-HRM and is equipped with the competencies to use e-HRM systems.
- Management should put in place policies that discourage the use of manual HRM processes, so that the organisation can change and move as argued by the changing trends in the HR field.
- Super users of SAP in the organisation should be given a chance to conduct awareness meetings with management and other employees who will be using e-HRM. These meetings will aim at fully presenting the benefits that could come from full implementation of e-HRM systems.

- Management should consider benchmarking organisations that use e-HRM to see how they are benefiting from its use. This conduct should include all authoritative figures to ensure that they see for themselves and be motivated to fully adopt e-HRM as well.

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ABORTION AMONG PREGNANT TEENAGE GIRLS: A CASE STUDY OF CHERIMA, MARONDERA, ZIMBABWE

KUDZAI MUTUWIRA¹

Abstract

The notion of why pregnant teenage girls abort is a very controversial topic in the sense that it is rooted in the discourse of pro-life and pro-choice. At the same time, abortion is forbidden in a patriarchal society as they view women's role as giving birth. Thus, this research study sought to explore the reasons pregnant teenage girls abort. Qualitative research methods were used to gather relevant data. The methods utilised include semi-structured personal interviews and key informant interviews that pinpointed why pregnant teenage girls abort and the consequences faced after abortion. The experiential research study made use of the symbolic interactionism theory to relate to how society views the discourse of abortion. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that the reasons for abortion by pregnant teenage are a result of societal norms and values. The study findings agreed that pregnant teenage girls aborted because of different experiences they are facing in their community.

Keywords: *young girl, abortion, pro-life, pro-choice, policy, sociality*

INTRODUCTION

There is an increase in the cases of abortion among pregnant teenage girls. Many studies on teenage abortion. In Zimbabwe, there is scarcity of studies on teenage abortion. In addition, most studies carried out on abortion focused on medical reasons such as the study by McHale and Jones (2011), Mavroforou, Koumantakis and Michalodimitrakis (2004) and Harries *et al.* (2007). Hypothesising that there are other reasons for abortion, the focus of this study is to explore the socio-economic reasons pregnant teenage girls abort in Cherima, a suburb of Marondera, Zimbabwe. As argued by Zhou (2010), in Zimbabwe, the

¹ Human Resources Department, The Best Car Rental, Harare, Zimbabwe

highest rates of abortion are in the Mashonaland Provinces and Harare, recording 21 per 1 000 girls aged 15-19. Despite this observation by Zhou, there remains a scarcity of studies in Marondera on why pregnant teenage girls abort; therefore by focusing the study in Cherima, the researcher is bringing out the localised picture. The present research addresses this problem by exploring the abortion push factors in Cherima. Many studies that have been carried out on abortion by pregnant teenage girls focused mainly on the consequences of abortion, more specifically, health complications. That abortion has socio-economic push factors remains unexamined, especially in the Zimbabwean context. This study, therefore, emerges as a timely and relevant contribution to the existing literature on this important topical issue.

This study seeks to explore abortion, specifically the socioeconomic factors that trigger abortion in Cherima. As argued by Feltoe (2004) in Chin'ombe (2014:29-30), abortion is unlawful and intentional killing causing the expulsion of a human foetus from the uterus. Abortion affects women of different ages, religions and societies. The topic of abortion remains controversial because it centres on the debate of women's control over their bodies but is influenced by religion (pro-life) and policies (pro-choice) (Grisanti 2000). In Zimbabwe, abortion is regulated by the Zimbabwe Termination of Pregnancy Act, Chapter 15:10 (1977), which states that abortion is allowed only in circumstances of rape, incest, foetal impairment or to serve the mother's life. Abortion performed for any other reason than the highlighted becomes illegal. Thus, this study seeks to highlight the socioeconomic reasons behind illegal abortion by teenage girls.

Adolescent pregnancies are a global problem that occurs in high-, middle- and low-income countries. Around the world, they are more likely to occur in marginalised communities, commonly driven by poverty, lack of education and unemployment opportunities (World Health Organisation, 2015). Darroch *et al.* (2016) state that adolescent girls face barriers to accessing contraception because of restrictive laws and policies regarding their provision based on age or marital status,

health worker bias, and adolescents' own inability to access contraceptives because of ignorance and financial constraints.

As argued by Ngome and Odimwegu (2014:2), globally, about 16 million teenage girls give birth each year and of these births, 95% emanate from developing countries (World Health Organisation 2011: ix). The National Abortion Federation (2020) argues that 78% of teenage pregnancies are unintentional. Unwanted pregnancies result in abortion, which can be the main cause of death among teenage girls aged 15-19 years globally (World Health Organisation, 2015).

As argued by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (2016:1) report, Zimbabwe has a young population, with one-third being between the ages of 10 and 24 years. The National Statistics Agency (2012) argues that adolescents aged 15-19 years constitute 24% of the total population of Zimbabwe. These young people face a myriad of challenges related to their development. These challenges include unemployment, limited educational opportunities, gender-based violence, inter-generational relationships, child marriage, pregnancy, HIV and other negative reproductive health outcomes.

Unsafe sexual behaviours among 15-19-year olds results in a high number of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies (Zhou, 2010). The restrictive abortion laws in Zimbabwe result in teenage girls pursuing clandestine and potentially unsafe abortions (Ganatra and Gerdt, 2010). A global burden of disease study (2016) propounded that unsafe abortions are likely to contribute to maternal mortality in Zimbabwe, estimated to be 25 million between 2010 and 2014. Section 60(1) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act criminalises abortion that states that.

“Any person who intentionally terminates pregnancy by conduct that he or she realises involves a risk or possibility of terminating the pregnancy shall be guilty of unlawful termination of pregnancy.”

Thus, it is a criminal offence to terminate a pregnancy other than for what is provided in law. The presented facts and statistics indicate that against the law and cultural approval, pregnant termination seems to be normalised. It is therefore, the thrust of this study is to explore the socioeconomic reasons behind illegal abortion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Patriarchy is a social structure or system that has men being superiority over women (Hansjee, 2011). Siegel (2007) argues that the criminalisation of abortion is a telling manifestation of the singular power of patriarchy and the marginal and subordinate status of women as physiological beings who are expected, and required, to bear children in a gendered society. Patriarchy involves organisations, behaviours, thoughts and belief systems that maintain male privilege and power. Thus, the issue of abortion is deeply intertwined with that of gendered roles and gender inequality.

ABORTION AND RELIGION

Religion is rooted in the discourse of pro-life that views the foetus as a human being. This is supported by King David's poetry in Psalms 139:14-16,

"My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret when I was woven in the lowest part of the earth. Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book, all its parts were down in writing".

Jeremiah was a Jewish prophet who stated that God knew him even in the womb (Jeremiah 1:5). This is further supported by the Catholic Church opposing abortion in the name of defending the right to life, beginning and considering the foetus as a human being. However, the research looks into the socio-economic factors that push teenagers to abort.

ABORTION AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

The fight against abortion has found much space in the human rights discourse. Restricting access to safe abortion violates women's rights,

especially Article 25 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.”

Moreover, in various countries, women’s movements like the feminist movements of the 1960s (notably in France) or other women’s groups have demanded the right to abortion and contraception. Jacquemart, Masclet and Epstein (2017:79) state that women had slogans such as “My body is mine”, “my body, my choice”, “A child when I want, if I want”, and “Let her decide”, thus women defended their right to control their bodies, to enjoy safe sexuality dissociated from procreation, and to decide freely whether to have children or not. Thus, the legalisation of abortion affords women greater control over their reproductive lives, as contraception cannot prevent all unplanned pregnancies.

REASONS WHY TEENAGE GIRLS ABORT

According to Alex and Hammarstron (2004:62), an interview among girls between the ages of 15 and 19 who had aborted was conducted in Sweden revealed that major reasons for abortion were socio-economic situations and whether their partners wanted the child or not. The study also highlighted that the decision for abortion was not done independently but the decision was influenced by friends, partners or family members. However, the focus of this study is to understand the phenomenon of abortion among pregnant teenage girls in Cherima. In South Africa, a triangulated study by Varga (2002) indicated that the choice of abortion was pressure from the reaction of partners. Because the father of the child does not publicly accept that the unborn child is his, and therefore no support from the father, school disruption, financial reasons, family moral standing and the issue of social stigma, a teenager is forced to abort the pregnancy. Furthermore, Harries *et al.* (2007) articulate that a study in Greece reported that social acceptance, financial reasons, absent husband or partner, and religious factors

were reasons for teenage girls to decide to abort. In the Ukraine, a study highlighted that the main reasons for abortion were a result of low income and socio-economic situation; and some of the teenagers lived by themselves (*ibid.*).

A Norwegian study reported that roughly 52.5% of women abort due to financial reasons. The present investigation seeks empirical data on the reasons for abortion in Cherima. In Nigeria, Milton (2001) established that teenagers view abortion as an immediate solution to unplanned pregnancies. Teenagers choose to abort because they do not want pregnancy interferences with schooling, fear of family members knowing, and not knowing the father.

As posited by Kheswa and Takatshana (2014), abortions have existed since time immemorial and girls are subjected to stigmatisation in most societies. Due to fear of stigmatisation from society, women tend to abort for many explanations, ranging from socioeconomic situations, uncommitted partners, authoritarian parents and peer influence to unpreparedness for motherhood (Wahab, and Ajadi, 2009).

CONSEQUENCES OF ABORTION AMONG TEENAGE GIRLS

The World Health Organisation (2004) enunciates that abortion poses a major risk to women's mental health and carries a greater risk of emotional harm than childbirth (Coleman, 2006). Nolen-Hoeksema *et al.* (2008) mention that most women who have aborted suffer from an increased risk of suicide attempts, anxiety, negative social relationships, excessive worry, depression, nightmares and insomnia. Emotional distress such as remorse, guilt become evident (Kheswa, and Takatshana, 2014). In a quantitative study conducted by Wahab, and Ajadi (2009) among undergraduate female students at Lagos University in Nigeria, about 80% of the participants indicated that they had lost their self-esteem and seemed overwhelmed with feelings of regret. As a result, they experienced academic failure, lack of zeal, poor interpersonal relationships and fatigue. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the social consequences of abortion. Kumar, Hessini, and Mitchell (2009) state that abortion is stigmatised because it violates social norms. Frohwirth, *et al.* (2018) advance that religion is a part of the context in that abortion stigma is formed and experienced. Cockrill

and Nack (2013) highlight that religious affiliation expressed internalised stigma more often than non-religiously identified counterparts, especially among women who stated that their friends, family members or communities are religious, and they were afraid to be judged harshly if their abortion were disclosed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by the theoretical ideas of Symbolic Interactionism by Blumer to understand the reasons teenage girls abort in Cherima. Symbolic interactionist believes that people and the world can be understood only by looking at the human experience (Littlejohn, 1977). It looks at individuals and group meaning-making, focusing on human action instead of large-scale social structures. Under this perspective, a few of the major principles defining human behaviours include individual and the society as inseparable. Under the symbolic interactionism theory, the level of analysis is regarded as micro because it is concentrated only upon the social interaction and how to use symbols to create social life when people come together (Henslin 2010). Gordon (1997) argues that Blumer came up with three core principles to his theory, that is. meaning, language and thought, which lead to conclusions about the creation of a person's self and socialisation into a larger community. The first core principle of meaning states that humans act toward others and things based upon the meanings that they have given to those people or things. Blumer believes that meaning is a condition that emerges because of the interaction of group members and not an intrinsic feature of the object (Aksan *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, meaning is created because of the interaction between people, and meaning allows people to produce some of the facts forming the sensory world. As argued by Reminnick and Segal (2001) Israeli women tended to interpret abortion as a personal failure, whereas Russian immigrants looked upon it as bad luck or a mistake. In this study, society views teenage pregnancy before marriage as deviant behaviour, as one is expected to indulge in sexual activities after marriage.

The second core principle is language. Da Silva (2013) believes that naming assigns meaning, thus naming was the basis for human society and the extent of knowledge. 'Reality' in everyday life is understood using language that occurs through interactions between individuals.

In this study, religious institutions that individuals belong to are against abortion and this causes society to construct the 'meaning' of abortion to be immoral, sinful and murderous. Furthermore, concerning reasons for abortion, abortion attitudes socially construct abortion as 'a woman's problem' and thus placing stigma on teenage girls that have abortions for their reasons. The third core principle is that of thought. Thought modifies each individual's interpretation of symbols. Thought, based on language, is a mental conversation or dialogue that requires role taking or imagining different points of view.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a case study as the research design. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2012). The study took place in Cherima, Marondera, where high rates of abortion are being perpetuated by pregnant teenage girls due to socio-economic reasons. The study also used a qualitative research design. The targeted population were six teenage girls between the ages of 15 and 19 because abortion is being perpetuated by this age group due to different reasons.

Semi-structured personal interviews were used because the information obtained is based on emotions, feelings, experiences and privileged insights on the causes and consequences of abortion. The research employed thematic analysis as a technique for data analysis. Thematic analysis of data allowed the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole contexts, hence making it feasible to determine precisely the relationship between concepts and compare them with the replicated data.

FINDINGS

ABORTION IS CAUSED BY SOCIETAL EXPECTATION OF A GIRL CHILD

People have constructed societal norms and values that a girl child should have a child after marriage. Hence, for the desire to preserve the expected norms, when girls get pregnant outside wedlock, they tend to abort. In this study, most cases of teenage abortion are a result of social factors, for instance, fear of knowing the actual father, fear of

the unknown or being rejected by in-laws. In addition, the findings also argue that society has great influence, in the sense that due to the fear of being discriminated against by society and called by all sorts of names, girls end up aborting as a way of handling the situation. This is supported by data provided by Varga (2002) who states that the main reason for the choice of abortion was because the father of the child would not have publicly accepted the unborn child as his. Family moral standing and the issue of social stigma also play significant roles in the abortion decision-making.

Box 1: Some social reasons

Fear of knowing the actual father

Fear of knowing the real father is revealed to be one of the reasons for aborting. From the semi-structured personal interview, Chipo, an 18-year old, indicated that owing to her principle of dating two guys at the same time, she had to have an abortion as she was not sure who the father of the child was. She said

"I was surprised, shocked, I could not believe it and I became scared of who between my boyfriends was going to accept the pregnancy. The serious problem came after communicating with both men about the pregnancy. They both accepted responsibility. Munashe was not in the country when I broke the news to him, but he was happy that on his return we would work on the marriage rites. I was nervous but also happy at the same time. On the other hand, James also thought of the marriage rites and scan. Because of the fear that the real father was one day going to be revealed, I was left with no option than to abort the pregnancy".

Fear of the unknown

The participants also indicated that they had abortions because of fear of the unknown. Tariro, another 18--year-old participant ,in an semi-structured personal interview, revealed the sole reason she had an abortion was due to fear of the unknown. She claimed that she had had a pregnancy in an immature relationship, barely knowing well the person she was dating. She said,

'When I realised that I was pregnant, I was shocked and I began to ask myself many questions. What if this person is married? What if he regards me as loose for sleeping with him in a two-month old relationship? What if he denies the responsibility? What if his parents do not accept me? On the other hand, I also asked questions on my part. If my stomach grew big, how would I look? Will I be able to carry a child for nine months? Am I ready to become a mother? Where will I get the money for the baby's welfare? What will happen to me during delivery? Because of these and many other questions that I failed to provide answers, I decided to get rid of the pregnancy.

Rejected by the husband's family

During key informant interview, a constable from the Friendly Victim Department mentioned a story of Tambudzai who aborted due to rejection by her husband's family. She came from a poor family, her parents passed away when she was 10 years old and none of her relatives wanted to stay with her. The constable mentioned that Tambudzai survived by begging for food in the streets or doing household chores for people. At 19, Tambudzai got pregnant by her boyfriend, so she was happy as she thought that her life would become better but unfortunately, she was wrong.

Tambudzai went to her husband's place as culture requires. The husband's family members rejected her because she came from a poor family, calling her all sorts of names and sometimes she would go for days without eating. They also succeeded in manipulating the boyfriend to abandon his girlfriend. The girl reportedly could not bear the pain and terminated the pregnancy

Protecting dignity and family values

Data revealed the need to protect dignity and family values as one of the reasons girls abort. During a semi-structured personal interview, 16-year-old Roselyn said,

"Mukomana wandaida nemoyo wangu wose akandirwadzisa kusvika pakuda kuzviuraya" The guy I loved so much broke my heart that I thought of killing myself. I felt worthless and there was no reason for me to be faithful to any guy. I became a new person and would sleep around with different men without protection. My mother was super strict and well-respected in the community and she did not want to be shamed. When I realised that I was pregnant, reality struck, I cried like a baby but I told myself that I was going to keep the pregnancy since it was the only reason for me to survive. But because of the need to protect my mother's dignity and the family name, my mother forced me to abort the pregnancy.

Fear of becoming a single parent

The fear of becoming a single parent, especially when the spouse denies responsibility, results in abortion. The participant indicated that neither boys nor the girls are always ready to assume the responsibilities of being parents. Ruvimbo indicated that she was pressured by her boyfriend to abort, indicating that he was not ready to be a father. The boy rather advised that if she was unable to be a single parent for the child, she had to terminate the pregnancy. The option of single parenting was a very difficult one, so she decided to abort.

Guilty conscience

During a semi-structured personal interview, 19-year-old Stella, a student at a local university, shared her story. Stella had been dating her boyfriend for the past six years and the boyfriend had found a job out of Zimbabwe and he wanted to marry her first before he left. Stella's bride price (*lobola*) was paid in August and her white wedding was to be held in December the same year.

'I stupidly continued an affair with my ex-boyfriend even after my bride price had been paid. I got pregnant with my ex-boyfriend. I lied to my husband that I was pregnant for him. However, conscience haunted me and I ended up terminating the baby'.

Religious reasons

During a key informant interview, Pastor Litiwe, a pastor in Marondera, mentioned that pregnancy outside marriage is highly forbidden in their church. She said that one of her youth members, Natasha, a 17-year-old, aborted because of fear of being labelled and stigmatised. Natasha was the youth secretary, and she was also seen as a mentor to other young girls. Pastor Litiwe said that the rule of the church argues that if one gets pregnant out of wedlock, she would be prohibited from receiving the Holy Communion, and if she held any posts in the church, she would be demoted. She will also be no longer viewed as a youth member, but rather as “*ruwadzano*” (women’s fellowship). Owing to the fear of such labelling and victimisation, Natasha had to terminate the pregnancy.

ABORTION CAUSED BY FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Money is important for everyday life because without money, it is difficult to survive especially in the Zimbabwean context, where there is hyperinflation. Money is a discourse of abortion due to the lack of money to raise a child and the upkeep of the mother to have a healthy baby. Thus, girls resort to aborting than having a child who will end up without good care. Tambudzai, a participant in a key informant interview, decided to terminate her pregnancy after being rejected by the husband's family and knowing that she was not financially stable to take care of the child. This highlights how financial constraints can push girls to abortion.

Society has created this ‘reality’ that children are expensive, especially the first eight months where clothes are bought every month. Among other things, the need for diapers and supplementary foods, requires a bit of financial stability. Mojapelo-Batka and Schoeman (2003) report that financial circumstances play a key role in the deciding to have an abortion. These findings are also supported by several studies. For instance, Varga (2002) observes that in South Africa, women abort because of financial problems.

Ramakuela *et al.* (2016) argues that financial problems are a challenge, because lack of resources to cover the staggeringly high costs associated with pregnancy, birth and child-rearing, especially if they

do not have medical aid. Rubin (2010) states that teenagers in Europe view abortion as a way of preventing poverty because they are economically disadvantaged. Lack of adequate medical care during pregnancy places a new-born baby at high risk of complications during birth and in early infancy.

DESIRE TO PRESERVE FAMILY STATUS

Symbolic interactionism has maintained that society labels what is right and wrong. In this case, abortion is seen as a taboo because the unborn child is regarded as a human being, thus, it is associated with the issue of pro-life. According to African Traditional beliefs, abortion is highly unacceptable because it is associated with misfortunes in the family or community, hence, when one is known to have carried out an abortion, she is severely punished.

In society, family status is highly respected and people try by all means to make sure that their family name is not tarnished, thus leading to abortion. The discourse of family status argues that families ground in good morals are the ones that are respected in society and are seen as good examples to others. This shows that as much as teenage girls would want to keep the pregnancy, the family plays an important role in keeping it.

FEAR OF BEING A SINGLE PARENT

Society has constructed that the role of a woman is to bear children and a child brings happiness to family members and the community. Within society, a couple that helps each other to take care of the child is something admired by everyone. When teenagers fall pregnant, they also wish that their partners are there during the nurturing and the growing up of the child. It has been observed that after the partner has denied his responsibility, the fear of raising the child on their own lead them to abort.

Trussel, Raymond and Cleland (2016) argue that even in situations involving teens cohabitating with their partners, the outlook for unmarried teens as single mothers is discouraging. For teens in their 20s living with their partners at the time of birth, one-third ended their

relationships within two years. Thus, due to the fear of bearing the costs and pain alone, pregnant teenage girls resort to abortion.

ABORTION RESULTS IN SOCIAL STIGMA

The stigma around abortion is perpetuated at every level in society, that is, by lawmakers, anti-abortion extremists, religious leaders and the media. As society sets meaning to things, it creates attitudes and opinions that influence how society should perform. It shames people who are in need of care into silence, limits the girl's ability to advocate for abortion care as a vital part of health care services allowing social stigma to be tied with the themes of abortion as a moral concern.

The religious perspectives and non-religious people see women who have aborted as murderers and murder is viewed as a sin in the bible. This is supported by the key informant interview with Pastor Litiwe who stated that Natasha aborted due to fear of stigma. Thus, society labels women who have aborted as murderers and not playing the role of a woman in society. Sigcau (2009) articulates that traditional attitude of the 'role of a woman', for example, wives and mothers shaped by society around female fertility, reproduction and abortion, are culturally embedded.

Hence, social discourse speaks of abortion as being 'bad, disgusting and shameful', created by society through social stigma that results in the formation of stereotypes, taking away value and respect from women who have aborted. Mojapelo-Batka and Schoeman (2003) found that women who had abortions feared that society would judge them and, as a result, experienced feelings of shame and embarrassment.

ABORTION RESULTS IN LABELLING

Murder is the "unlawful and deliberate killing of one person by another" (Soanes and Hawker 2006). Pastor Litiwe mentioned that in the church, abortion is viewed as murder and it is not acceptable. She went on to state that,

"the rule of the church argues that if one gets pregnant out of wedlock, she will be stopped from receiving the Holy Communion, and if she had any posts in the church, she would be demoted as one will be viewed as a bad example and she will be no longer viewed as a youth member but rather as "ruwadzano" (women's fellowship).

Thus, the church views a foetus as a human being that also has the right to live and killing the unborn child is regarded as murder and is highly unacceptable by God through the Ten Commandments and one of them states that, "You shall not kill." This argues that people are influenced by religion in the sense that it views abortion as a sin, hence for someone to be acceptable in society, she must follow what the bible says. The unborn child's right to life is preserved and supported by the 'Pro-life' discourse that believes that an individual's genetic makeup is already established at the moment of conception (Jali and Phil, 2001). As argued by the symbolic interactionism theory, people give meanings to things, thus society views the foetus, not as an object, but as a person. Hence, after abortion, teenage girls are labelled as murderous. Therefore, religion plays a major role in understanding abortion as it views it as a sin.

CONCLUSION

Socioeconomic reasons were the major causes of abortion among pregnant teenage girls and, as a result, most participants believed abortion was a justifiable option. The major findings highlighted that abortion is a result of preserving family status, fear of becoming a single parent and rejection by partners' families. Therefore, abortion perpetuated by pregnant teenage girls lead to different consequences of social stigma.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Information dissemination, in schools, hospitals, clinics, police stations and other public places on reproductive health.
- Awareness campaigns on the dangers of abortion.
- Abortion should be allowed to be performed by health practitioners.

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STATUTES

Termination of Pregnancy Act [Chapter 15:10]

The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23]

United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25

PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF PROJECTS UNDER THE IMPACT OF COVID-19: SOME REFLECTIONS ON ZIMBABWE

ZEBEDIAH MUNETA¹, INNOCENT CHIRISA² AND ENOCK MUSARA³

Abstract

This article is a desktop study that seeks to discuss ethical considerations in the planning and delivery of projects under the impact of COVID-19, engaging evidence from Zimbabwe. The global impact of COVID-19 on project delivery has affected plans, costs and project timelines. In Zimbabwe, project planning has been affected by unsettled national and local politics. The COVID-19 pandemic might be another factor that has affected the delivery of projects and effective planning in the country. Several projects that started before the pandemic failed to be completed on the planned times lines and even in post-COVID-19 era, they are still in progress. The key cause of delays which will be discussed herein, includes re-allocation of financial resources to fight during and after the pandemic in monitoring construction projects in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: *policy, management, sustainability, management, scrutiny*

INTRODUCTION

The article seeks to discuss ethical considerations in the planning and delivery of projects under the impact of COVID-19. Zimbabwe has encountered different project crises affecting planning over the past years due to political influence, interference and natural disasters. A typical example is Cyclone Idai in 2019 which affected part of Manicaland. The global impact of COVID-19 on project delivery has

¹ Department of Architecture and Real Estate, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

² Office of the Vice Chancellor, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe; Department of Urban & Regional Planning, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. ORCID:

³ Department of Development Programming and Management, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe

affected overall costs, timelines and project delivery in the country. Evidence from Zimbabwe shows that planning is problematized by political instability and harsh economic conditions affecting project delivery. COVID-19 might be another factor affecting the delivery of projects and effective planning in the country. In construction, all resources are being allocated to revaluing necessary health and safety measures, forcing project managers to re-evaluate the necessary project delivery ways during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of planning and project delivery due to the imposed restrictions that changed normal ways of working in post-COVID-19 period. Due to the pandemic restrictions, most project meetings were conducted virtually with the relevant stakeholders to improve coordination, as lack of communication and clarity on decisions can lead to duplication, inefficiency, frustration and wrong decisions.

Africa has been hit by several disasters for the past decade and people have been exposed to several hazards. Due to the rapid increase in urbanisation, poor infrastructure and informal settlements in most African cities, many people are exposed to these hazards. Environmental degradation, poverty and conflict further aggravate the risks and reduce the coping capacity of communities (Muchadenyika and Williams, 2017). COVID-19 has affected the continuous expansion of several infrastructural projects in Africa as it has affected the new ways of life. Many have found it difficult to grasp the meaning of COVID in their operations, especially for construction projects and capital expenditure programmes due to their multi-faceted components. The response of business and government entities that exist along the construction programme life cycle to COVID-19 is changing hourly, with more businesses and government entities operating under the guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO). COVID-19 has affected both capital and construction projects because of restrictions that have resulted in delays, an increase in costs and a loss of efficiency. Construction teams for on-site projects have been affected by this pandemic as the nature of the job requires them to be on the ground despite the COVID-19 regulations imposed by the government (Corbera *et al.*, 2020). However, in some circumstances, there was a total shutdown imposed by the Zimbabwean government, seriously affecting project operations.

Environmental change influences the extent and severity of weather-related events, although it does not justify their destructiveness. The key factors are the populations of vulnerable persons and property, access to unsafe sites and lack of adequate personal protective equipment for COVID-19 (Hewitt, 2013). Catastrophes and damages suffered in most African countries have evolved over a century, while in wealthier nations, economic casualties are more dominant in causing deaths, unlike in developing countries (World Bank, 2010). In Southern Africa, it is difficult to distinguish urban threats from deprivation and wasteful transitions of ex-urban property lands or projects that push people into the cities.

Excessive casualties underline the role of socioeconomic factors in disasters in specific locations and classes of people. A moral view considers hurricanes, flooding and burning as indiscriminate threats (Chan, 2020). Impoverishment and pre-existing vulnerability classify most casualties of a tragedy and disproportionate deaths in subgroups. Most African countries, owing to their hard-earned expertise and feedback from civil society organisations (CSOs), such as the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, are evolving beyond the conventional narrowly sensitive approach to disaster and pandemic responses. Rather than relying solely on the response process, African governments are gradually realising the value of taking preventive steps to reduce the effects of disasters and pandemics on the population (Corbera *et al.*, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the noted and un-reviewed nature of this research problem, desktop research was adopted. Relevant information was identified from existing literature on disaster management in planning and project delivery in Africa, paying particular attention to Zimbabwe. Some data were collected from the WHO, World Bank reports, articles from Google Scholar and unpublished papers presented in the past on some of the key themes of planning, development and construction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Business Continuity Management (BCM) has been characterised as an instrument that perceives the weakness of an organisation to inside

and outer dangers and orchestrates hard and delicate resources for fruitful alleviation and recuperation (Surg, 2020). BCM includes the cycle of danger ID, including normally happening chances, human blunder chances and those emerging from pernicious acts, assessment of expected money-related misfortunes, reputational harms and conceivable legitimate activity, hazard relief procedures including limiting danger, moving danger, through protection and making redundancies, building up calamity recuperation plans and building up a cycle of ceaseless checking and controls (WHO, 2020). It can also be divided into four stages: safety, prevention, emergency and recovery (Corbera *et al.*, 2020).

BCM originated in information management and only recently spread to cover technology and the social aspects of maintaining asset protection and business continuity (Surg, 2020). It has also expanded in the field of higher education to include knowledge technologies, contact networks and the offer of services that can be expanded through inter-institutional collaboration. Price Waterhouse and Coopers (PwC) (2020) noted that the interconnectedness, unpredictability and worldwide nature of the development of business' flexibility chains and labour force influence the expense and timetable of framework ventures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report proposes five moves that could be made to moderate negative outcomes. They are to distinguish basic providers, think about legitimate and monetary ramifications, discuss obviously with all partners, lead situation examination and make an emergency course of action (Corbera *et al.*, 2020).

Scenario planning strategies focus on a series of expectations that encourage one to consider future scenarios. Scenarios are based on a series of circumstances, factors or guiding powers decided upon by those involved in the practice of scenario planning (Curtis, Kross and Stapleton, 2020). This preparation aims to develop, build and expect practical yet stable potential scenarios by growing unpredictability. Therefore, the scenarios vary from the predictions as they require

discontinuities, new anomalies and developments to be implemented. The concept of scenario planning is an integral concept that should be inclusive and the planning exercise is also a dynamic ecosystem of instability and multiple risks that occur in a city or country, primarily due to its unorganised and unregulated development (ICT, 2012).

Scenario training can be coordinated by professionals, states, corporate departments, groups, or research activities. There are generally three stages of the description of driving forces each identifying features and alternatives or alternate solutions (for increasing driving force), review of the interdependencies of the driving forces and interpretation of possible possibilities and input and cooperation (*ibid.*). Scenario preparation is typically multi-hazard-oriented and does a collaborative multi-actor activity comprising limited or broader communities that consider contributions from their various sets of knowledge. The feedback is conveyed through stories, videos, two-dimensional or three-dimensional visualisation experiments or other ways (Surg, (2020)). These repeated mechanisms, in a wider context of action research, highlight the need to strive to engage all participants in the chain of activities where information and choices are taken, continually develop and strive to be influenced (such as special meetings, conferences with key players, group meetings and seminars for society in general). Such participants are active in the cycle of utilising consensus-building methods to compile, validate and change the scenarios. The consistency of the scenarios is determined by the ability and expertise that each person brings into the process; this is why a wide range of voice-based involvement is needed (Khan *et al.*, 2015).

Using the knowledge obtained from the scenario planning exercise, the right strategic steps may be identified to accomplish the optimal or ideal scenario, avoid the bad ones from occurring, capture incentives and encourage tactics to allow good, realistic results to be achieved (Corbera *et al.*, 2020). Law, policies, strategic methods and practical decision-taking ideas may be built from such an exercise. Although the process does not guarantee the political will or commitment of the community necessary to take the desired actions, increasing awareness

of alternative paths for sustainable growth is also a strong starting point for promoting progress (Khan *et al.*, 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the ethical preparation is undertaken in reaction to the problems of the 19th-century industrial community. The early days of planning and public health were indistinguishable in the global north (Muchadenyika, 2015). Indeed, advocacy to tackle public health issues encouraged policy-makers to intervene with private property rights in the public interest, resulting in a system of policies and laws that helped define planning as a separate discipline. With a focus on unhealthy miasma, overpopulation, and a growing fear of social instability, new models emerged in Europe and North America from the 1880s to the end of World War II, seeking to find a way to plan a liveable city. These designs were intended to moderate congestion by strategically controlling densities and ensuring the availability of a large open public space.

Improving proximity, access and exposure to green spaces were essential. However, these ideas did not finally materialise, as they were overtaken by the automobile in the post-war period, especially in North America. As suburbanisation became the norm in many northern cities since the late 1950s, concerns arose about how poorly managed sprawl resulted in declining social cohesion, traffic jams and a multitude of environmental problems (Corbera *et al.*, 2020). It was in this context that the planning began to take a full turn, where once she struggled with density, she embraced it. Specifically, a new cohort of planners began to re-examine old configurations of urban neighbourhoods that the previous generation of professionals considered detrimental to public health (Khan *et al.*, 2015).

In the face of the impact of COVID-19 on planning, capital projects and construction programmes, there are important steps that owners, contractors, subcontractors and suppliers can take to improve the control of their building programmes and be well-positioned when the pandemic abates. Currently, there are several self-imposed guidelines, ordinances and restrictions regarding the planning, design and management of certain construction projects (Corbera *et al.*, 2020).

Guidelines change daily and affect projects in different ways, depending on the status, scope and location of the project. Planning steps to consider include proactively developing a mitigation plan for potential project delays, closures and restarts, reviewing projects to identify work that may need to be strategically suspended, assessing services that may continue off site, to limit schedule delays and focusing on design and contracts, limiting the risks associated with uncertain hours and are positioned for effective engagement once restrictions are relaxed (PWC, 2020).

In project management, developing the project start-up plan before slowing down or stopping, has a bearing effect on the project timeline, hence the need to complete proper documentation of project planning with some allowance of the disturbances that affect the project timeline. Hence, the available literature provides possible opportunities that project managers can implement on their projects in the future and review active projects to determine stages of development and evaluate the proactive measures that can also be implemented to improve the workplaces of their teams on the ground.

Following the maximum impact of the pandemic, most companies in all industrial sectors will focus on profitability to ensure sustainable demand for delivery teams at competitive prices in delivery centres (Lennon, 2020). The economic consequences of the pandemic increased the appetite for the benefits of global delivery labour arbitrage, increasing competition for talent in major centres. In the medium term, service providers may need to adopt a more open and flexible approach to remote working to retain their best employees (Curtis, Kross and Stapleton, 2020). This can be a challenge given the drastic approaches taken by some companies to maintain the productivity of their home-workers, including the intrusive use of online working for people's safety.

An increase in the use of independent resources, as companies seek to keep their internal bench as lean as possible while bringing in outside experts to fill specific gaps in their ranks, could be seen after the pandemic. This is a role that will continue to be supported in more

flexible labour markets such as the UK and the Netherlands, by well-established body shops. However, this will also spark interest in platforms like e-work in Sweden that connects companies to independent consultants with relevant experience (Deloitte, 2020).

The massive remote work experience will have a lasting impact on workforce preferences that service providers must respond to in a war for talent. There may be a slight shift from the recent emphasis on local delivery to the use of global equipment driven by the need to reduce costs and limit exposure to regional risks (Lennon, 2020). As new projects start to take off, it will be beneficial to use independent resources to keep internal teams as tight as possible (Le *et al.*, 2020). As part of the COVID-19 response, the project's decision-making time may not keep up with the organisation's typical day-to-day operations. Project managers may be required to make decisions with incomplete or rapidly changing data. If an initial risk assessment has been completed, the project team will be better prepared to implement contingency plans and make the most informed and effective decisions to move the project forward. By taking an inventory of the skills and competencies that exist within the project team to confirm gaps or uncover hidden talents, one may find that they have a hidden cameraman, educator or writer who could benefit from the project (PWC, 2020).

One of the most common risks that organisations face due to COVID-19 is the risk to the project schedule. Many client partners have had to re-allocate resources, including project team members, to cope with the immediate increase in patients admitted to hospitals due to COVID-19. In some states, construction projects have been temporarily suspended to reduce transmission of the virus. As argued by Deloitte (2020), for companies to avoid complete closure of some projects, they must rework their schedules and determine areas that can be compressed or consolidated simultaneously instead of sequentially (Deloitte, Many companies develop a priority scale for the project and work on the deliverables. Even though COVID-19 is still spreading, experts are reading warnings of more waves of the virus and similar viruses to

come. This would reduce the risk of project bogging in planning and implementation due to the deadly pandemic (PWC, 2020).

In project planning and management, the danger lies in shortening execution times as projects will be less participatory due to lack of workers on site. Proper participation in the project identification phase takes time, ideally allowing everyone involved to reflect, deliberate and come together if necessary (Le *et al.*, 2020). One of the biggest challenges that could be encountered in the post-COVID-19 period for development project managers could be linked to good turnout on tight deadlines. The importance of the project guide provides information on the activities of the sequence activities and estimates the duration of the activity. Key elements of effective project planning, the project's critical path and waterline are very important during the planning phase (Lennon, 2020). Project development experience tends to focus more on the human side of projects as time management is given less priority. In the post-COVID era, time management is becoming a more critical activity, showing that levelling and smoothing resource optimisation techniques are gaining importance in the development industry. Project implementation and schedule control are complementary to schedule planning and include making adjustments to the project to correct deviations from the schedule plan (Deloitte, 2020).

As organisations seek competitive advantages in current dynamic business environments, project management becomes the method of improving quality to improve the overall performance of an organisation (Le *et al.*, 2020). In this sense, management of an organisation's projects turns out to be the means of change and growth. By leveraging project management tools and techniques, organisations strategise and implement innovative business approaches to gain or, perhaps, maintain competitive strengths (Lennon, 2020). Since the life of many organisations is tied to their ongoing projects, their particular revolutionary organisational strategies have led to project management as a vital business practice. It is also considered a practical approach as it forms the foundation of organisational strategy.

As COVID-19 persists, policy-makers and healthcare providers are focusing on urgent needs like improving medical capacity, combatting malnutrition and protecting businesses and families from evictions and bankruptcy. Many funds from the the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), other national development banks or central banks, aim to fund security teams at clinics, support financial systems and compensate companies for providing funds, products and services to critical staff. or provide direct cash assistance to households (Lennon, 2020). Interim research has been initiated in several countries on what the next growth period would look like and the position of effective public intervention to improve demand, generate replacement income and encourage new investment (Curtis, Kross and Stapleton, 2020). Most countries, including China, Germany and South Korea, have promising signs of ecological problems as part of their rebirth. The decisions that policy-makers make to jump-start their economic engine and the long-term social, fiscal and environmental co-benefits they seek to derive from their stimulus spending would be extremely important in ensuring that they come back stronger and in better health.

RESULTS

Many have faced human and financial resource constraints to meet the urgent needs of students in the COVID-19 era. Government partners and staff face fiscal and technical constraints to allow staff to work remotely and meet student needs. The lockdown has reduced staff mobility with implications for the implementation of response activities that have affected the progress of several projects in the country due to travel restrictions imposed by the government. While the government issued some letters authorising movement after the initial lockdown, some partners face new mobility challenges during the second phase of the lockdown. In other sectors, urgent solutions to target learners who are unable to access digital or radio lessons due to coverage or domestic considerations, are minimal and need to be deepened to improve response.

CASE STUDIES OF PROJECTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19 IN ZIMBABWE

The affected projects in Zimbabwe were on loan facilities secured from China Eximbank and other financial institutions. The Zimbabwean

government-imposed lockdown restrictions in the country following the recorded coronavirus cases and deaths. Several Chinese projects delivery in the country were affected by this pandemic, namely the US\$1,1 billion Hwange Thermal Power Station expansion, the US\$153 million Robert Mugabe International Airport expansion and the US\$100 million New Parliament Building in Mt Hampden, Harare, and the US\$70 million NetOne expansion (Muchadenyika, 2019). Zimbabwe is already battling to resuscitate its collapsing economy and the outbreak of COVID-19 worsened the situation, especially in project delivery, as these projects are key in turning around the country's economic fortune. Post-COVID-19 resources were re-allocated to the slowed down projects, showing that some activities started to pick up, for example, the completion of the New Parliament Building and the Robert Mugabe International Airport.

However, economic analysts have revealed that the implementation of the projects has been disrupted by the pandemic with the delay in huge construction shipments, as the world races to find a solution to contain COVID-19. Chinese Enterprises (2019) noted that

“several projects and other investments by the global economic powerhouse in Zimbabwe had been severely hit by the pandemic, with completion targets hanging in the balance.”

Major projects were affected because key technicians and engineers could not come to Zimbabwe, and this applies to construction equipment and materials due to international travel restrictions (Kairiza, 2020).

The Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company (ZIMASCO) has a project that was affected by this pandemic. The construction of new ferrochrome furnaces in Mberengwa in the Midlands Province was delayed due to challenges induced by COVID-19. ZIMASCO and Afrochine Smelting, the country's leading ferrochrome producers, entered into a joint venture to build four smelters with a production capacity of 140,000 tonnes per year. Construction was delayed due to the interruption of the pandemic (*ibid.*). In general, the pandemic has caused a sharp drop in commodity prices, tax revenues, foreign exchange earnings and foreign financial flows, travel restrictions, a drop in tourism and hotels, and the freezing of the labour market,

among others. Kairiza (*ibid.*) noted that funding for new capital projects would be adversely affected due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 and, possibly, suspensions and delays. This is happening in other parts of the world where some proposed projects are delayed. The first ZIMASCO furnace was to be commissioned in 2021, followed by the commissioning of the second plant in 2022 and finally the third and fourth in 2023, but these projections have been affected by the pandemic.

DISCUSSION

Organisations in the infrastructure sector have implemented strategies to comply with the lockdown and not risk the lives of their employees and stakeholders. Currently, most infrastructure projects have allowed their employees to work from home with the relaxation of closure rules (*ibid.*). Policies have been implemented to operate secure remote offices for employees. The results of this study suggest that project managers face various challenges in daily activities and are advised to use effective supervisory criteria to reduce erroneous results, rejection and reworking activities. Successful perimeter control should be implemented by project managers at the outset of the management plan to reduce the possibility of work delay due to an accidental landslide on the perimeter (Jallow *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the findings indicate that human resource management remains one of the most difficult tasks for project administrators in the 21st century.

The findings identify the following as the primary demotivating factors impacting the overall success and productivity of project managers on a variety of projects. Chan (2020) notes that the ambiguity of the relationship between expectations and performance, a lack of financial reward strategies, a way of aligning intangible results, a time-consuming decision-making process by clients, a pay scale, systematic bias and the impact of culture on project results, a pause in reacting to a request for information, project and operational maturity, a shortage of skilled labour, a material shortage, create key performance metrics for supplier evaluation, strategic clarification and completeness of technical specifications, frequent order changes during execution, and rework activities (Lennon, 2020).

Policy-makers need to take several considerations into account when crafting an economic package, including urgent demands, local financial capacity, business dynamics, free funding and the impact of past spending decisions on infrastructure (Chan, 2020). Some parameters for determining stimulus initiatives or projects include capacity for job growth, the time required to initiate the project and government investment that will help draw private capital to further finance a project and the impact on the country's long-term pollution trajectory. Sustainability entails considering long-term criteria such as decarbonisation, environmental resilience and adaptive capability, and the effect on physical, financial, and human resources (Lennon, 2020).

The sustainable development framework raises issues that governments will encounter when evaluating the most successful initiatives and connecting them (Yan, 2020)). Most policy-makers have advanced policy frameworks that can be used as additional guidelines. This review draws heavily on the analysis of the 2008 economic downturn and looks, in particular, at the additional government or structural improvements to ensure initiative preparedness (Lennon, 2020). One of the main lessons from the 2008-09 interventions in Zimbabwe is how the lack of simple policy changes or enabling policies puts many renewable energy initiatives at a disadvantage, compared to advanced technologies.

The guideline for projects should extend to any set of programmes or initiatives that are introduced as part of a stimulus package from cash grants to specific expenditures on modern facilities. This can be added to the lists of current initiatives, for example, regional construction programmes, transportation or water master plans, nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, or new projects developed explicitly for post-recovery. This spans two-time scales that are the short-term need to produce as many workers, employment and consumer activity; and the long-term need to achieve sustainable development and stability.

The World Bank has proposed a mechanism built on its experience collaborating with countries to consistently develop their capacity to respond to and handle catastrophe threats. It is built on five pillars:

risk assessment, risk avoidance, preparedness, financial security and resilient recovery (World Bank, 2016). These are defined as:

Risk assessment - Understanding the risks that policy-makers and societies pose is the first step in risk management. Risk analysis can assist states, societies and people in making responsible decisions by quantifying the dangers and possible detrimental effects of natural disasters.

Risk reduction: Accurate information on catastrophe risk will guide planning strategies and programmes aimed at reducing short- and long-term risks using both structural and non-structural measures. This information can be used to develop training modules to strengthen the national and local experience in DRM.

Preparation: Not all risks can be avoided, hence proper preparation is essential. Nations must have effective and properly prepared warning systems. The most cost-effective crisis management structures to save lives and protect livelihoods.

Financial protection: Financial protection can help protect governments, businesses and households from the economic burden of disasters. Governments can adopt disaster risk financing strategies to increase financial response capacity after a disaster while protecting the long-term fiscal balance. Access to insurance can increase the financial resilience of society as a whole.

Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction: Effective recovery is key to restoring the livelihoods of affected communities and rebuilding damaged infrastructure to higher levels of quality and standards. The aftermath of a disaster is often the starting point for a long-term commitment to reduce vulnerability (World Bank, 2013).

The results indicate that the lockdown proved difficult to manage projects as employees work from home. This causes delays in a project, as most employees cannot physically get to the site and perform the work. Managers find it difficult to manage their teams. However, technological tools such as video chat and meetings through online

platforms have proven to be more effective in communicating with project teams. The building information modelling design has been helpful as 3D design models help visualise the project within team meetings to comply with COVID-19 rules and follow social distancing guidelines. However, the induction of any new initiator is proving difficult to manage with the pandemic and the lockdown as it involves drug and alcohol testing before starting work on the project.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 virus threatens capital projects and development projects. Project stakeholders must be cautious and constructive in handling the volatile situation and project partners must communicate effectively. Understanding one's contractual rights and meticulously recording disruptions or other effects will place one in a healthier place to re-establish activities as one's project recovers, and the company returns to usual. Governments must plan their laws and regulations to address this rising threat by encouraging community disaster risk prevention efforts, fostering international disaster and recovery aid, and lowering regulatory barriers to shelter. The article gave a valuable look into the perception and knowledge of the effects of COVID-19 and the improvements that the infrastructure industry has made to comply with the lockdown rules while remaining profitable. This research leads to educating policy-makers about certain lessons learnt from the management of COVID-19 from the viewpoint of the infrastructure market. This article described on-going infrastructure projects that have been impacted by COVID-19 and the effect on management teams, operations teams (site engineers, surveyors), architecture teams (including the BIM team), new employees, internal personnel, supply chain and customers. The lockdown is proving difficult to maintain projects as employees are working from home. This leads to a delay in a project activity as people cannot physically go on-site and conduct work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Preparedness:** Active early warning systems, well-prepared disaster response processes, and evacuation planning are among the most cost-effective ways to save lives and protect livelihoods.
- **Financial Insurance:** Financial protection will help shield states, companies, and families from the economic costs of disasters.

Governments should use catastrophe risk funding mechanisms to improve financial response capability in the wake of a disaster while maintaining long-term fiscal balance.

- **Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction:** Effective recovery is critical to restoring displaced peoples' livelihoods and rebuilding destroyed facilities to a greater level and standards.

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SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL CONUNDRUMS: TOWARDS THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS IN THE HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

MOREBLESSING MUSUNDIRE¹ AND ROSELIN KATSANDE-NCUBE²

Abstract

One of the critical concerns faced by African cities in the modern epoch are disappearing urban wetlands because of the construction of infrastructure. This is predominantly the case in cities that are expanding their urban areas at a rapid rate. Wetlands are currently being studied for their potential role in the food mitigation process, in addition to supporting urban sustainability in terms of water quality and availability. It is undisputable that the protection of Harare's urban wetlands is an investment that is well worth making. The main objective of this study is to analyse views, attitudes and perceptions of residents and relevant authorities towards wetlands in the Harare Metropolitan Province. This is to promote the wise use of wetlands for sustainable development. Human activities and poor policy implementation are the causes of wetland depletion. The study targeted the Harare Wetlands Trust, Monavale and Cleveland management, residents living on or near the wetland areas and representatives from the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). The study deployed a qualitative research approach and utilised the face-to-face Interview guide, semi-structured questionnaires and field observations for data collection and was guided by the wise use and ecological restoration concepts. Results highlighted that there is an existing policy on wetlands, most stakeholders are aware of wetlands and their benefits and are of the view that they should be conserved. Although they are viewed as important ecosystems, they are utilised in unsustainable manners. Human activities have been persuaded by economic challenges, a lack of policy implementation, lack of

¹ Department of Development Programming and Management, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe.

² Faculty of Social and Gender Transformative Sciences, Women's University of Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe

awareness programmes and education. There is need to change perceptions and attitudes towards wetlands. The study concluded that wetlands are an important part of the ecosystem, and they offer a crucial role, especially to the hydrological system of the city. The study recommended that the Environmental Management Act needs to be revised in line with on-going developmental activities, gazetting of existing wetlands to identify those under threat, reclaim or restore lost or degraded wetlands for sustainable development to be attained.

Keywords: *ecosystem, sustainable development, utilisation*

INTRODUCTION

The alternative extremes of wetland conservation or conversion can have devastating effects on livelihoods. Conservation leads to loss of access to land while total conversion leads to loss of natural products and hydrological functions (Maconachie *et al.*, 2008). Wetlands are defined as any area of marsh, fern and peatland, whether natural or artificial, static or flowing water, temporary or permanent with fresh or brackish or saltwater and include riparian lands adjacent to wetlands (EMA, 2002). The shifting urban landscape is a characteristic of global transformation taking place and has become a key issue facing metropolitan cities such as in the USA (California), New Zealand and Australia (Wei and Murambadoro, 2010). The fast pace of urban expansion in metropolitan cities has given rise to the reduction of wetlands and their surrounding areas. Wetlands in Zimbabwe have been seen as a readily available source to the urban poor for livelihood support and foodsecurity providence. Harare City's wetland areas are responsible for recharging the water supply that feeds Lake Chivero, which, in turn, provides water the societies that live in the city (Cunlife, 2020). The city has grown times its size and has been growing since independence in 1980. This has led to the scramble for resources due to population pressure. The United States is no exception, with the amount of its wetland cover closely correlating with species richness. Even though wetlands cover only near 5% of the land in the United States, they support approximately half of all species listed as threatened or endangered, harbour more than 30% of plant species, and provide vital habitation for up to half of all North American bird species. But wetlands in the United States remain highly vulnerable to

loss, with today's wetlands covering less than half the acreage that they covered in the 1700s (US Fish and Wildlife Services, 2023).

Zimbabwe is a signatory member of the Ramsar Convention on conservation of wetlands, whose mission is to conserve and wisely utilise all wetlands through international, regional, national and local cooperation, to attain sustainable development (Ramsar, 2016). The reality is that wetlands are not being entirely conserved, but are gradually being depleted, if not totally eradicated. The aim of the study was to analyse views, attitudes and perceptions towards wetlands from the grassroots level up to governing bodies. The aim was motivated by the evident shrinkage of wetland resources by residents and developers within the metropolitan province, leading to the decrease of their functions such as water storage, groundwater recharge and biological productivity. Previous research on wetlands have mainly quantified them or mapped them without fully analysing the relationship between these ecosystems' depletion and human interaction, hence this study. The researcher analysed views and perceptions from policy-makers to the views of the residents, who make up the grassroots, to understand the underlying issues related to wetland utilisation.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Russian geographers projected that more than 6.4% of the land area of the world or 8.6 million km² are wetlands. Even though land use conflicts related to wetlands continue to pose great challenges in several parts of the world, the tide has started to turn. Present-day societal attitudes towards wetlands are more positive due to the acknowledgement that wetlands offer valuable regulating, provisioning and cultural services to humanity (Davidson *et al.*, 2019). There are thus increased efforts to restore and create wetlands as nature-based solutions to help address problems such as eutrophication, climate change, biodiversity loss, floods and droughts (Bradfer-Lawrence *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the international community has reacted through conventions that involve wetland preservation and re-establishment and 38% of all countries presently have wetland protection included in their environmental policies (Peimer *et al.*, 2017).

Wetlands in Africa are also anticipated to have a similar reduction inclination due to increasing pressure on wetlands (Zarh *et al.*, 2015). Major threats to wetlands in Africa include the growing development of reservoirs for energy purposes in some regions, a surge in population increase, agricultural undertakings, urbanisation and land use system, considering wetlands as communal land and open access. In the past few years, African countries have been attentive to designing sustainable utilisation of wetland ecosystems considering the biodiversity values of wetlands. Nevertheless, the knowledge and skills gap in the design and implementation of sustainable utilisation of wetland ecosystem services is a challenge in most African countries (Pansthwa and Buschke, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, wetlands cover 4.6% of its land. After its accession to the Ramsar Convention in 2011, Zimbabwe has now seven wetlands selected as Ramsar sites. In the history of human settlement, sufficient water supply was the main factor, thus largest settlements in Zimbabwe, like Harare, are in or near wetlands. Legislation to protect wetlands came into effect in 2007. Regardless of this, the loss of wetlands continues unchanged. The message is clear: the development of wetlands is on-going at a rapid pace (Mhlanga *et al.*, 2014). The Monavale wetland, where houses and other buildings have now been constructed, and the Belvedere wetland near the National Sports Stadium are two of the wetlands that can be seen in and around Harare that have subsequently been converted into stands where a school was being built while a multipurpose centre (hotel and wholesale) was completed only recently, constructed on a wetland in Ashdown Park. Many people in Chitungwiza, Budiriro 3 and 4, Tynwald and Glen Lorne all face immediate threat of construction activities taking place there. Although it is impossible to differentiate the status of the wetlands in Harare from the condition of the wetlands in the rest of Zimbabwe, it does seem that Harare has a distinctive pattern of acquiring regions that contain wetlands (Ruzvidzo, 2020). Table 1 highlights percentage loss of wetland ecosystems in Harare.

Table 1: Loss of wetlands (Moyo, L. and Cunliffe, R., 2020)

Wetland	% Loss
Prospect	15.7
Kuwadzana	30
Mbare	30.8
Warren Park	30.8
Dzivaresekwa	32.5
National Sports Stadium	36.4
Tafara	46.2
Budiriro	49
Houghton Park	71
Epworth	78.8

Area

15.7

30

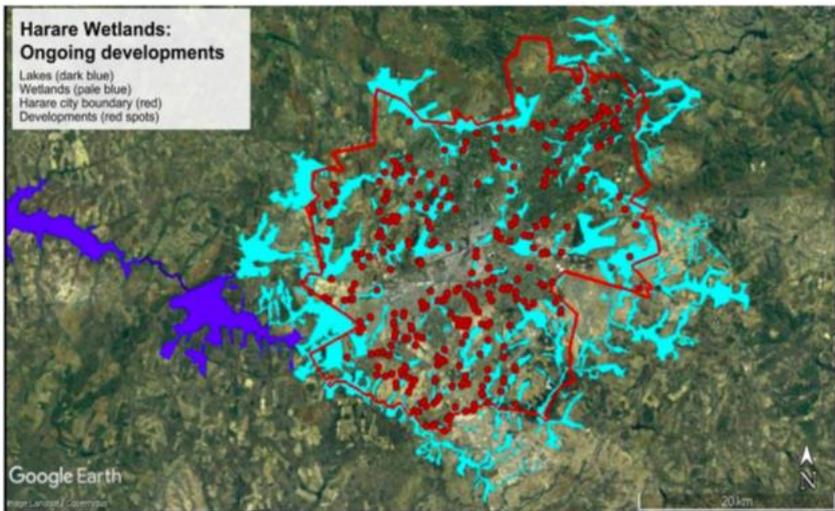


Figure 1: shows Harare and the extent of developments that have taken place on its wetland ecosystem (HWT, 2020)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research was guided by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The Convention on Wetlands is an international agreement adopted on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. Thus, although the name

of the Convention is written “Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)”, it has come to be universally known as the “Ramsar Convention” (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2018). The certified name of the treaty, The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance predominantly as Waterfowl Habitat, reflects the original emphasis is upon the conservation and wise use of wetlands principally as habitat for water birds. (Ramsar, 2010). The Convention’s mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and global collaboration, as a contribution towards realising sustainable development throughout the world. The Convention requires its member states to support the conservation of their Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar wetlands) and to plan for the wise use of all of the wetlands in their states. Convention guidelines emphasize that human use on a sustainable basis is wholly compatible with Ramsar principles and wetland conservation in general (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2018).

The “Wise Use Concept” was adopted at the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Iran in 1972 as a management practice for wetland conservation (Ramsar, 2016). The wise use concept applies to all wetlands in signatory states indicating wetlands of importance known as “Ramsar sites” (*ibid.*). Wise use of wetlands is the management of their ecological character, accomplished through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the framework of sustainable development. Wise use of wetlands results in benefits for poverty eradication, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and prevention of disease and natural catastrophes (Kumar *et al.*, 2016). The wise use concept is about upholding wetland values and functions, while at the same time providing services and benefits now and into the future, for human wellbeing. Wise use, in stimulating maintenance of environmental, economic and social sustainability, encourages compromise between individual and collective interests. To realise sound decisions on wetland, use and management, decision-makers at local, regional and national levels need to facilitate participation by relevant stakeholders and to balance a range of objectives and perspectives (Finlayson *et al.*, 2011).

This research was also guided by the ecological restoration concept that seeks to restore degraded ecosystems for sustainability purposes. As defined by the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SER) (2004), ecological restoration is a deliberate activity that initiates or speeds up the reclamation of an ecosystem with respect to its integrity, wellbeing, and sustainability. Restoration normally begins with practical questions of: Which locations are accessible? How have they been ruined? and Which aims are attainable? Additional questions develop from cultural and socio-economic insights, including: Which aims are most anticipated? Who gets to choose? How much effort can be put in to achieve goals? and How can local citizens become involved? The latter questions are truly significant from an ecological perspective. Restoration is an opportunistic arena (Zedler, 2005). It is in the interest of this research to investigate what has led to the degradation, of wetlands, that wetlands have been degraded, what can be done to involve societies in the process of restoring the lost wetland ecosystem.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT

On a national scale, the government of Zimbabwe formulated the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) guided by the act of 2002. Its aim is to protect the environment against any form of degradation for sustainable growth to be achieved. Wetlands are part of the environment that EMA seeks to protect against destructive human activities. The Environmental Management Act concentrates on sustainable utilisation of natural resources and safeguarding of the environment, the inhibition of pollution and environmental dilapidation, the preparation of a National Environmental Plan and other strategies for the management and safeguarding of the environment. It provides for the formation of an Environmental Management Agency and an Environment Fund. The Environment Management Act (Chapter 20:27) section 113(2) says, no individual shall, excluding in accord with the express written permission of the Agency, given in discussion with the Board and the Minister in charge for water resources;

- recover or drain any wetland;
- interrupt any wetland by drilling or tunnelling in a way that has

or is likely to have an adverse impact on any wetland or badly disturb any animal or plant life therein;

- Present any exotic fauna or flora species into a wetland.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

STUDY SITE

Harare is Zimbabwe's biggest city and it is governmental, commercial and infrastructure centre. The city exists on a watershed plateau with some of the country's best agricultural soils, hence urban population grows by leaps and bounds. Nearly all open green spaces in greater Harare are wetlands and these are the headwaters of the Manyame/Marimba/Gwebi catchment basin upon which the city is built. This basin is a water source for half of the population of Zimbabwe. The water supply is downstream of Harare, so it is important to keep wetlands intact. Numerous wetlands that can be found in and around Harare have been converted for different developmental causes and there are some are still under threat from human encroachment. Wetlands to be studied are the Cleveland Dam and Monavale Vlei .

Cleveland Dam was built in 1913 to supply water to the city of Harare. Cleveland covers an area of 2 500 hectares and is one of the countries' Ramsar sites. The dam has a water supply capacity of 90 million litres. There are three main water sources flowing into the dam, namely Mabvuku, Manresa and Chikurubi Rivers. The catchment area is a public facility and important water source as the water from Cleveland eventually flows into Lake Chivero. The site was initially woodland grass and grassland. The Cleveland area is one of Harare's prominent recreational sites and is subdivided into four sections, namely Cleveland Dam Picnic site, Shooting Range, Haka Game Park and Danhiko.

The Monavale Ramsar site is an urban seasonally flooded short grassland wetland ecosystem situated in northwest Harare, close to the city centre. These vleis or wetlands are the main water sources for the

city. Monavale is an exceptional example of the once wide headwater wetland or vlei environment of Zimbabwe, supporting a different range of flora and fauna, many of which are distinctive and of global significance. The overall Monavale site is 594 hectares in size with the protected Monavale Vlei at its centre settled between the hilly suburbs of Monavale and Meyrick Park. It is the headwater of the Marimba River which flows straight into Lake Chivero. The main protected area is 34 hectares in extent situated in the municipal area of Malbereign.

Monavale Vlei and Cleveland Dam were preferred as wetlands for the study because they are listed as Ramsar sites of international importance. Also, the study aimed at doing a comparative analysis on the two different sites. Monavale Vlei has been conserved as an open grassland wetland whereas Cleveland Dam has been utilised as a recreational facility. The study looked into policy implementation on both sites and evaluated stakeholder perspective on the wetland utilisation. Monavale is surrounded by low-density areas and Cleveland by high-density areas.

METHODS

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data about physical characteristics, types of wetlands, ecosystem services offered, legislation on wetlands, contribution to livelihoods, threats to the wetlands' ecosystem, perception on wetland management was collected. Questionnaires, field observations and key informant interviews were used to collect data from residents and authorities managing wetland ecosystems under investigation. To strengthen the quality of the data gathered, secondary sources were used to obtain more information. These were published and unpublished sources.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Purposive sampling known as convenient sampling was used to select informants during the data collection process. Residents who live near wetlands and utilise them for livelihood support were chosen to answer questionnaires as they were likely to have more knowledge on the ecosystem that are part of their everyday lives. The two wetland ecosystems selected to be studied, Monavale Vlei and Cleveland Dam

are located in different areas and serve different populations, hence samples of residents were drawn from both areas to give broader perspective on wetlands management. Key informants from authorities that deal with wetland management such as EMA, Harare Wetlands Trust, Cleveland Dam administration and Monavale Trust were selected as the best, as they manage wetlands in their institutional daily mission. They also interact with residents who are contributing to wetland management.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Key informant interviews were researched through administering in-depth interviews which sought to gather information on their analysis on wetland management. The other tool was legislation framework on wetlands, the challenges being faced, strategies put in place to conserve wetlands, their views and perceptions on communities they engage with in wetland utilisation.

QUESTIONNAIRES

These were administered to residents who live round the study sites and are in constant contact with the ecosystem itself. Questions were structured to extract information on whether they were aware of the legal framework, benefits from wetlands, challenges in utilising wetlands, why they are carrying out activities on wetlands. Questionnaires helped the researcher assess attitudes towards wetlands through direct contact.

FIELD OBSERVATION

This method was highly beneficial to the researcher as it helped gather information from the study sites. Field observations allowed the researcher to gather personal analysis pertaining to the physical structure and state of wetlands comparing with the information that was being given to by informants.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed through thematic analysis. The themes of interest were based on the research questions and the information given by respondents. Some of the themes were on stakeholder views and

perceptions on wise use of wetlands, challenges being faced in promoting the wise use of wetlands, measures put in place to promote the wise use of wetlands and recommendation on how to ensure wise use of wetlands.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This component exhibits, analyses and interprets findings from the study carried out with indications of responsiveness of the target population. The presentations are in accordance with the questions that were asked and the analysis constituted the captured data from the interviews in comparison with the literature review.

VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS FROM RESPONDENTS ON WETLAND MANAGEMENT

As argued by key informants from authorities who manage wetlands, wetlands are often viewed as open grassland spaces. So, such views have resulted in these areas being used as open spaces, wastelands that can be utilised in any way that is beneficial to human beings. Wetlands are not deemed important due to their being not so visible to the human eye, hence susceptible to degradation. The uses of wetlands such as the soil that is a critical part of the ecosystem and the benefits that come with it are not visible to the human eye or beneficial to their urgent livelihood support system. Therefore, they are not deemed to be important.

EMA has reported that wetlands are generally viewed by the general populace as open spaces awaiting to be utilised for development purposes, hence there has been an increase in the conversion of wetlands into shopping malls, water draining areas for commercial purposes, residential homes and agricultural use. All these activities are against the Agency's thrust to protect wetlands and promote their wise use as stated in the Ramsar Convention handbook. In view of the policy in place, EMA encouraged that the wetland policy should address the views and attitudes of multitudes that have led to the destruction of the wetland ecosystem in the city.

Of note is that the Agency has, therefore, in its thrust to promote the wise use of wetlands, embarked on community projects and public

awareness programmes through various platforms to try and change behaviour and perception towards wetlands. The reason behind public engagement is that the general populace is not aware of the benefits and functions of wetlands, mainly those not visible to the human eye. Because of this, these open lands face the risk of human activities, since there is no visible physical structure to demarcate them as “no land use zone areas”. They have been susceptible to human encroachment as citizens are in search of housing and livelihood support systems that these wetlands have provided over the years. Because wetlands have fertile soils and can store water, urban agriculture has become rampant on these lands as people seek to produce household food, especially maize, the staple food.

Therefore, emphasis is on the need for the city of Harare, and all relevant stakeholders from grassroots awareness to promote wise use of wetlands and include the wetland ecosystems in city’s land-use planning. However, there are loopholes in the policy, leading to wetlands being converted to concrete areas, to non-compliance by developers, lack of EIA and monitoring. Political interference in policy implementation has also been a major setback on protection of wetlands and overlapping policies that have resulted in environmental legislation that protects wetlands, losing its value.

The Cleveland area provides a wide variety of functions such as water storage, supporting aquatic life systems, vegetation cover, conservation of wildlife, food and habitat for animals and promoting the conservation of indigenous trees such as *mutohwe*, *mukute*, *muzhanje*, *mutamba*, amongst other trees. It is important to observe that if wetland areas are conserved, they can support the economic growth of the country. The Cleveland area has four major areas, picnic site, Haka Game Park, shooting range and Dhaniko School, which can be utilised for eco-tourism and education to the benefit of the country.

However, if the Cleveland area is not protected at national level, it is at risk of losing its value due to human interference, such as streambank cultivation which, over the years, has led to siltation of the dam, introduction of exotic trees such as the pines and the eucalyptus (gum trees), leading to reduced growth of the indigenous trees. This because of perceptions that there is need to continuously grow trees on the

woodland, but the wrong trees are being grown on these areas, leading to the introduction of alien species to the ecosystem. Water drainage from the Cleveland Dam for commercial purposes has triggered human encroachment into the wetland, prompting residents to utilise water from tributaries that flow into the dam in unsustainable ways.

Harare Wetlands Trust (HWT) reported that the Monavale Vlei used to cover a wider area than it is today, this being due to limited resources to adequately manage the area. Being an open grassland area, it has been threatened by human activities, a large part of it has been converted to fields and houses by residents from Milton Park, Kuwadzana and Tynwald. Therefore, only a small portion of the entire wetland area has been conserved as the Monavale Vlei. Footpaths on the wetlands have been affected by soil compaction causing drying up of the wetland. The continuous passage of people through the wetland threatens the peace and stability of creatures on the wetlands as they view humans as a threat to their survival.

Visual assessment of the Cleveland noted that the area just outside the fence demarcating the boundary for Cleveland, is extensively used for cultivation. Just like the Monavale case, the Cleveland site used to be bigger than it currently is, as it was a wider wetland covered by woodland and grassland ecosystems. Due to the need for household food and firewood, there has been continuous cutting down of trees and clearing of land for agriculture. The Cleveland authorities highlighted that they resorted to fencing the area to protect the remaining woodland, wildlife and land on the wetland from human threat. Residents stated that the area outside Cleveland used to be very fertile when people started cultivating, but with time, the soil structure and its fertility has been slowly diminishing due to erosion and the use of inorganic fertilizers.

Residents also echoed the same sentiments regarding the ecosystem services that the Cleveland offered to them. The area just outside Cleveland offers firewood and fertile soils for agriculture. However, despite the benefits, they echoed that there is need to continue to protect the wetland. Benefits derived from the wetland ecosystems by communities who live around them were recorded to be as follows:

- Helps in the hydrological cycle, through evaporation and hence

increases rainwater.

- It helps boost the tourism sector as there is a game park that has been put in place due to the existence of a conserved wetland that offers food and shelter for animals.
- Picnic site is good for leisure purposes.
- Livelihood support as people do fishing.
- Offers educational tours.
- Underground water recharge.
- Fresh breeze from the wetland area due to its vegetation cover and moisture content.
- The wetland has helped in the conservation of indigenous trees such as *muzhanje*, *musasa*, *mukute*, *munenda*, *hacha*, and *utohwe*, amongst many other trees found on the Cleveland site.
- Grasslands and trees help trap soil and reduce erosion, reducing siltation of the dam.
- Wetland soils offer plant growth even in dry spells. These plants, in turn, offer food and habitat for animals, helping the ecosystem function fully.

Most community members said they were aware of the legal framework, acknowledging that they knew it was not allowed to cultivate, construct or cut down trees on wetlands. Some went on to state that stream bank cultivation is not allowed on the dam. The use of inappropriate fishing equipment such as sacks or nets is prohibited. Residents highlighted that with regards to community engagement or sensitisation on wetland management, no public awareness or educational campaigns have been done by authorities such as EMA. Noteworthy, the knowledge on wetlands is acquired through indigenous knowledge systems which has been passed on within the communities from one generation to another. If the policy is not made public, they all agreed that the environment will be continuously abused.

Residents utilising the Monavale Vlei stated that they support the conservation of wetlands, but due to economic hardships, they have had to resort to farming on the wetland since it offers very fertile soils and moisture that support the growth of maize. Residents pointed out that some of them are rural migrants, and where they came from, wetlands were good for agriculture, hence when they relocated to the

city, they had to continue with their staple food production to meet food needs. Despite the area being in the low-density areas, respondents who utilise this wetland for agricultural benefits travel from high-density areas. In this regard, there is need to ensure that wetland ecosystem management is not limited to those who live around the wetland, but to the entire population.

In light of the discussed findings, it is worth noting that, once a wetland is converted into concrete or buildings, it automatically loses its function and an imbalance is created within the ecosystem. Plant life is lost, alongside some animal species who depend on solely the wetland as an ecosystem. Wetlands improve water quality by acting as sediment sinks or basins. As argued by EMA, nutrients from fertilizers, manure and leaking septic tanks are dissolved in the water and are often absorbed by plant roots and microorganisms in the soil while other pollutants stick to the soil particles. In many cases, this filtration process removes much of the water nutrients and pollutant load by the time it leaves the wetlands. If wetlands are wisely utilised, respecting their natural functions and systems, they can offer many ecological services at no cost. The city could be saved from losing a lot of money through acquiring machinery and lots of chemicals for water filtration and purification.

FACTORS THAT HAVE LED TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CLEVELAND AND MONA VALE WETLANDS ECOSYSTEMS

CULTIVATION

Streambank cultivation is one of the major threats to wetland, particularly in the Cleveland Dam area by residents from surrounding suburbs such as Mabvuku, Chikurubi and Epworth. This activity does not only affect one segment of the ecosystem, but carries long with it several problems for the environment. Streambank cultivation has led to an increase in runoff, leading to the siltation of the dam and thereby reducing its carrying capacity. Cultivation has also led to eutrophication of the dam, leading to invasive water plants such as the water hyacinth that affects the survival of water-dependent plants and animals. High use of chemicals and tillage has led to degradation in the soil structure and quality.

CONSTRUCTION

The Monavale wetland is 594 hectares in extent, but the protected core area is 34 hectares in extent. The reduction in the size of the core area has been due to the construction of residential stands, the need for industry and recreational facilities which has also led to the depletion of wetland areas and their value.

INVASIVE SPECIES/EXOTIC SPECIES

The main challenge facing Cleveland and Monavale wetlands is the existence of invasive plant species that have affected the existence of indigenous plant and animal species. Along the driveway entrance to the dam, there is a beautiful scenery of pine trees. They may be beautiful to the human eye, but are destructive to the wetland ecosystem. These pine trees are highly flammable and do not support the growth of any other plant species around them. On the Monavale wetland, the introduction of trees on a wetland that should be grassland has also led to the growth of invasive plants that do not favour the growth of indigenous plant and animal species. Various invasive weeds have engulfed the wetland area leading to disappearance of indigenous plants that existed before. The extinction of one component of the ecosystem eventually results in the extinction of another.

WATER DRAINAGE

The dam that has a water-storing source has been subject to drainage by companies such as ZimForce for commercial purposes. This has posed a threat to the dam's water capacity, especially during the dry season.

MISMANAGEMENT OF WETLAND AREAS

With regards to the Cleveland Dam, the picnic site is meant to be grassland but due to poor management practices, the grassland areas have been turned into vehicle pathways as patrons are allowed to drive into the wetland area. This has led to the destruction of the ecosystem, affecting animal habitats and destroying existing plants and grasslands. The opening up of pathways has led to the loosening of the soil, causing to an increase in runoff and hence, river siltation.

Just as on the Monavale Vlei, creation of footpaths has led to soil compaction, increasing runoff and reducing infiltration, reducing groundwater storage in the long run.

DEFORESTATION

The Cleveland Dam site is a woodland grassland area, where there has been encroachment into the area by residents from surrounding areas in search of firewood and timber from the gum trees. High loss of indigenous trees has been taking place in the woodland area.

POOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Agency's policy does not offer license of operation to individuals wishing to partake in small-scale activities such as residential or house construction. Local authorities have made it a trend to give out permission to an individual to construct their homes on wetlands. All wetlands in Zimbabwe's towns and cities will disappear within 20 years if municipalities continue on their current model of development. Harare has endured rapid urbanisation and is presently experiencing a substantial shortage of housing. As a direct result of this, most Harare's wetland regions face the prospect of being transformed into residential areas. Others have been converted into a "hive of commercial operations" with housing communities, gas stations and other facilities related with commercial enterprise taking over the area.

CORRUPTION

Corruption within the Agency and governance systems has choked the existence of wetlands. Due to corruption and political interference, most developers on wetland sites are somehow linked to an individual within the political realm. When issued with a warning or fine, they often ignore or threaten officials using their affiliation to those who are politically influential. Hence, political interference has led to the crippling of the Agency ending in loss of wetlands on massive scales.

CONSERVATION MEASURES APPLIED FOR THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

EMA is responsible for activities done on the environment as it is responsible for issuing licenses to operate, revoking those licenses, and stopping operations that are detrimental to the environment. EMA supports the Ramsar Convention on the notion of "wise use of

wetlands". The agency also ensures that EIAs are carried out before the commencement of a project to ensure that the wetland ecosystem is not affected. This is also done to ensure that when environmental audits are carried out, the developer is still carrying out operations as per initial agreement when their licenses were issued and if not, fines are imposed on these offenders or licenses for operation are revoked.

The Agency also upholds and commemorates World Wetlands Day every 2nd of February each year. The gives the Agency a chance to facilitate public awareness and educational programmes as these commemorations are done in different parts of the country, both rural and urban. The Agency provides training to 10 local environment action plan community groups. These community groups form pressure groups whose aim is to speak on behalf of the environment. They were created mainly to protect wetlands from urban cultivation for the restoration process to take place. The groups are being trained to facilitate the introduction of soft projects such as the creation of recreational parks on wetlands in their respective areas. The main challenge these communities are facing is lack of funding to kick start their ideas. The Agency raises awareness through engaging stakeholders at all levels through word-based feedback meetings such as television programmes, radio talk shows, use of social media and engaging schools through school visits where they aim to catch them young.

As argued by the HWT, its mandate is to restore wetlands that have been lost or degraded. The trust lobbies against any developer who wishes to start operations on wetlands. These are taken to EMA and, if the agency fails to handle the matter, a case is filed in a court of law against the developer by the trust. To protect these wetlands, authorities have put up signs that state and warn that the area is protected and is not a dumping zone, and that any offenders will be prosecuted. With time, such measures have been minimised dumping in the area. The Monavale authority has also tried to protect the wetland area from urban cultivation by employing security guards and routine checks to ensure no cultivation takes place in the area. To minimise or stop nearby residents encroaching into the wetland area to farm, are given food hampers by the authorities.

The Cleveland Dam site is conserved through minimising the introduction of new tree species. Any tree planting projects IN the area are not allowed as this might affect the existence and growth of indigenous trees such as Loquat fruit (*muzhanje*) and Spiny monkey orange (*matamba*) trees that help in the sustenance of wildlife such as monkeys found in the game park. The areas have also been electrically fenced to boost security measures and to also try and stop trespassers. Residents also try to support responsible authorities on the study sites in conserving wetlands. Efforts pointed out includes no cutting down of trees, trespassing, poaching or hunting animals within the demarcated Cleveland area or on the Monavale site.

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

The Ramsar Convention on wetlands, adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty that offers the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The drive for creating the Ramsar Convention was that the overall wetland area and value were deteriorating in most counties of the world, even though wetlands are vital for the benefits of ecosystem services that they offer humankind. The loss and dilapidation of wetlands are taking place due mainly to the lack of awareness regarding their benefits that can be challenging to quantify. At first glance, wetlands seem like unattractive wastelands of little or no noticeable economic value. Particularly in urban areas, they can be viewed as dumping sites or unwanted grounds. It is, therefore, not surprising that these areas have frequently been considered by the public and planners as fit for infrastructure development.

However, when efforts have been made to study and assess the benefits of wetlands, their value is shown to be substantial, resulting in policy change. This new analysis provides decision-makers with the assurance that the robust decision for the future is to treat the wetland areas as no-development zones. Capturing and publicising good practices is the most effective way to escalate awareness of the value of wetlands internationally. Understanding and quantifying the value of

wetlands, whether they are coastal, freshwater, or urban will permit governments to make wiser resolutions on environmental, sustainability, economic growth, and urban development.

The Environmental Management Act needs to be revised in accordance with activities that are taking place on wetlands that have led to their disappearance. As indicated within the findings, the act needs to be revisited and revised, removing some of the clauses that have paved the way to environmental degradation.

An integrated approach to the wise use of wetlands should be adopted, this means including everyone from the grassroots level in encouraging the wise use of wetlands. Wetlands need to be reclaimed or restored if possible. EMA needs to be consistent with carrying out EIA and environmental audits and offenders have to be apprehended. The judiciary system needs to be more environmentally conscious to make wise judgments regarding the environment. Lastly, re gazettement of wetland areas needs to be done urgently. Re gazettement entails official listing and publication of all wetland areas in the city. All stakeholders, relevant authorities and developers should agree on wetland areas identified as no land-use zones.

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BEGGING AS A LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY: A CASE OF STREET CHILDREN OF THE HARARE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT IN ZIMBABWE

TANATSWA CATCH AND WITNESS CHIKOKO¹

Abstract

There is a dearth of academic studies on begging as a livelihood strategy among street children in the context of austerities. The article problematises begging as one of the livelihood strategies of street children of the Harare Central Business District (CBD) in the face of adversities, induced partly by austerity measures. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to generate data for this study. Resilience theory was adopted to analyse the realities of these children. Research findings suggest that the street children of the Harare Central Business District through begging. The article argues that younger children were more involved in begging as a livelihood strategy as compared to the older ones. The article concludes by lobbying and advocating for full implementation of child rights laws, policies and programmes to reduce risks associated with begging among these children.

Keywords: *austerity, poverty, income, policy, urban sustainability, management*

INTRODUCTION

Children in street situations face many adversities. To cope with some of their daily challenges, street children engage in begging (Bourdillon 1994; Dube 1997,1999; Vameghi *et al.*, 2014; Kushtiwala and Iqbal, 2023). Begging is one of the survival strategies employed by many people during times of distress. The lack of basic necessities is the major driver of begging. It is a common practice that has historical roots. Even during traditional societies and biblical times, begging was a common practice.

¹ Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

These children often lack access to necessities such as food, shelter and education, and resort to begging as a way to survive on the streets. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, begging is very common and here are varied reasons for begging among the street children of Addis Ababa (Abebe 2009). Some of them include childhood poverty, abuse and neglect by parents, disintegration of families and limited access to social services among others (*ibid.*).

Begging also reflects broader societal and economic challenges, including urbanisation, poverty, and inequality (Gobina and Samson, 2018). As cities grow and become more crowded, the number of street children also increases, and begging becomes more visible as a form of livelihood strategy. In Nigeria, children's street begging was caused by parental destitution and their inability to provide for their children's basic needs, and a lack of social support (Olapegba *et al.*, 2020). The authors pointed out that many parents were unable to meet their children's basic requirements, including food and education and, as a result, children were left to rely on begging on the streets to survive. They emphasized the fact that many street-connected children lacked access to healthcare and education, making them more susceptible to exploitation and abuse (*ibid.*).

In Bangladesh, street children faced numerous challenges, including lack of access to education and healthcare, these contributing to their involvement in begging in the first place. This shows that issues of begging around the globe involve lack of basic commodities (Uddin, Islam and Rahman, 2022). Begging then becomes an automatic solution in a bid to address issues of lacking basic commodities. As a result, this lack is instrumental in driving child onto the street to beg for their livelihoods.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resilience Rheory is also known as positive psychology (van Breda, 2018). The theory is about the ability of individuals to bounce back in the face of adversities (Hlungwani and van Breda, 2020). Cunningham *et al.* (2017:701) define resilience as, "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity." Resilience is influenced by both the child and his or her community

and the capacities of children's complex social ecology to provide resources (Liberio and Ungar, 2010).

Among vulnerable children are many factors that promote resilience. Some vulnerable children develop positive psychology or adaptations to adversities because of participating in sporting activities (Morgan, 2010). Through participating in sporting activities, the vulnerable children enhance their mental health, self-esteem and forge new social relationships beyond care, among others (*ibid.*). Family resilience is also associated with protective factors (Benzies and Mychasiuk, 2009). Some of the protective factors modify or transform responses to adverse events so that families avoid positive negative outcomes (*ibid.*).

Liberio and Ungar (2010) have identified seven factors that promote or enhance resilience among children and youths. These include social justice, social cohesion, cultural adherence, identity, power and control access to material resources among others (Liberio and Ungar, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street children in Bangladesh, raise money for survival through begging (Kaiser and Sinanan, 2020). Through begging, the street girls of Bangladesh were able to raise money for buying basic needs such as food and clothes (*ibid.*). The street children of Pakistan raise money for survival through various forms such as rag picking, commercial sex work and begging (Kushtiwala and Iqbal, 2023). Begging has also been common among street children in many Latin American cities in the context of austerities.

Begging is one of the survival livelihood strategies in many cities in Africa (Abebe, 2008; Kassah, 2008; Mtonga 2011). For example, begging is a vibrant survival strategy in cities in Ghana (Kassah, 2008). It is also a popular survival strategy among street children of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and sometimes practised at church entrances (Abebe, 2008).

In the case of Accra, Ghana, begging is common on streets, especially at traffic intersections (Kassah, 2008). Kassah (*ibid.*) observes that the beggars include able-bodied persons, those with disabilities and refugees from neighbouring countries among many. Begging is also

considered as devaluing, thus stigmatising in Ghana (*ibid.*). Despite the fact that begging is unlawful and punishable under the 1996 National Liberation Decree 392, begging for survival still takes place (*ibid.*).

In Addis Ababa, street children engage in begging as a result of limited alternative income-generating strategies, abuse and neglect in families, limited access to social protection, failure of rural livelihoods (displacement because of war, famine, drought) (Abebe, 2008 and 2009). In South African cities, street begging has been associated with limited access to employment opportunities, poor educational levels, family dysfunctionality, among other reasons (Stones, 2013). Harmful traditional practices also drive children into begging in Addis Ababa (Abebe, 2008). The street children demonstrate their agency through converting their poor status into viable livelihood strategies (*ibid.*). Begging among street children of Addis Ababa, demonstrates agency, entrepreneurial skills and the ability to use their financial resources they get (*ibid.*). Among the street children of Lusaka, Zambia, begging to raise money illustrates agency (Mtonga, 2011).

Similarly, some persons with disabilities, in Accra engage in begging because of various reasons (Kassah, 2008). Some of the reasons include limited employment opportunities, embarrassment at school, thus withdrawal from school, harassment at work places, etc. In such circumstances, they resort to street begging as one of survival options (*ibid.*).

Studies suggest that begging is a common practice in cities around Zimbabwe. Street begging is not only confined to children but also persons with disabilities and other vulnerable members of society such as those with chronic illnesses (Bourdillon 1994; Dube, 1997 and 1999). Some of the street children of Bulawayo and Harare, Zimbabwe, survive through begging (Wakatama 2007; Ruparanganda, 2008; Mhizha, 2010; Mella, 2012; Ndlovu 2015). Mhizha (2010) noted that, there were dynamics associated with begging among the street children of Harare. Some of the dynamics include younger girls being more comfortable with street begging as compared to those at the stage of adolescence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology, punctuated by street ethnography was used to generate data for the article. Through purposive sampling, a total of twelve (12) street children, made up of six (6) boys and six (6) girls, participated as primary participants for the study. The research participants' age range was from 10 to 18 years.

Data were drawn through in-depth interviews, informal conversations and participant observation methods. Similarly, Chikoko (2014 and 2017) used street ethnography when studying substance abuse among street children in the Harare Central Business District.

Some street vendors, City of Harare officials and social workers employed by the Department of Social Development under the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, were part of the team of key informants for the study. The key informants, such as officials from the Government of Zimbabwe, have been engaged when studying the lives of street children in Harare (Bourdillon 1994; Dube 1997 AND 1999; Rurevo and Bourdillon 2003a & b; Wakatama 2007; Ruparanganda, 2008; Mhizha, 2010; Mella 2012; 2014 and 2015). The target group of the study were street children dotted around the streets of the Harare CBD. Most of the street children were involved in begging at intersections of roads, entrances to shopping malls, supermarkets and restaurants.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

SUPPLEMENTING FOOD

The study findings established that, begging contributes to the livelihood of street-connected children as it increases food provision. It is noted that most children engage in begging because of poverty. In this case, begging cushions issues of food shortages. Most of the money received from a day's work is used to buy food. Food is bought from street food vendors (*musika*) that usually sell an almost decent meal that varies according to the amount one is to part with. This takes care of hunger issues. This notion was derived in an informal conversation with one of the child beggars.

Participant CB 5

"My mother said that I should join her in her trade in the CBD so that I raise money and help her fend for the family, Life on the street is hard. Some days people just ignore you, so that means if you don't manage to evoke pity in someone, then business is slow. On a good day, I earn US\$7,, the primary currency here that we then use for subsistence. Since then, we have been able to make sure that every day, the family manages to eat a close-to-decent meal from the proceeds from begging. On days that I come alone to work, I make sure that I go and buy myself a kaylite of sadza by the street. This meal should suffice for the whole day until I get back home where I get the second meal for the day."

Another participant had this to say:

Sister, where we stay, there's nothing else we can do but beg in the CBD and to at least spend the day in town seeing how other children are making ends meet. Just look at Epworth where I come from, everyone in the area is just vending or gaining from whatever means that can help, so the least I can do is just to move away and go get exposed to a new environment, so this environment encourages me to beg. At the end of the day, you will realise that begging helps us to survive because I get food.

The findings established that apart from buying their own food from the money received from begging, these child beggars also receive food donations from well-wishers. An example is an initiative by well-wishers from a private institution called the Street Kitchen. The aim of the kitchen is to provide food for the street beggars, thereby aiding survival of the child beggars as they can now feed themselves from the proceeds.

Participant CB 9 had to say:

Apart from raising our own money for food, begging ensures that we get food from well-wishers. Of late we have getting food from an organisation that hands out food to us on a certain day on a weekly basis. This initiative helps us in instances when business is low and we cannot manage to cater for our own food. Usually, the food provided by this organisation is really good food and well-balanced. Despite the fact that the portions of the food are little and sometimes do not satisfy the hunger levels, the street has taught me to be grateful – half a loaf is better than nothing.

Disgruntlement with little portions was also expressed by many of the participants. Most of the organisations working to help child beggars are concerned mostly with fulfilling their goals of feeding numbers of street children than providing a better service to a few, thus compromising the quality of service by focusing on numbers and not the quality of service.

The participants also added that, despite the contribution made by begging in aiding food provision, its contribution should not be over emphasized. This sentiment was explained in the sense that begging provides food for the child beggars but, owing to the nature of the livelihood strategy, food is not always guaranteed. The participants said that food provision is not always definite because the livelihood strategy is static, its success is dependent on the willingness of givers. If people do not feel like giving food or money, then food provision is a futility. The inconsistency of the donations shows how this livelihood strategy is sometimes not reliable, thereby making the child beggars vulnerable to various risks as they will be desperate to make a living.

This is evidenced in the extract from Participant CB 6:

Sadly, our work does not always guarantee automatic food income. Some days people just ignore you, so on days like, that we spend the day on empty stomachs. It all becomes a matter of luck. If you are lucky enough, then you will get food but if you are not, then you are going to starve for the day and hope for a better day.

In a key informant interview this view was expressed thus, by Participant CWPS 1:

Inasmuch as begging does contribute to food income, one can observe that begging is a chancy and uncertain livelihood strategy, meaning to say that the proceeds from begging have no defined pattern of provision. On some days, the children manage to get food and, on some days, food is an illusion. Automatically this impedes its success on supplementing food income.

Owing to the inconsistency in food provision, the study also revealed that some of the food handed out to the child beggars is contaminated or decayed food. This has a ripple effect on the health of the children as consuming such food causes illness. This serious case described by the key informant depicts a dire situation where the child beggars vulnerable to issues of ill health as they consume contaminated food. held Beggars, in some instances, eat the food anyway, because of the levels of desperation.

Key informant CT 2:

I have had many cases of the child beggars who abscond school to beg, complaining about issues of stomach problems. They get in class and sit whilst placing their heads over their desks trying to get a comfortable posture as they will be in pain. In the conversations that I have had with them, most of the children always pinpoint a case related to food poisoning or eating decayed food that would have been offered by people in the streets. This places the children at great risk of developing greater health related issues that are even extreme and lead to death in extreme cases.

During an informal conversation with the participants, one openly expressed that:

Some of the food that we get are rejects, food that people do not want for themselves, So, most days we have stomach problems because of the food, but we are getting used to the pain, it's better to have something to fill up your stomach with.

PROVISION OF CLOTHING

The findings also established that the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy for street-connected children includes provision of clothing. Through begging in churches, these children get assistance, contributing to them staying afloat amidst different circumstances. It can be commented that clothing is also an essential aspect in the welfare of children. From the churches, the children sometimes get aid in the form of cash, educational benefit and even shelter as many churches aim to help the vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe. SW 2, a key informant, revealed that:

These child beggars are very tactical. They have studied the patterns of gaining within the street., So, through begging, they have managed to establish that begging can improve their wellbeing through the aid given by social assistance in the form of donations or through aid from non – governmental organisations and institutions. However, this has been very powerful in effect because through begging in churches, these children manage to get clothes from well-wishers within churches.

On the same issue, Participant CB 2 also shared the same sentiments and said:

Our begging job sometimes is cushioned by the aid we receive from churches. Every Sunday we make sure that we go to church, obviously we will get something from there, either food or clothes. Apart from those benefits, the church stretches warm hands towards us because we are beggars, so they feel mandated to help us. As a result, our church attendance makes us develop trust in God, so we never give up.

The findings established that the contributions made by churches are a crucial aspect of begging. Street-connected children have a deep religious faith and firmly believe that God will one day improve their lives and make their current struggles manageable. They rely on their faith to find comfort, solace and hope when confronted with the harsh realities of street life. Faith in God can give meaning and a sense of worth. This shows that in issues of begging are viewed as an obligation of fulfilling Christian duty. However, the children become a charity case and the church becomes a haven where the children run to for assistance. All these contributions manage to enhance the livelihood strategy as in some instances, the children are then able to get aid that is essential for their livelihood.

This is what participant CB 7 had to say:

One time I visited this church here in the CBD, I had no intentions of going to the church because I had come to work but business was slow. I was not feeling quite well on the day so I was just sitting around. There I just decided to go into this church near Kwame Nkrumah Avenue and Leopold Takawira. Upon arrival, I was welcomed by the ushers who then asked about my story, I clearly remember that they asked me not to leave after church and so I didn't. After church, I was attended to by the pastor and another man. This man then offered to bring me clothes if I returned to the church the following week. I did just that. There he was waiting for me with the clothes a promised. -I was so happy

Apart from getting the clothes from well-wishers and other organisations, the child beggars also use the money from begging to purchase their own clothes. The findings revealed that the child beggars now have well established areas that they know they can buy clothes that are within their means. Participant CB8 said:

Begging has been able to provide a lot of things for me. The money that I get from the job I sometimes go to buy clothes at Mbare. You will be shocked to see that US\$1 in Mbare will fetch me about four t-shirts. When I am begging these days, I have also started to clean windscreens for cars at robots, this helps to get a quick buck.

RAISING MONEY FOR SCHOOL FEES

The findings also noted that begging helps to raise money for school fees. During the in-depth interviews, most children revealed that they got into begging when they considered that the trade brought some benefits such as quick money and leisure in the sense that no one tells you whether you have worked enough for a day's wage, so one can continue to anytime work and still manage to gain more. Indirectly, one works as their own boss and no one tell one what, how and when to do things. The flexibility of the livelihood strategy enhances the street-connected children as they manage to raise their school fees.

In an informal conversation Participant CB9 had this to say:

Sister, begging has its own challenges and benefits. I started begging because I saw the benefits of making quick money. Given my situation, I had to beg to raise money for my school fees and daily needs. Begging is less strenuous than street vending, and I can even do it while sitting down, which allows me to go to school before or after. I make good money through begging, which is better than vending in town. People are often willing to help if you can persuade them to feel pity. I come to work, make some money, and hurry to school on some days because of the hot seating system.

Such an account reveals that begging allows some of the child beggars to pursue their at the same time. The findings showed that the contribution made by begging is powerful as it sustains essential and crucial aspects of the livelihood of children. During the key informant interviews, one of the former outreach officers of CWPS confirmed that:

Some of the street children joined the bandwagon of street begging after failed attempts of other means of earning money, like selling small items. To them begging has proven to be the most flexible livelihood strategy that one can engage in order to meet their basic needs. Its flexibility allows them to also focus on other things that help them to develop, in this instance pursuing education.

Key informant CWPS 1:

Most of these children have ventured into begging because they have tried various methods of earning money, which could have proved to have failed, thus begging provided the closure that they had been looking for. The next resort for livelihood left would then be begging as it gives financial aid. The money received is then used to buy the other essentials needed in their academic journey.

This excerpt reveals that the contribution made by begging as a livelihood strategy closes the gap left behind by social assistance programmes like the Basic Educational Assistance Module (BEAM), that seek to pay fees for these children. The findings showed the gap for BEAM is that, in some instances, it fails to provide other necessities needed for the education of the children, like books. In another instance, late payment of fees for the children prevents them from going to school as some of the schools deny unpaid students' entry into school premises, hence the contribution of begging. In an informal conversation, one of the participants said:

The money that I get from begging I use it to buy some of the things that I need for school like stationery as BEAM does not provide all these other things, so this helps me to be able to attain my education.

ENSURING ACCESS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The study established that begging provides money for medical assistance and medical treatment. The study unearthed how proceeds from begging were used to access medical care. The child beggars manage to buy medicine, be they traditional or modern treatment. Evidently, with money from begging, the child beggars can utilise medical facilities. This contributes to the livelihood of the children as the moment they can receive medical attention they continue to contribute meaningfully to their wellbeing.

This is what one girl child beggar had to say:

Sister, as for me, I get stomach problems very often, so that means I need to be getting medicine from time to time when I feel the pains. So for me to be able to buy these medicines. I use the money I received from begging. Sometimes, instead of just using the money. I can also approach a person and ask them to just buy me the medicine that I need, but however, the first option of just buying my medicine myself works better because now people are in the habit of refusing to buy us medicines because they fear we will use the medicines for suicide – which is understandable because that is a common issue here. Also, in some instances, the pharmacists also refuse to give us the medicines because we are too young. So just going to a clinic works better than anything else or just buying traditional medicines from the street vendors who sell some medicines in the CBD.

The findings from a key informant suggested that the Department of Social Welfare has taken a stance to try and provide medical assistance to the street-connected child beggars in the form of Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTO). This initiative was put in place in a bid to ensure that the vulnerable populations get assistance from medical facilities. However, owing to the bad state of the economy in the country, the availability of medicines needed by some of the children cannot be provided by the AMTO waiver, so street children countered this gap by the proceeds from begging. This theme was echoed by participant SW 2, who said:

Efforts to provide medical aid for street children have been rendered futile by the economic status in the country. This has made the street-connected children to rely on begging as a source of income, a source that provides a better livelihood. Consequently, the children have managed to ensure that their access to medical services is not limited owing to the economic downturn, so they now visit clinics themselves and pay for their treatment. An example is that of Edith Opperman Clinic in Mbare, where street-connected children go to for their maternity issues and other health related treatments.

This utterance then suggests that the loophole within the system of AMTO's is compounded by the fact that the child beggars now provide for themselves. Their ability to manoeuvre through and use the money from begging to buy medicines promotes good health.

PROVISION OF SHELTER AND PROTECTION

The findings also proved that begging contributes to provision of shelter and protection for the street-connected children. One of the most important aspects of the lives of street child beggars is caring for one another, thereby substituting child protection. Because they

frequently depend on one another for survival and assistance, these children develop strong bonds based on common situations and experiences. The study showed that despite facing several difficulties and dangers, children living on the streets may also be able to rely on one another for care and protection, thus the provision and contribution of begging. Through interviews with the participants, the study showed that the interactions and support among street children significantly affect both their survival and well-being. This is because the livelihood strategy ensures that the children watch over one another and all depended on each other for them to thrive. Street children's interactions and care also contribute to their sense of belonging and the development of their identities.

These sentiments are also shared by participant CB 7;

Sister, life in the streets is hard, so you need someone whom you know that has your back here and watches after you, so automatically that person becomes your family. You work together and you stick together, so when we work together, we then become able to provide for ourselves because the joint effort bears much greater yield than working alone. The moment we work together, we able to attain our daily needed provisions to survive. Here I live my life with no fear because I know that whatever I am doing, my mate has my back, either good or bad we stick together.

The findings also suggested the older child beggars form gangs with leaders that dominate and direct the daily running of the group. All this is seen as a form of care for one another as each gang member from the bases is held responsible for the welfare of another, bearing good results for the gangs as they act as social protection for each other.

Participant CB 6 intoned:

I used to be part of a gang here in the street, so we would work together and make sure that at the end of the day where everyone should present what we worked for, everyone would have an amount or just something cash or kind to show the groups and it would be distributed amongst us. The only problem that arises with a setup like this would be issues of selfish tendencies by other members but overall, the care managed to help us sail through every obstacle.

As such the extract of participant CB6 emphasizes that street children's interactions and care can also contribute to their sense of belonging and the development of their identities. These connections can give them a sense of support, hence the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy as it proffers protection for the children. In greater

extents of the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy, CWPS 2 had this to say:

Surely caring for one another through begging does contribute to the livelihood of the street connected children. I clearly remember a group of young boys who used to strategically position themselves along Samora Machel and beg. This group thrived so well that they managed to get themselves a room to rent instead of inhabiting the street. The gang got a room to rent in Epworth where they then began to develop themselves there. Since then, they have become a strong family that works together to get whatever that they want together.

DISCUSSION

It is suggested here that begging promotes resilience of street children of the Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe, in the face of adversities. The street children of the Harare CBD are faced with multilayered vulnerabilities. Some of the vulnerabilities are limited access to foods, shelter, violence (emotional, physical and sexual nature), stigma and discrimination, and social exclusion from social protection systems.

Utilising the resilience theory, begging enhanced the capacities of the street children to adapt in the face of adversities (van Breda, 2018). Begging promoted the resilience of street children of the Harare Central Business District in many ways, some of which are accessing medical assistance, provision of food and clothing, raising money for school fees, access to shelter and protection.

Begging promoted the resilience of these children through raising money for school fees. The research findings collaborate the study conducted in Ghana, where begging enhanced the children in financing their education, thus making begging a means to academic advancement (Amenyah, 2018). Begging can teach children business skills, financial independence and humility, making it a gateway to these valuable qualities (Adomako and Agyeiwaa, 2018).

As highlighted above, begging increased access to food among the street children of the Harare Central Business District. In other words, through begging, the street children of were able to raise money for food. Similarly, begging brought many benefits of children in Dagbon of Northern Ghana (Fuseini and Daniel, 2018). Through begging, the children were able to supplement family incomes, raise money for

examination fees, buying mobile phones, and DVDs for movies, among others (*ibid.*). Begging has been a survival strategy for street children in Latin America, who often lack access to basic necessities such as food, shelter and healthcare (De Vos and Tarzi, 2016).

In India, begging is also interpreted as a fulfilment of religious mandates. Apart from the major factor of poverty as a very important contributing cause for the continuing institution of begging, there is a religious angle to it (Thirumalai 2004). In certain ways, it could be said that when religions promote alms-giving, they also, either directly or indirectly, promote begging as a source of income.

Thirumalai (*ibid.*) cites the Islamic Book of Life, which in a way supports begging. The rights of the beggar and the impoverished existed in their property, according to Quran 51:19. The Quran supports alms-giving as part of begging. Similarly, most of the world's major religions support alms-giving as a way of cushioning the debilitating impact of poverty among the vulnerable members of society.

CONCLUSION

As discussed, begging is one of the survival strategies of the street children of the Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe, in the face of adversities. Some of the adversities the street children of the Harare CBD face are varied. There are multiple vulnerabilities of the street children in the context of violence (sexual, physical, emotional), limited access to social protection programmes, social exclusion, stigma and discrimination, among many. Therefore, through begging, the street children are able to meet their basic needs. Some of the needs include accessing medical assistance, provisions of food and clothing, raising money for school fees, access to shelter and protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The article proffers a number of suggestions to reduce vulnerabilities associated with begging among the street children of the Harare Central Business District. These include:

- The Government of Zimbabwe and other duty bearers should provide social protection programmes such as child

supplementary feeding for street children of the Harare Central Business District;

- There is need to establish functional drop-in centres dotted around the streets of the Harare Central Business District. These should be child-friendly to increase their accessibilities by street children;
- There is urgent need to implement a family-tracing and re-unification programme targeting the street children of the Harare Central Business District; and
- There is need for full implementation of Child Rights legislation in Zimbabwe targeting children in street situations.

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