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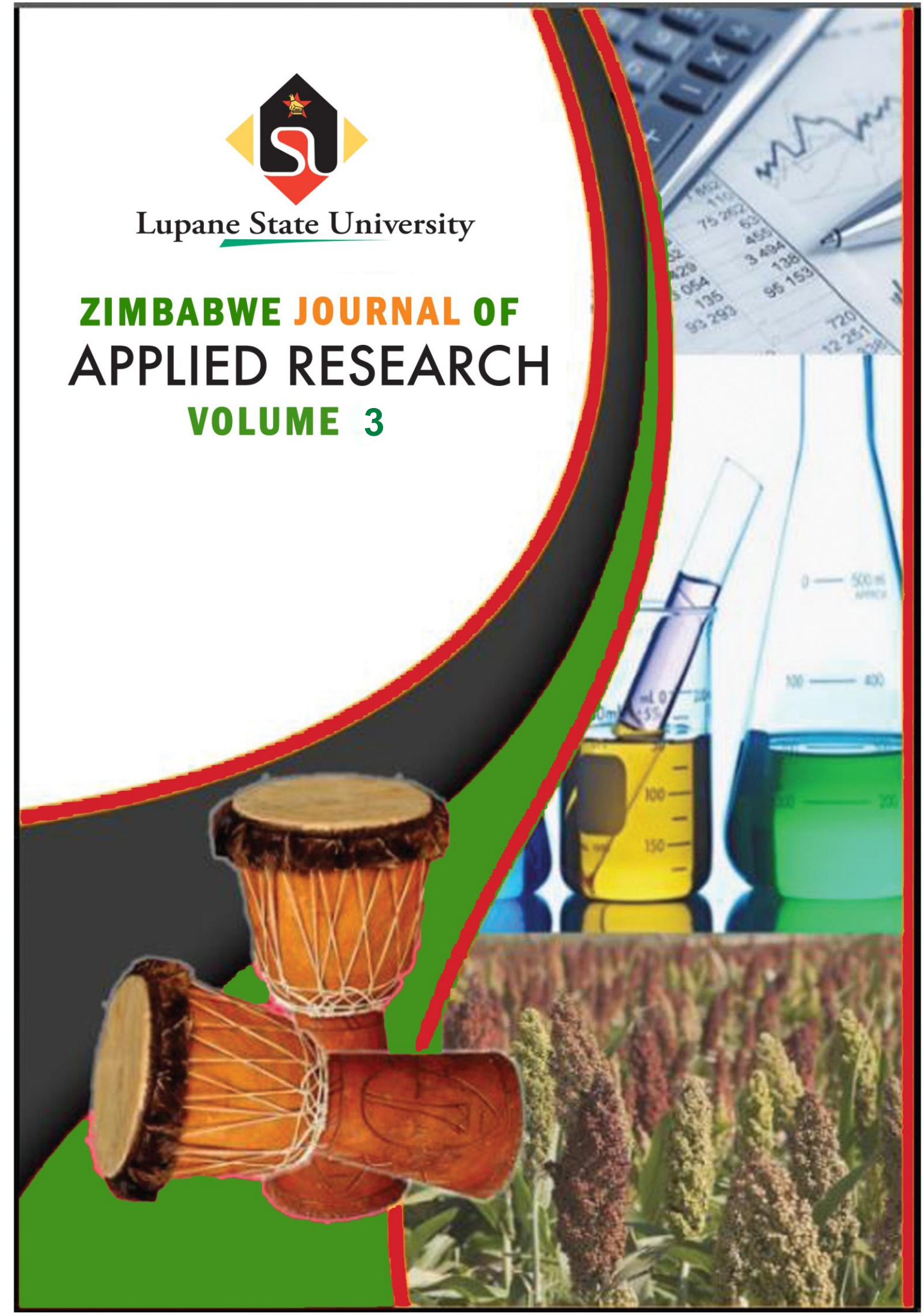

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am excited to introduce to you third volume of the Zimbabwe Journal of Applied Research which continues to grow in spite of the many challenges that include the advent of Covid-19. Consistent with the multi-disciplinary scope of the journal, articles in the current issue cover education, quality assurance, human resources, cultural studies, investment analysis and peace studies. Authors in this volume are drawn from various institutions including Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The study by Kwandayi and Dube examines flexible resourcing strategies used by the Mutare City Council to improve performance. It found out that the council applied several types of flexible resourcing strategies. The major resourcing strategies used included outsourcing, use of temporary fulltime employees, use of casual workers and use of staggered working hours. The study identified specific challenges that respondents felt negatively affected the implementation of flexible resourcing.

The article by Magweva investigates the benefits of adding alternative investments (with special reference to infrastructure investments) to a risky portfolio made up of listed real estate and listed general equity in emerging economies. The study used correlation analysis, portfolio optimization and the Sharpe ratio to evaluate the value of infrastructure investments (part of the alternative asset class) in an optimal risky portfolio. It found that investment in private or unlisted infrastructure enhances optimal portfolio return and reduces portfolio risk.

Marime and Mavezera investigated the the significance of demographic factors on academic dishonesty in the Munhumutapa School of Commerce at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU). Of the demographic factors under study, extra-curricular activities and one's department were found to be significant. The study recommends that University authorities craft policy on academic dishonesty in the institution and explicitly define in policy manuals what they consider as an act of dishonesty. The study further recommends that when formulating cheating policies, there is need therefore for greater involvement from students so that they follow rules they help formulate.

Ndlovu and Mapara's paper reviews the state of literature on Zimbabwe's gastronomy (culinary) elements as intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The paper established that while there has been some significant work on food science, and limited research on Zimbabwean traditional foods, there is almost no literature at all which looks at Zimbabwean gastronomic elements as living heritage. Sporadic references are made by some scholars on food as being a part of a historical legacy of a community but there is still a dearth of literature which analyses food products as ICH.

The study by Tinashe Rukuni focused on the use of peace gardens as an agent for promoting coexistence among women from diverse political groupings in Gutu and Bikita districts in Masvingo province. The research findings from this study revealed that partisan politics has become the focal base for conflict and disharmony among politically active women in Zimbabwe. The findings further discovered the efficacy of the peace gardening intervention strategy in promoting women promoting a culture of peace.

Finally, the study by Tapera explores the concept of Academic Value Addition (AVA), that is, the value generated for the various stakeholders in the higher education sector as a result of effective implementation of quality assurance interventions in higher education. A dearth exists on literature that specifically focuses on the value that is created through effective implementation of various quality assurance interventions in higher education and this paper endeavours to close that gap by articulating the different dimensions of value derived by various stakeholders from a quality higher education system. Based on both theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, conclusions are drawn and recommendations proffered.

Dr Thulani Dube
Chief Editor

Journal Objectives

The Zimbabwe Journal of Applied Research aims to publish peer reviewed articles that employ Scientific Research Methodologies to generate applied knowledge in the fields of Agriculture, Commerce, Social Sciences and Humanities. The journal seeks to give its wide readership evidence based knowledge that bridges the gap between theory and practice. It also offers academia and practitioners across disciplines a platform to assess the merit of their work known to the journal readership.

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FLEXIBLE RESOURCING STRATEGIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF MUTARE CITY COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine flexible resourcing strategies used by the Mutare City Council to improve performance. Descriptive survey design was employed. The researchers sampled 150 shop floor workers and middle managers as respondents to a questionnaire. In addition, all 12 heads of department were targeted for interviews. Of the 150 shop floor workers and middle managers who were sampled to complete questionnaires, 120 completed and returned usable questionnaires and 7 out of 12 heads of department participated in the interviews. Simple descriptive statistical methods were used to summarise questionnaire data. The results of the study indicated that the Mutare City Council was applying flexible resourcing strategies with the main objective of cutting costs. The council also applied several types of flexible resourcing strategies. The major resourcing strategies used included outsourcing, use of temporary fulltime employees, use of casual workers and use of staggered working hours. The study further found that flexible working had several benefits to the council that included availing more resources to service delivery and it also made it easier for council to plan its work and deliver better service to residents. The study identified specific challenges that respondents felt negatively affected the implementation of flexible resourcing. These challenges included certain jobs which were not conducive to flexible work arrangements; flexible working might lead to poor communication where flexitime and flexplace were involved; it was demanding in terms of monitoring and there were potential legal challenges. Finally, the study came up with several recommendations that could enhance implementation of flexible resourcing strategy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2010), throughout the world, most cities face the most acute challenges of service delivery because of fast growing populations. Besley and Ghatak (2007) say that in many developing countries, the issue of service delivery is a challenge that needs to be addressed given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor. Khalid

(2010) supports this view when he states that local councils in Malaysia continue to face pressure to improve their service and more discerning citizenry that expects better services and accountability from its local government. Moreover, rapid industrialization and urbanization of countries have created a challenging environment for local governments to provide quality services worldwide (Khalid, 2010). With respect to South Africa, Gwayi (2010) noted that municipalities face serious challenges in implementing service delivery options and strategies that were put in place by the government.

Zimbabwe also has its fair share of service delivery challenges in urban areas. For example, Mushava (2014) lamented poor service delivery in urban areas in Zimbabwe. In this regard, he observed that most urban areas in Zimbabwe are replete with "rudimentary infrastructure, frequent interruption of water supply, uncollected refuse, dilapidated sewer systems, poor road networks, rampant corruption and general lack of accountability have all rendered Zimbabwean municipality to a dying state." (p. 10). Similarly, a study by the Republican Institute reported in The Independent (June 12, 2015) noted several service delivery problems in urban areas in Zimbabwe. In this regard, the Republican Institute reported that "Overall, 33% of the respondents said poor infrastructure was the main service delivery problem followed by lack of water at 28%, lack of clean water at 12%, poor refuse collection and limited access to health care at 9%. Respondents in urban areas ranked lack of water as their main service delivery problem (29%) followed by poor refuse collection (26%), load-shedding at 25% and lack of clean water at 15%, among other problems."

Overall, the problem of service delivery is uncommon in towns across the world, especially in African countries and other developing countries where there is a need for urgent attention. Humphreys (1998) alluded to the fact that delivery of services has a direct and immediate effect on the quality of the lives of the people in a given community. Poor services can make it difficult to attract business to an area and it will also limit job opportunities for residents. Hence, as Besley and Ghatak (2007) indicated, improving public service delivery is one of the biggest development challenges worldwide. While there are several factors that account for poor service delivery, there is one area that needs improvement. This area is workforce performance. Poor service delivery is largely due to poor performance by the workforce of local authorities. One strategy that has been suggested to improve performance of workers is to apply application of strategic human resources management (SHRM). The focus of SHRM is on alignment of the organization's human resources (HR) practices, policies and programmes with corporate and strategic business unit plans (Greer, 1995). SHRM thus links corporate strategy and HRM, and emphasizes the integration of HR with the business and its environment (Armstrong, 2009). It is believed that integration between HRM and business strategy contributes to effective management of human resources, improvement in organizational performance. It can also help organizations achieve competitive advantage by creating unique HRM systems that cannot be imitated by others.

In order for this to happen, HR departments should be forward-looking and the HR strategies should operate consistently as an integral part of the overall business plan.

Several factors led to SHRM but the major ones are globalization, economic challenges and rapid development of technology. SHRM puts emphasis on use of human resources to achieve competitive advantage. Scholars and practitioners have come up with specific SHRM strategies and according to Armstrong (2009) these strategies include human capital management, knowledge management, corporate social responsibility, organizational development, talent management, learning and development, reward, employee relations, employee wellbeing and flexible resourcing. Among these strategies, flexible resourcing has been found to be very effective in improving performance of organizations in both the private and public sector which include local authorities.

Flexible resourcing has its roots in the resource based view (RBV) which assumes that sustainable competitive advantage can be obtained by exploiting the organization's internal strengths and external opportunities whilst minimizing its internal weaknesses and the effects of external threat (Barney 1991). The organization's human resources are regarded as a key source of its competitive advantage as they add value, are rare in the marketplace, hard or impossible to imitate and cannot be easily substituted. Simply put, the model says that an organization can achieve competitive advantage through effective use of its human resources. During difficult or turbulent times one of the strategies is flexible resourcing strategy. Flexible resourcing strategy according to Brewster et al (2008) entails a greater variety in the time periods of employment; and a greater ability by the employer to dispense with certain workers when not strictly essential to the production process. According to Business Balls (2021), another perspective to look at flexible resourcing strategy is to present its key typologies, which include:

- Numerical flexibility: This means arrangements for altering the size of the workforce using temporary, fixed-term and agency staff.
- Functional flexibility: This refers to training employees so that they are able to perform a wider range of tasks (multi-skilling).
- Flexible working: This relates to an organization's working arrangements in terms of working time, working location and the pattern of working.

The foregoing can be summarized as flexible working hours, part time working, job sharing, temporary working, agency workers and casual employment, seasonal working, remote and home working and virtual organizations.

According O'Reilly to (2014), some of the benefits associated with flexible working include increased employee productivity; effective virtual teams; meeting customer and operational needs; reduced business travel; agile office space and infrastructure; attraction and retention of senior executives; more senior women; increased engagement; greater employee retention; and flexible retirement. These benefits largely explain why some organizations have adopted the flexible resourcing strategy. Companies that have praised and recommended the approach include Flexibility.co.uk (2000). With reference to the UK, Flexibility.co.uk (2000) says that local councils can reap many benefits from introducing flexible work. Given the poor performance in most

local authorities in Zimbabwe, the study sought to examine the extent to which implementing flexible resourcing could improve performance of workers in local authorities with special focus on the Mutare City Council. Focusing on one city council ensured an in-depth study of the case study. The study was limited to the flexible resourcing as a strategy to enhance performance of the municipality.

1.2 Research questions

The study sought to address the following questions**:**

1. What flexible resourcing strategies does the Mutare City Council use?
2. To what extent are these strategies achieving their intended objectives?
3. Are there any challenges that the city is facing in implementing flexible resourcing strategies?
4. How can the Mutare City Council improve its implementation of flexible resourcing strategies that it is using?

1.3 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design which is a process of collecting data from a sample of existing population with no particular control over factors that may affect the population characteristics of interest in the study (Leedy & Ormrod 2005). In this regard, the study did not investigate the whole population of employees of the Mutare City Council but it involved a small portion or sample of the target population. According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), descriptive survey research "is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens". Hence, the study surveyed opinions of managers, employees and councillors on flexible resourcing strategy and therefore falls in the category of descriptive research.

1.4 Population

Burns and Grove (2003) describe population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. They define eligibility criteria as a list of characteristics that are required for the membership in the target population. The criteria for inclusion in this study were:

- Being an employee of the Mutare City Council
- Being a manager or director at the Mutare City Council

The target population was 1120 and respective planned sub-samples for the study are shown in the Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Target population and planned samples

	Total population	**Sample**
Top management	12	12
Middle management	150	50
Shop floor workers	958	100
Total	**1120**	**162**

The first column shows the target population for each group. All the managers in the top management participated in the study. The other groups that included shop floor workers and middle management were selected using systematic random sampling.

1.5 Sample and sampling procedures

In this study the sample was drawn from council employees and middle managers. A sample is suitable when it would be impractical for a researcher to survey the entire population, when budget constraints prevent a survey of the entire population, when time constraints prevent a survey of the entire population and when the results are needed quickly. It is important for a sample to be representative of the population so the researcher can generalize results to the wider population. Systematic random sampling was used to select the sample. Systematic random sampling is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point and a fixed, periodic interval. This interval, called the sampling interval, is calculated by dividing the population size by the desired sample size.

A register for middle managers and shop floor workers was used to select each of the sample. Since a sample of 50 middle managers was required, selection of each member was after every 3rd manager from a total of 150 middle managers. For shop floor workers, the required sample was 100 from a population of 958 employees. That meant dividing 958 by 100 which is 9.58, which is 10 to the nearest whole number. Therefore, sample for shop floor workers was chosen after every 10th member. The starting point was chosen by tossing a coin. Those not willing to participate in the study were replaced.

1.6 Research instruments, data collection and analysis

The study used a questionnaire for shop floor workers and middle managers. The questionnaire had two main sections. The first section focused on personal data of the respondents while the second part addressed flexible resourcing strategy aspects. The researchers designed their own questionnaire based on the review of literature. The questionnaire granted anonymity to the respondents and encouraged honest answers. Section A of the questionnaire focused on bio-data of the respondents while Section B contained questions to assess respondents' views on flexible resourcing strategy. Some of the questions were open- ended while others were closed-ended questions. Some of the closed-ended questions were measured on a five point Likert Scale using strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Semi-interviews were conducted with the selected participants who included senior managers. The researchers used an interview guide which consisted of specific questions on flexible resourcing strategy items. The interview guide consisted of several key questions that helped to focus on areas of interest.

Validity of the questionnaire was assessed using consensual validation strategy. Consensual validation refers to mutual agreement by two or more person s about a particular meaning or aspect. In this case, it would imply agreement on the suitability of the questionnaire with respect to addressing the research questions. The researchers sought the opinion of other scholars knowledgeable in the area. The interview guide also underwent consensual validation.

A pilot study was carried out in order to test the questionnaire and the interview guide on ease of completion, timing, understanding and clarity as well as to allow for the improvement of the questionnaire in general. This pre-testing was done on two middle managers and 10 employees of the Mutare Municipality and these were not included in the final sample of the study. Amendments were

done on the questionnaire and interview guide based on the findings of the pilot study. Questionnaires were hand delivered to respondents by the researchers. The respondents were given one week to complete the questionnaires. Top managers were interviewed in their offices. All data were collected in September and October 2019.

Data cleaning was done before data analysis. Data from questionnaires were analyzed using hand tallying. Simple descriptive statistical methods were used to summarize the data. The descriptive statistics used included frequencies and percentages. Data were presented using tables and graphs. Qualitative data from interview guides were analyzed using emerging themes.

1.7 Ethical considerations

The respondents were informed about the purpose of research and the procedures to be used. The researchers explained key elements of the study for the respondents to understand and the respondents were given an opportunity to ask questions which the researchers answered. The respondents were free to discontinue their participation in the study at any time and data collected were treated confidentially.

1.8 Data presentation

1.8.1 Demographic data

Questionnaires were administered to 150 respondents who were shop floor workers and middle managers. In addition, seven top managers were interviewed. Among the 150 questionnaire respondents surveyed, 120 completed and returned the questionnaires representing a 75% response rate. This section presents demographic data of the respondents who completed and retuned usable questionnaires.

1.8.2 Gender of respondents

There were 120 respondents in this study. Eighty-four (70%) were males and 36 (30%) were females. The results are presented in Table 1.2

Table 1.2: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	84	70
Female	36	30
Total	**120**	**100**

1.8.3 Age of the respondents

A combined age group of 31-40 constituted the majority of respondents with 60%, followed by the 41-45 age group which had 16% of the respondents. The age group of less than 25 years had the lowest number of the respondents with 3%. This spread was important because it showed that various age groups participated in the study.Table 1.3 shows the ages of the respondents.

Table 1.3: Age of the respondents

Age group in years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 25	3	3
25-30	6	5
31-35	42	35
36-40	30	25
41-45	19	16
46-50	10	8
Over 50	10	8
Total	**120**	**100**

1.8.4 Marital status

From the findings, 84 (70%) of the respondents were married, 15 (13%) were widowed, 12 (10%) were single while 9 (8%) were divorced. Table 1.4 shows the marital status of the respondents.

Table 1.4: Marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	12	10
Married	84	70
Widowed	15	13
Divorced	9	8
Total	**120**	**100**

1.8.5 Level of education

The data collected revealed that the majority of the respondents (60%) had a diploma, while 33(28%) of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree, 12 (10%) had a postgraduate qualification and only three (3%) had secondary school level of education. This indicates a fairly well distributed categories of respondents in terms of their qualifications. Results obtained in this respect are shown in the Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	No of respondents	Percentage
Secondary	3	3
Diploma	72	59
Bachelor's degree	33	28
Postgraduate	12	10
Total	**120**	**100**

1.8.6 Positions of respondents

As shown in Table 1.6, the majority of the respondents (67%) were in the shop floor category while the rest (33%) were in the middle management category.

Table 1.6: Positions of respondents

Positions of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Shop floor	80	67
Middle Management	40	33
Total	**120**	**100**

With respect to interviews, out of the 12 top managers who were supposed to be interviewed, only 7 were available since the other 5 were on leave. Of those who were interviewed, 5 were males while the remaining two were females.

1.9 Results on flexible resourcing strategies

This section addresses key questions of the study. The findings were derived from the questionnaires and interviews.

1.9.1 Use of flexible working

The results in Table 1.7 show that most respondents (91%) reported that the Mutare city council used flexible working arrangements. Very few respondents (9%) did not think that the Mutare city council used flexible working strategies.

Table 1.7: Whether Mutare City Council use flexible working or not

Use of flexible working	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	109	91
No	11	9
Total	**120**	**100**

The top managers who were interviewed confirmed that the City Council was using flexible working arrangements especially the use of temporary workers during peak periods such as the rainy season when the council hired casual workers. The council also engaged temporary workers to do road maintenance during the rainy season. Another important flexible strategy the council was using was outsourcing. It was mentioned by 6 of the 7 top managers during the interviews that the Council was contracting out Chohunoita private cleaners to offer cleaning services. They said that this was done in an effort to reduce costs.

1.9.2 Types of flexible working used by the Mutare City Council

The respondents were asked to state any three types of flexible arrangement that was used by the City Council. Table 1. 8 indicates that the most commonly used types of flexible working were use of part-time or casual workers (100%), outsourcing (100%), employment of temporary fulltime workers (55%) and flextime or staggered time (25%). The least mentioned was telecommuting (8%) followed by compressed work week (15%). Table 1.8 summaries the results on the type of flexible working arrangements used by the Mutare City Council.

Table 1.8: Type of flexible working arrangements used by the City Council

Type of flexible working	Frequency	Percentage
Temporary fulltime	66	55
Part-time/use of casual workers	120	100
Outsourcing	120	100
Flextime/ staggered hours	30	25
Telecommuting	10	8
Compressed work week	18	15

The heads of departments who were interviewed confirmed the identified types of flexible working. The two most commonly used types of flexible working were outsourcing and use of casual workers. The top managers noted that the council was flexible with regard to certain jobs using staggered hours such as those who did water meter reading. This form of flextime is a system whereby employees choose their starting and ending times from a range of available hours. The interview and questionnaire data both showed that some workers were also involved in compressed work week. Under this arrangement, the standard week in a week is compressed into fewer than five working days. The participants indicated that this type of flexible working arrangement was also common with security guards.

1.9.3 Reasons for using flexible working

When asked to state reasons why the Mutare City Council used flexible working arrangements, less than half of the respondents could give reasons why the strategy was used. The most common reason mentioned for using flexible working was to reduce costs by the city council which had a frequency of 55 (46%). This shows that most respondents saw the use of flexible working as a strategy to reduce costs by the City Council. The other two most frequently mentioned reasons for using flexible working were that it was convenient for workers (33%) and that the strategy enabled the council to allocate more resources to service delivery (30%). As indicated in Table 1.9, the least mentioned reason was that flexible working allowed workers to do their work and this response had a frequency of 31 (28%). The fact that not many respondents gave reasons for use of flexible working could indicate that the respondents were not very familiar with flexible working strategy.

Table 1.9: Reasons for using flexible working

Reasons for using flexible working	Frequency	Percentage
Reduces costs for the council	55	46
It is convenient to some workers	40	33
More resources are available for service delivery	36	30
Workers can also plan their private work	31	28

The main reason given by top management for applying flexible working arrangements was to cut costs. The interviewees indicated that the City Council was facing serious financial challenges and it was therefore imperative that the council cut costs.

1.9.4 The extent to which the flexible working arrangements were achieving council objectives

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which flexible working arrangements were achieving the intended objectives. Overall, the responses were divided with the highest frequency indicating that they were "Not Sure" (42%) followed by "No"(36%) with the lowest percentage (12%) being for those who said "Yes", the flexible working strategy was achieving its objectives. Combining the responses of those who said "Not Sure" and "No" would indicate that 78% of the respondents were not very confident about use of flexible working strategy. Table 1.10 summarizes the results on the extent to which flexible working arrangements were achieving City Council objectives.

Table 1.10: Extent to which the flexible working arrangements were achieving intended objectives

Extent to which flexible working was achieving its objectives	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	22
No	43	36
Not Sure	51	42
Total	**120**	**100**

While the shop floor workers and middle managers were rather doubtful about the extent to which the flexible working arrangements were achieving their objectives, top managers felt strongly that the flexible working arrangements were achieving council objectives especially that of cutting costs. These results indicate that the flexible working strategy is largely a management strategy without much support from the shop floor workers and the lower echelons of management.

1.9.5 Advantages of using flexible working

The respondents were further asked to indicate advantages of using flexible working by asking them to rate their views on a Likert scale using strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), Not sure (NS), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). Table 1.11 summarises the findings. The respondents' views were varied. Some respondents did not view some of the statements as advantages. For example, 92 (76%) disagreed to strongly disagreed that flexible working meets customer and operational needs. Only 20 (19%) agreed to strongly agreed that flexible working meets customer and operational needs. Additionally, 91 (76%) respondents disagreed to stronng1y disagreed that flexible working increased productivity. Only 17% agreed to strongly agree that flexible working increased productivity. A very high percentage of workers also disagreed that flexible working motivated workers to work harder. Only 17% agreed to strongly agreed with the statement. Most respondents agreed to strongly agreed that flexible working made more resources available for service delivery with 84% affirming to this. Another very high percentage (94%) agreed to strongly agree that flexible working made it easier for council to plan its work and deliver better services. These results largely contradict the literature because while the literature views all the statements in Table 1.11 as advantages of flexible working, the results in this study indicate that

council workers largely do not agree with the statements. Explanation for this could be that the council employees were not yet familiar with the concept of flexible working.

Table 1.11: Advantages of using flexible working

Advantages of using flexible working	**SD**		**D**		**NS**		**A**		**SA**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Meets customer and operational needs	30	24	62	52	8	7	16	13	4	3
Increases employee productivity	47	39	43	36	10	8	3	3	17	14
More resources (e.g. savings) are made available for service delivery	10	3	5	4	5	4	44	37	56	47
Makes it easier for council to plan its work and deliver better service to residents	8	7	5	4	7	6	31	28	79	66
More workers are motivated to work harder	65	54	25	21	10	8	15	13	5	4

Top managers who were interviewed largely saw flexible working as an advantage especially the argument that the strategy made it easier for the council to plan its work and deliver better services to residents.

1.9.6 Disadvantages of using flexible working

Findings in Table 1.12 show that to a large extent, respondents viewed the given statements as clear disadvantages. Combined frequencies and their respective percentages for each of the given disadvantages for agreed to strongly agreed were very high and all of them were above 70%. Overall, the high levels of agreement with the disadvantages of flexible working show that most of the respondents viewed flexible working arrangements as a major disadvantage.

Table 1.12: Disadvantages of using flexible working

Disadvantages of using flexible working	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reduced face-to-face time may cause a loss of work unit cohesion	8	7	12	10	20	17	28	23	62	52
Hiring and firing at will demotivate workers	1	1	11	9	5	4	46	38	57	48
Direct observation by supervisor of employee work becomes more difficult	5	4	5	4	10	8	44	37	56	47
Direct costs of some teleworking arrangements (e.g working at home) may be costly in the long term.	8	7	7	6	5	4	31	26	79	66
Working from home may result in greater distractions and lower productivity	5	4	25	21	10	8	45	38	55	46
Hiring and firing workers at will is unpopular with trade unions	4	3	3	3	3	3	42	35	78	65
Conflicting requests by multiple employees make some requests difficult to accommodate flexible working	3	3	3	3	4	3	53	44	57	48
Hiring and firing workers reduces their commitment to the company	2	2	3	3	6	5	54	45	56	48
Tracking employee work time becomes more complex	8	7	5		7	6	31	26	79	66
Some employees may feel distanced from the social aspects of working in a central location	5	4	5	4	20		50	42	40	42

1.9.7 Advice to Mutare City Council with respect use of use of flexible working

The study examined the nature of advice the respondents would give council with respect to use of flexible working strategies. The respondents were asked to indicate their views on the given items using the Likert scale. The majority of respondents agreed to strongly agreed to abandon flexible working arrangements in most council jobs. For example, 90 (75%) of the respondents agreed to strongly agreed that they would advise council to stop flexible working and they also preferred rigid working conditions consisting of mostly fulltime workers. Table 1.13 summarises the results. Interviews with top management gave similar responses although top management was highly in favour of the overall concept of flexible working strategy.

Table 1.13: Advice to Mutare City Council with respect to use of flexible working

Advice to Mutare city council with respect use of use of flexible working	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your advice to council is to stop flexible working and have rigid working conditions consisting of mostly fulltime workers for all jobs	7	6	13	11	20	17	30	25	60	50
Your advice to council is to implement all aspects of flexible working (i.e 100% flexible working)	45	38	57	48	6	5	2	2	9	8
Your advice to council is to introduce flexible working in some sectors of council	4	3	4	3	12	10	44	37	56	47

1.9.8 Challenges of implementing flexible working

Respondents were asked to give their views about challenges of implementing flexible working arrangements. The majority of respondents gave several challenges that they thought hindered the implementation of flexible working. As shown in Table 1.14, three most commonly cited challenges were that the strategy was demanding in terms of monitoring (80%); certain jobs were not conducive to flexible work arrangements (75%), and potential legal challenges (72%). As shown in Table 1.14, two other important challenges that were indicated by a fairly large number of respondents were poor communication and management resistance.

Table 1. 14: Challenges of implementing flexible working

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Certain jobs were not conducive to flexible work arrangements	90	75
Decrease /poor communication	81	68
Demanding in terms of monitoring	96	80
Informal policies that lead to inconsistencies and inequities	70	58
Management resistance	75	63
Potential legal challenges	80	72

There was general agreement between the top managers and other respondents with respect to disadvantages of flexible working. The top managers also identified the potential challenges of flexible working especially potential legal challenges and the need for more time for monitoring subordinates involved in flexible working such as those involved in staggered working hours.

1.9.9 Suggestions to enhance flexible resourcing strategy

When asked to suggest strategies to enhance the implementation of flexible working strategy, the respondents came with four major suggestions shown in Table 1.15. The most cited suggestion was that the strategy should be approved by both workers and management and this response had a frequency of 78 (65%) followed by the need to have a formal policy with a frequency of 72 (60%). As shown in Table 1.15, two other suggestions that received high frequencies were the need for thorough training of both management and workers for them to understand flexible strategy and the need to make sure that flexible working was consistent with the Labour Act. The overall results show that the respondents wanted to be involved in decisions and policies related to flexible working.

Table 1.15 Suggestions to enhance flexible working

Suggestions to enhance implementation of flexible working	Frequency	Percentage
It should be participatory	54	45
Should be approved by both workers and management	78	65
There should be a formal policy on flexible working	72	60
Thorough training of both management and workers on the system	60	50
Should be consistent with the Labour Act	58	48

All the top managers indicated that for flexible working arrangements to succeed, there was need for active participation of workers in decision making. Workers should be allowed to air their views with respect to the policies and decisions related to flexible working strategy.

1.10 Discussion of the results

The results of this study showed that Mutare City council was applying flexible resourcing strategies with the main objective of cutting costs. The Council was also applying several types of flexible resourcing strategies. The major resourcing strategies that the city council used included outsourcing, use of temporary fulltime employees, use of casual workers and use of flextime/ staggered working hours. The study further found that flexible working had several benefits to the council that included the fact that more resources were made available for service delivery and it also made it easier for council to plan its work and deliver better service to residents. However, the benefits identified in this study are very limited compared to those found in the literature which include greater employee retention, increased employee motivation and more or better employee relations, increased employee commitment, engagement and loyalty and have seen a reduction in staff turnover and

eventually experienced increased performance as a result of reduced absenteeism (O'Reilly to (2014). None of these benefits were identified in the current study. The main reason for the difference could be that flexible resourcing strategy in the Mutare City Council is still in its infancy. A lot of work still needs to be done for both workers and management to appreciate the importance of flexible working arrangements.

While the flexible working strategy had some advantages, the study also identified several disadvantages that included: reduced face-to-face interaction that may cause a loss of work unit cohesion; hiring and firing at will demotivate workers; direct observation by supervisor of employee work becomes more difficult; direct costs of some teleworking arrangements (e.g. when one working from home) may be costly in the long term; working from home may result in greater distractions and lower productivity; conflicting requests by multiple employees make some requests difficult to accommodate flexible working; and some employees may feel distanced from the social aspects of working in a central location. These findings are consistent with a report by the North Carolina Central University (2013) which found several shortcomings of flexible learning such as loss of work unit cohesion, greater distractions and reduced productivity. A study by Bohnert, Janssen & Nachreiner (2003) also noted that flexible working is associated with increased impairments in health and well-being.

Apart from the general disadvantages of flexible learning, the study noted specific challenges that respondents felt negatively affected the implementation of flexible resourcing. These challenges included certain jobs which were not conducive to flexible work arrangements; might lead to poor communication where flextime and flexplace were involved; it was demanding in terms of monitoring and there were potential legal challenge (North Carolina Central University, 2013).

The findings in this study are interesting because the benefits of flexible working were not fully confirmed in the study yet challenges and disadvantages of flexible resourcing were almost similar with what is found in the literature. One explanation for difference could be that in the current study the respondents appeared not fully knowledgeable about flexible resourcing strategy and therefore were quick to see problems instead of benefits. The workers could also have been apprehensive about the flexible resourcing strategies especially given the firing of workers in Zimbabwe since the infamous High Court ruling in 2015.

With respect to suggestions to improve the implementation of the resourcing strategy, the respondents came up with several strategies which call for further discussion. Two major suggestions were the need for flexible working training for both workers and management and the need to involve workers in decision making related to flexible resourcing strategy.

Training in flexible working is also recommended by the Alfred Sloan Foundation (2016), which says that employees should be educated about work flexibility policies and programmes, and should feel comfortable to use them. This can only happen if an organization actively promotes work flexibility policies and programmes. Employees need to know that participation in such initiatives will not hurt their careers. Indeed, HR Magazine in Alfred Sloan Foundation (2016) noted that many of the options for flexible working are perceived as being bad for one's career by both

management and workers who are used to more traditional working arrangements. The Alfred Sloan Foundation (2016) further notes that employees are not the only workers who need to be reassured. Organizations implementing flexible work plans must also develop resource materials and training programmes for managers.

1.11 Conclusions

1.11.1 Flexible resourcing strategies used by the Mutare city council

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the Mutare City Council uses flexible resourcing strategies and the main strategies used include outsourcing, temporary fulltime, use of casual workers, use of flextime/ staggered hours, telecommuting and compressed work week.

1.11.2 Reasons for using flexible working

The study concludes that the main reasons for using flexible working were to reduce costs for the council, convenience to some workers, more resources were made available for service delivery and that workers could also plan their private work.

1.11.3 Extent to which flexible working was achieving intended objectives

While the shop floor workers and middle managers were rather doubtful about the extent to which the flexible working arrangements were achieving organizational objectives, top managers felt strongly that the flexible working arrangements were achieving council objectives especially that of cutting costs. These results indicate that the flexible working strategy was largely a management idea without much support from the shop floor workers and the lower echelons of management**.**

1.11.4 Benefits of flexible working

The study found out that flexible working had several benefits to the council that included the fact that more resources were made available for service delivery and it also made it easier for council to plan its work and deliver better service to residents. The benefits identified in this study are very limited compared to those found in the literature.

1.11.5 Challenges that negatively affected the implementation of flexible resourcing

The study came up with specific challenges that respondents felt negatively affected the implementation of flexible resourcing. These challenges included certain jobs which were not conducive to flexible work arrangements; might lead to poor communication where flextime and flexplace were involved; it was demanding in terms of monitoring and there were potential legal challenges.

1.11.6 Suggestions to enhance implementation of flexible working

The study came up with specific suggestions that could enhance implementation of flexible resourcing strategy. These suggestions included the need to make the approach participatory; should be approved by both workers and management; there should be a formal policy on flexible working; there is need for thorough training of both management and workers for them to understand and

appreciate the new system; and the strategy should be consistent with the Labour Act to reduce labour disputes and the resultant costs.

1.12 Recommendations

1.12.1 Recommendations for practice

One of the major conclusions of this study was that shop floor workers and middle managers were rather doubtful about the extent to which the flexible working arrangements were achieving their objectives. On the other hand, top managers felt strongly that the flexible working arrangements were achieving council objectives especially that of cutting costs. In this regard, the results indicate that the flexible working strategy is largely a management idea without much support from the shop floor workers and the lower levels of management**.** It is therefore recommended that the council carries out a massive training programme to educate both floor workers and management on the importance of flexible resourcing strategy. In the training, both the merits and demerits of the strategy should be emphasized.

The study came up with several challenges that negatively affected the implementation of flexible working. It is therefore important the challenges are addressed. The study noted insufficient communication with workers with regard to implementation of flexible working. It is therefore important for management to seek input from employees on their interests and needs before the council develops a flexible work programmes. Management should assess whether or not the new work arrangement is appropriate for their type of work. The best arrangement is one that addresses employees' personal needs or wants and at the same time addresses the company's needs to provide high quality products and services.

Flexible resourcing can lead to informal policies that lead to inconsistencies and inequities. Inconsistent application of informal policies can cause resentment, poor morale, loss of employees and even legal action. It is therefore important that the city council develops a formal written policy on company flexible work plans that is detailed, clearly-stated and non-discriminatory.

The study found that one of the challenges of flexible working was a decrease in communication because some work arrangements such as telecommuting can result in a lack of social contact with co-workers and supervisors. It is therefore important that management conducts staff meetings that include flex staff so that they are not excluded from information sharing or alienated from coworkers and managers. Telecommuters' contact with other employees should not be limited to one form of communication such as email; efforts should be made to include telephone contact, especially with supervisors.

At middle management level, the study found that managers are not always eager to relinquish direct supervision of staff "on-site" where they can visually evaluate the work process of employees. In view of this finding, managers need to be educated in order to change their mindset. They will need to learn to manage in a system based on trust and respect, where it primarily the results, rather than the work process, that is evaluated. In line with the philosophy of flexible working, most output can be measured wherever a person may be located and working.

One of the challenges of flexible working was that it might result in failure to monitor, assess and update flexible work arrangements. It is important to note that *flexible work* arrangements require a

continual process of improvements or developments. Therefore, the study recommends that after a flex programme has been initiated, council management should take time to assess its success in meeting its objectives, goals, and make any necessary adjustments.

The study came up with specific suggestions that could enhance implementation of flexible resourcing strategy. These suggestions include the need to make the approach participatory; should be approved by both workers and management; there should be a formal policy on flexible working; there is need for thorough training of both management and workers for them to understand and appreciate the new system; and the strategy should be consistent with the Labour Act to reduce labour disputes and the resultant costs.

1.12.2 Recommendations for further research

Given the study focused one city council, the study recommends further research to examine application of flexible resourcing strategy in other municipalities. In addition, given that the Government of Zimbabwe recently introduced a labour policy closely related to flexible resourcing especially hiring and firing of workers, more research is needed to find out how this is affecting business especially the aspect of employee loyalty and productivity.

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IMPACT OF INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS IN A RISKY PORTFOLIO

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the benefits of adding alternative investments (with special reference to infrastructure investments) to a risky portfolio made up of listed real estate and listed general equity in emerging economies. The study used correlation analysis, portfolio optimization and the Sharpe ratio to evaluate the value of infrastructure investments (part of the alternative asset class) in an optimal risky portfolio. It found that investment in private or unlisted infrastructure enhances optimal portfolio return and reduces portfolio risk. This indicates unlisted infrastructure investment's ability to diversify portfolio risk and enhance returns, implying that investors can meet their 'performance seeking' objective by including privately-held infrastructure in a risky portfolio. Interestingly, the opposite was found to be true for listed infrastructure, implying that listed and unlisted infrastructure investments complement rather substitute each other. It is thus recommended that investors should consider the heterogeneous nature of infrastructure investments when making asset allocation decisions.

Key words: Emerging markets, infrastructure investment, risk-adjusted return, Sharpe ratio

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Portfolio management is an on-going process that includes scouting for new investment avenues and committing resources to the same to earn substantial returns. Investors all over the world are in search of new investment avenues as the financial and capital markets are currently characterized by very low returns, low interest rate episodes, economic uncertainty and wild market swings in developing and developed nations (Oyedele, Adair, and McGreal, 2014; Kovarsky, 2018; Thompson, 2019). Institutional investors with short- and long-term liabilities constantly seek new investment routes in an effort to reduce risk without sacrificing returns (Moss, 2014; Korvasky, 2018). Among other objectives, they hunt for investments that provide the D-I-Y benefits of diversification, inflation protection and improved yields (Bahceci & Leh, 2017; Blanc-Brude 2018). The renewed interest in emerging markets infrastructure has been necessitated by the need to reduce capital concentration risk (in mature developed markets infrastructure). According to a study by Korvasky (2018), 46% of the interviewed fund managers indicated their intention to increase their portfolio allocation towards infrastructure in China and India, whereas 30% indicated their intention to

increase their investment proportion towards infrastructure in Africa. As such, this study explored the financial attributes which can be harnessed by the aforementioned fund managers with interests in emerging market infrastructure investments.

Traditionally, the 60/40 investment strategy, in which 60% of the portfolio is allocated toward stocks and 40% toward bonds, has been a default way to construct an investment portfolio for many long-term investors and it worked –bringing reliable gains for years (Paulina, 2020). Unfortunately, the correlation between stocks and bonds is now increasing, implying that a traditional 60/40 portfolio might fail to provide rewards of diversification.

Institutional investors have access to *'patient capital'* which can be invested for medium to long terms in tandem with their liabilities. Theoretically, their goals can be met by means of investments in infrastructure which are generally long term in nature, have monopolistic/oligopolistic strategic powers and produce steady inflation protected cash inflows (Kovarsky, 2018; Blanc-Brude, 2018). Infrastructure could thus be the new investment niche if the sector lives up to claimed financial or economic attributes like risk diversification and inflation hedging. Thus, all other factors held constant, institutional investors are expected to allocate substantial portions of their investments to the infrastructure sector.

The asset allocation decision should be treated with caution as it determines more than 80% of a portfolio's return and risk (Moss, 2014). As such, there is need to empirically evaluate infrastructure investments' financial attributes so as to ascertain whether institutional investors can derive significant benefits from investing in this sector. Benefits which can be drawn from including infrastructure investments in a risky portfolio include diversification ability, return enhancement, inflation hedging ability and volatility reduction (O'Brien and Leung, 2018). Such evaluation is key in developing nations where there is a dire need for infrastructure due to urbanization, industrialization and population growth as well as climate change and the *'green technology movement'* (Woetzel, Garemo, Mischke, Hjerpe, and Palter *et al.,* 2016). The evaluation will determine whether infrastructure investment can be treated as a new investment *'habitat'* for institutional investors in emerging or developing markets exhibiting specific economic and financial attributes (Wurstbauer & Schafers, 2014).

Economic growth in most emerging or developing nations tends to be more rapid than in developed nations (Felipe, 2020). Emerging nations include the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the GIPSI (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Italy), and the CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa). These countries' capital markets are not as mature as developed capital markets and have not been fully integrated into the global economy. Resultantly, the reliability of accounting and financial statements is a legitimate fear when dealing with investments in emerging markets (Ferriello, 2020). A company that an investor believed to be a great investment opportunity could quickly become a dud if its financials were presented inaccurately (Ferriello, 2020).

On the contrary, most developed countries (such as Canada, USA and UK) have globally integrated capital markets, and have stronger oversight and stricter regulations that govern the operations of companies there (Paulina, 2020). This leads to more reliable accounting and financial reporting. When performing research and analysis, reliable accounting and financial reporting practices go a long way in helping ensure the safety of any potential investment. There is also a lower risk of unexpected economic or political instability in developed nations

compared to developing nations (Felipe, 2020).

The infrastructure gap in emerging markets amounts to USD 1.3 trillion per annum to merely keep up with normal economic and demographic growth (World Bank, 2018). This gap increases three to fivefold if green technology, the United Nations' developmental goals and adaptation to climate change are taken into consideration (Authers, 2015; Woetzel *et al.,* 2016; World Bank, 2018). It presents fertile ground that can be utilized by both domestic and foreign institutional investors. However, take up of infrastructure investments in emerging markets by institutional investors will only be attractive if such investments can live up to claimed financial and economic attributes, other things being equal.

This empirical research evaluated the portfolio return enhancement and risk diversification benefits of adding infrastructure investments (a key component of alternative investments asset class) to a risky portfolio in emerging markets. This was achieved by comparing the risk-adjusted return of an optimal risky portfolio comprised of traditional assets (real estate and common stock) against an optimal portfolio made up of traditional assets plus infrastructure (real estate, common stock and infrastructure investments).

The objective of portfolio diversification is to realize optimal returns at any given level of risk. Diversification aims to reduce specific or unsystematic risk without sacrificing returns (Kempler, 2016). Unsystematic risk is specific to a particular industry, country, sector, or economic or geographical zone. The investor needs to choose assets whose returns are minimally correlated to achieve a well-diversified portfolio. The combined effects of globalization, advances in information technology, significant capital market integration, and increased correlation between asset classes might cast doubt on infrastructure assets' ability to achieve this objective; hence the need for empirical analysis.

Overview of infrastructure investments

Infrastructure is easier to identify than define (Gatzert and Kosub 2014). The online American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2016) defines it as:

'The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society, such as transportation and communications systems, water and power lines, and public institutions including schools, post offices, and prisons.'

In general, infrastructure investments can be classified into two categories, namely, economic (transport, utilities, communication, energy) and social infrastructure (education, health, recreation) (Wurstbauer and Schafers, 2015; Inderst, 2016).

Investment in infrastructure is never lost as it results in improved standards of living, increased life expectancy, poverty alleviation, national competitiveness and efficient use of physical assets, other things being equal (Courtois, 2013). The options available when investing in the infrastructure sector can be generalized as direct or indirect using listed or unlisted options. Direct investment occurs when an investor commits resources to the primary provision of infrastructure products and services. This can be done using either private equity (unlisted) or by purchasing shares (listed) of a company involved in the primary provision of infrastructure products. The other option is the indirect route, whereby the investor commits resources to funds and collective investment schemes (listed and unlisted) that specialize in infrastructure investments.

As noted by Anagnos (2016), economic propositions suggest that investors are indifferent when it comes to choosing between listed and unlisted assets as the fundamentals are the same. However, there are discernable differences in the pricing, correlations, liquidity and sources of returns and risk (Moss, 2014).

Listed and unlisted assets tend to be complementary in the short run, as they display significant differences in their correlations, volatility, and liquidity and return levels. This implies that investors can benefit from including both listed and unlisted assets in their portfolios (Moss, 2014; Anagnos, 2016). As the investment horizon increases to the long term, these features tend to converge, rendering listed and unlisted infrastructure assets close substitutes and providing room for investors to swap listed for unlisted infrastructure investment (De Bever, Van Nieuwerburgh, Stanton and Berkeley, 2015). As such, this paper examines whether listed infrastructure complements or closely substitutes for unlisted infrastructure investments in emerging markets where the infrastructure market is still in its infancy.

Infrastructure investment features and institutional investors' needs.

Investment analysts and scholars generally believe that infrastructure investments are minimally correlated with other asset classes, and that they improve the risk-return profile, as well as offer long-term stable and reliable cash inflows and returns (Moss, 2014; Scoville, Ligere and Lyon, 2015; Oyedele, 2015; Nuveen Asset Management, 2016; Thompson, 2019). Thus, including infrastructure investments in a portfolio is theoretically expected to yield significant benefits (O'Brien and Leung, 2018). The resultant portfolio is expected to be less volatile, and more diversified and efficient with inflation linked returns. Weiner (2014), Norges Bank (2015), and Blanc-Brude (2016) are of the opinion that infrastructure investment in emerging markets is a sure way of achieving a well-diversified portfolio. However, as Rodel and Rothballer (2012) and Bird, Liem and Thorp (2014) argue, these intrinsic characteristics of infrastructure assets (such as duration hedging, and low correlations with other markets) are open to debate.

Kovarsky (2018) commented that post the 2007/8 crisis (punctuated by low growth, and low interest rates), investors' pursuit of yield, diversification, and defensive alternative assets gained momentum. Bahceci and Leh (2017) note that infrastructure investments provide investors with the D-I-Y benefits of diversification, inflation protection and improved yield coupled with stable cash inflows. In an attempt to avoid poor returns, and reduce portfolio volatility, institutional investors are now seeking to diversify and supplement core assets on a long-term basis (Gatzert & Kosub, 2014; De Laguiche & Taze-Bernard, 2014; KPMG, 2016; Kempler, 2016; Kovarsky, 2018). They are thus keen to identify liability-matching, less complex and tangible assets which provide new and better sources of long-tailed stable, predictable and risk-adjusted returns, as well as comprehensive diversification benefits (Imrie and Fairbairn, 2014; Weber, Staub-bisang, & Alfan, 2016; Kempler, 2016). Infrastructure investments are a natural fit for institutional investors pursuing healthy returns and liability hedging, among other objectives (Levy, 2017; Blanc-Brude, 2018). This highlights the need to empirically evaluate infrastructure investments' ability to meet such expectations in emerging markets.

The infrastructure gap in emerging markets.

Kovarsky (2018) and the International Finance Corporation (2017) note that demand for infrastructure exceeds supply in many countries as governments confront fiscal pressure and are looking to reduce rather than expand their balance sheets. The situation is acute in emerging economies where the infrastructure market is still developing, and national governments are already saddled with financial, economic, social and political obligations. The World Bank (2018) estimates that a USD 1.3 trillion annual investment is required to just keep up with normal economic and demographic growth in emerging nations. Adjusting for green infrastructure, climate change and the United Nations Development goals, the gap would rise to between USD 3.3 and USD 5 trillion per annum (Woetzel *et al.*, 2016; World Bank,

2018). In Africa, USD 90 billion per annum is required to satisfy demand for infrastructure (Gutman, Sy & Chattopadhyay, 2015). However, Inderst and Stewart (2014) noted that the continent is only spending approximately USD 45 billion annually, leaving half of the needs unmet. A lack of quality infrastructure undermines economic growth prospects as well as the possibility of migrating to new and smart technology. The infrastructure gap thus offers a fertile investment ground where institutional investors can provide investment and achieve their personal objectives.

This paper is structured as follows: the following section reviews the empirical literature on the ability of infrastructure investments to enhance portfolio performance and reduce portfolio risk. The third section discusses the methodology employed to conduct the investigation on the role of infrastructure investments in a risky portfolio in emerging markets. The fourth section presents the study's findings, and the final section provides overall conclusions and recommendations to different stakeholders.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a paucity of empirical research on infrastructure investment, which could be partly attributed to the unavailability of data even in developed nations, until recently (Wurstbauer and Schafers, 2015). The shocks experienced by the capital and real estate markets during the global financial crisis of 2007/8 prompted investors to tap into infrastructure investments (as part of the alternative asset class), sparking academic interest in this phenomenon (Thierie & De Moor, 2016). Infrastructure market is mature in most developed markets dampening the chances of generating above normal returns (Moore, 2018). This is not the case in developing nations saddled with a tremendous infrastructure gap discussed earlier on. Economic growth is likely to be high in developing economies driven by industrialization and urbanisation (KPMG, 2018). Such economic growth prospects make the real estate and infrastructure markets flourish providing investment opportunities to long term investors. Data and studies on the performance of alternative asset class is hard to access in many developing nations given pre-global crisis lack of professional and academic interest in the asset class (Levy, 2017).

At the global level, Chhabria, Kohn, Brooks, and Reid (2015) found that the FTSE Global Core Infrastructure Index outperformed US equities, global equities and global bonds from its inception in 2005 and did so with lower volatility. Kempler (2016) and Moss (2014) concluded that global infrastructure performed better than global equities and global bonds. De Bever *et al.* (2015) showed that global infrastructure earned high returns from 2003 to 2015, while Schmidt's (2016) examination of US data found that infrastructure provided better returns and enhanced portfolio returns compared to other asset classes. However, the sector's ability to provide superior returns might decline as the industry matures and deregulation occurs (Wurstbauer and Schafers, 2015).

Panayiotou and Medda (2014), who used infrastructure indexes in the UK and Europe from 2000 to 2014, and Oyedele (2015) noted that infrastructure assets outperformed traditional assets and provide better portfolio returns if combined with traditional assets although the level of risk was not reduced. Thus, infrastructure investments are performance enhancers rather than risk diversifiers in the aforementioned developed nations.

Finkenzeller (2012) noted that investors that committed resources to infrastructure development in Australia enjoyed increased returns, but diversification was limited. Investment in infrastructure in the US offered better returns and enhanced diversification as such investments were less affected by the economic crisis than asset classes like real estate and common equity (Panayiotou & Medda, 2014). Newell, Peng, and Francesco (2011) noted that only unlisted infrastructure investment earned better returns in Australia

when adjusted for risk, and provided significant portfolio diversification. Oyedele (2015) analyzed the UK market from 2001 to 2010 and concluded that investment in infrastructure offers portfolio diversification benefits as it is minimally correlated with traditional asset classes. Bahceci and Weisdorf (2014) examined infrastructure investment cash flows in the US and Western Europe and found that diversification opportunities existed across infrastructure subsectors and geographical areas. This suggests that infrastructure investments diversify specific risk in developed markets.

Most of the reviewed studies used bivariate correlation as a measure of diversification ability in the developed world (without any reference to developing nations which have significantly different economic, financial and risk-return profile). The study on which this paper is based on went a step further and employed the portfolio optimization method and the Sharpe ratio to compare the performance of optimal portfolios with and without infrastructure investments in emerging markets. It thus contributes to the debate on whether or not infrastructure investments in emerging or developing markets are ripe for take up by institutional investors using better methods, longer time frame, more cross sections and more variables as divulged below.

3.0 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data was obtained from the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) for the period 2009-2018 (the post-crisis period) on a yearly basis. Prior to 2009, no unlisted or private infrastructure index was available to the general public. The MSCI's emerging market comprises the following 24 countries: Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Qatar, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates. These nations represent 12% of global market capitalization (Moore, 2018).

The variables of interest are highlighted below.

The emerging market infrastructure index (MSCI infrastructure emerging market index) captures listed infrastructure investments which are invested through exchange traded funds and common stock purchase. It was the proxy for listed infrastructure investments in this study. This index was used due to the difficulty of obtaining data on infrastructure sector returns at country level.

Given that it is claimed that the features of listed and unlisted infrastructure investments are different in the short run (Wurstbauer & Schafers, 2015; Blanc-Brude, 2016), the MSCI Global quarterly private infrastructure index was treated as a proxy for unlisted infrastructure investments. This means that, if the attributes of listed and unlisted infrastructure are significantly different, investors can treat such investments as complementary; otherwise, they are substitutes (Kovarsky, 2018).

The MSCI emerging market stock market index and MSCI emerging markets real estate index are the traditional risky asset classes that represent general listed equity and listed real estate in emerging markets, respectively. Indices are tradable through the use of exchange traded funds and buying shares in listed firms. This will enhance a portfolio's liquidity, which is a primary concern for all investors (Chhabria *et al.,* 2014; Moss, 2014).

The ten-year government bond was used as a proxy for risk free assets available to investors. It was selected as it fitted with the time period under study, and as a matter of convenience (Strydom & Charteris, 2009). The rate was taken as an average rate (from all 24 nations) in the calculation of the Sharpe ratio as there was no readily available single risk free rate for the emerging nations under study.

A quantitative approach was adopted to evaluate the diversification ability and performance enhancement of infrastructure investments in a

risky portfolio. The study used the correlation coefficient, portfolio optimization and the Sharpe ratio to assess the ability of infrastructure investment to enhance performance and reduce portfolio risk.

Correlation analysis is used to identify how two variables move in relation to each other. The traditional method to assess the diversification ability of an asset class is to carry out inter-class correlation matrix or bi-variate correlation calculations as used by Newell *et al.* (2011); Finkenzeller (2012); Oyedele *et al*. (2014); De Bever *et al.* (2015); Kempler (2016); Bahceci and Leh (2017); and O'Brien and Leung (2018). The simple way of calculating the inter-asset correlation coefficient between any two asset classes is by means of the following formula;

$$\rho_{y,x} = {}^{\sigma_{y,x}}\Big/_{\delta_y \,.\, \delta_x} \qquad (1)$$

where $\rho_{y,x}$ represents the correlation coefficient between stock returns of Y and X indices, $\sigma_{y,x}$ is the covariance between Y and X, then δ_i is the standard deviation for Y and X. A small correlation figure (preferably a negative one) is evidence of the diversification ability of the asset classes under consideration (Kempler, 2016; Bahceci and Leh, 2017; O'Brien and Leung, 2018).

In emerging economies where portfolios are likely to be under-diversified, the Sharpe ratio is the best risk-adjusted return measure (Kempler, 2016). This study employed the mean variance optimization procedures adopted by Oyedele (2015) Farrukh and Cherdantsev (2016) and Kempler (2016) in order to determine the optimal Sharpe ratios.

Considering our two portfolios (with and without infrastructure), the objective was to identify a portfolio with the highest Sharpe ratio in each case (which is the optimal or tangency portfolio). This ratio is measured as follows:

$$S_r = \left({}^{R_p - R_f}\Big/_{\sigma_p}\right) \qquad (2)$$

where R_p is portfolio return, R_f is the risk free rate and σ_p is the standard deviation of the portfolio. A high and positive Sharpe ratio indicates superior risk-adjusted performance, while a low and negative ratio is an indication of unfavorable performance. To compute returns, in an N-asset portfolio scenario we use the following formula:

$$R_p = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (W_i)(R_i) \qquad (3)$$

where R_i is now the average return of the i^{th} asset in a portfolio and W_i is the portfolio weight of the i^{th} asset.

The variance of N-asset portfolio is computed as follows:

$$\sigma_{Rp}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} W_i^2 \sigma_{ri}^2 + \sum_{i=1}^{n} . \sum_{j=i+1}^{n} 2W_i W_j Cov(ri, rj) \qquad (4)$$

As we increase the number of assets in the portfolio, what remains as the key risk determinant is the covariance. The variance of a portfolio combination of securities is equal to the weighted average covariance of the returns on its individual securities:

$$\mathrm{Var}\left(r_p\right) = \sigma_p^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n} w_i w_j \mathrm{Cov}\left(r_i, r_j\right)$$

(5)

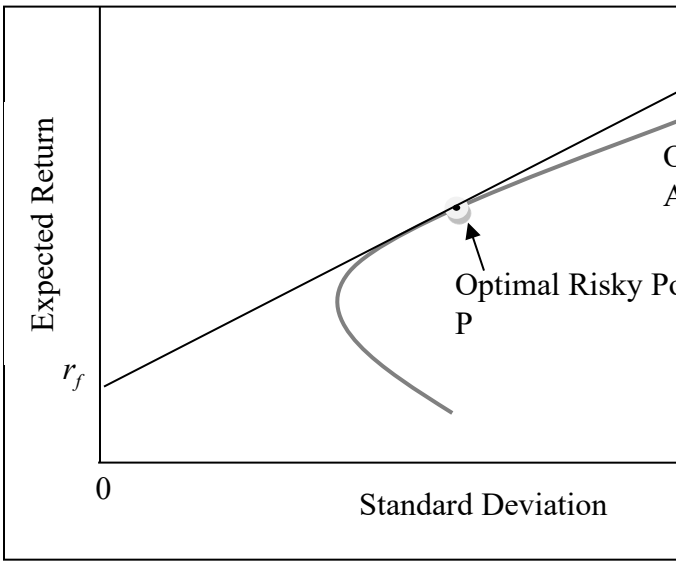
Covariance can also be expressed in terms of the correlation coefficient as follows:

$$\mathrm{Cov}\left(r_i, r_j\right) = \rho_{ij}\sigma_i\sigma_j = \sigma_{ij} \quad (6)$$

where ρ_{ij}= correlation coefficient between the rates of return on security i, r_i, and the rates of return on security j, r_j, and σ_i, and σ_j represents standard deviations of r_i and r_j respectively.

In order to simplify the determination of the optimal risky portfolio, we use the capital allocation line (CAL), which depicts all feasible risk-return combinations available from different asset allocation choices. The objective is to identify the weights that result in the highest slope of the CAL (the weights that result in the risky portfolio with the highest reward-to-variability ratio - Sharpe ratio) (Kempler 2016). Therefore, the aim is to maximize the slope of the CAL (Sharpe ratio) for any possible portfolio, P as presented in Fig 1 below.

Fig 1 Optimal Risky Portfolio, P



Source: Authors' illustration

When we maximize the objective function, CAL_S, we have to satisfy the constraints that the portfolio weights sum to 1 and no short selling is allowed, meaning that the individual asset class weight is always positive.. Therefore, we solve a mathematical problem formally written as

$$\underset{w_i}{Max}\ CAL_S = \frac{E(r_p) - r_f}{\sigma_p} \quad (7)$$

Subject to $\sum w_i = 1$.

In this case of two risky assets, the solution for the weights of the optimal risky portfolio P, can be shown as follows:

$$W_a = \frac{[E(r_a) - r_f]\sigma_b^2 - [E(r_b) - r_f]\rho_{ab}\sigma_a\sigma_b}{[E(r_a) - r_f]\sigma_b^2 + [E(r_b) - r_f]\sigma_a^2 - [E(r_a) - r_f + Er_b - r_f]\rho_{ab}\sigma_a\sigma_b} \quad (8)$$

$$W_b = 1 - W_a \quad (9)$$

As more than two assets are under study, such procedures were undertaken using Solver Microsoft Excel add-in to identify the optimal portfolio P (with and without portfolio). Under

the Solver add-in, the Generalised Reduced Gradient (GRG) Nonlinear aligorithm which is fast, reliable and works well with nonlinear and linear problems, was used (Open Cast Lab, 2015). Comparing the risk and return levels from the optimal portfolios enables us to identify whether inclusion of infrastructure assets in our investment portfolio reduces risk or enhances returns, if at all. Obtaining higher returns at low risk levels indicates the portfolio's ability to reduce diversifiable risk and enhance portfolio returns (Kempler, 2016).

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using annual data on all variables, the general distribution of the data is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Equity	Listed infrastructure	Listed real estate	Unlisted infrastructure
Mean	11.51000	5.235000	8.783000	12.82700
Median	4.890000	2.675000	-2.850000	13.68000
Maximum	79.02000	35.43000	57.75000	17.20000
Minimum	-18.17000	-18.36000	-26.06000	4.700000
Std. Dev.	29.71952	16.42050	31.86879	3.400255
Skewness	1.162578	0.323772	0.691845	-1.304250
Kurtosis	3.639767	2.291655	1.772153	4.436276
Jarque-Bera	2.423188	0.383778	1.425918	3.694649
Probability	0.297722	0.825398	0.490192	0.157658
Sum	115.1000	52.35000	87.83000	128.2700
Sum Sq. Dev.	7949.251	2426.696	9140.575	104.0556
Observations	10	10	10	10

Source: Extract from Eviews computations

From Table 1, it can be noted that private or unlisted infrastructure earned more on average than other asset classes as it has the highest mean amounting to 12.287%. Listed infrastructure scored the least, with average returns amounting to 5.235% during the period under study. Private infrastructure had the lowest risk as measured by standard deviation. The highest levels of volatility were noted in real estate, followed by general equity. This is

an indication that private infrastructure is the best asset among the available assets as it provided the highest returns at the lowest volatility levels. This is in tandem with observations made by Weber et al., (2016) who indicated that privately held investments exhibit different distributional features from listed investments in emerging markets. In terms of normality, all the variables under study were normally distributed which augurs well for the assumptions of portfolio optimization and the Sharpe ratio.

In measuring the degree of linear relationship, a correlation matrix is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Correlation matrix

	Equity	Listed infrastructure	Real estate	Unlisted infrastructure
Equity	1.000000			
Listed infrastructure	0.953461	1.000000		
Real estate	0.845761	0.824964	1.000000	
Unlisted infrastructure	-0.815844	-0.765006	-0.532175	1.000000

Source: Extract from Eviews

The correlation between listed assets is positive and very high, indicating the existence of co-movement of returns over the period. This indicates that stock exchange players treat all listed assets homogeneously. In other words, euphoria and market swings affect all shares in the same direction due to the contagion effect. In contrast to Kempler (2016) and De Bever *et al*.'s (2015) findings, investing in listed infrastructure in emerging markets is similar to investing in any other listed stock—there is no immunity. The high levels of positive correlation among listed assets render diversification across listed assets ineffective. All asset classes are affected by market up and down turns, regardless of the fundamentals of the firms.

Private infrastructure exhibited negative correlation with all the assets under review, illustrating its ability to reduce risk in a mixed portfolio. This concurs with Bahceci and Leh's (2017) assertion that, portfolio risk reduction can be achieved by including private infrastructure in a mixed portfolio comprised of listed equities, listed real estate and listed infrastructure in emerging markets.

The differences in the correlation coefficients scored by listed and private infrastructure are clear testimony to the claim that these are different and might not substitute for each other (Moss, 2014). Interestingly, the correlation between listed and private infrastructure is negative to the tune of -0.7650, driving home the point that they are significantly different (De Bever *et al.,* 2015). This could be attributed to differences in liquidity, price transparency issues and risk-return profiles. Market inefficiency could be another reason for this discrepancy as such inefficiencies are pronounced in emerging markets where information asymmetry remains an issue and the number of listed firms on stock exchanges is small compared to the entire economy. In other words, the stock exchanges in most emerging markets do not reflect the fundamentals of the economy.

On a different note, advocates for behavioral finance are of the view that asset prices are affected by many factors other than the fundamental attributes of the asset (Meir, 2018). These include emotions and psychological biases and errors like the herd instinct and loss aversion. Since listed assets' prices are determined in the market, they are likely to be affected by these non-fundamental attributes on an on-going basis (Bruce, 2017). This might not be the case with private assets, which in most cases are tightly held and their pricing process are usually opaque. This does not imply that private assets are efficiently priced; rather, it simply means there is a significant difference between the two pricing processes. In a nutshell, publicly held assets are priced differently from privately held assets.

The risk-adjusted returns of optimal risky portfolios comprised of different asset classes were determined using the Sharpe ratio. The average 10-year government bond rate in the 24 emerging markets from 2009 to 2018 was 6.405%. The optimal portfolios' weights and corresponding Sharpe ratios are presented in Table 3 below;

Table 3: Optimal portfolio weights and Sharpe ratios

	Portfolio 1	Portfolio 2	Portfolio 3	Portfolio 4
Listed real estate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Listed Equity	1.00	0.0881	1.00	0.0881
Listed Infrastructure	-------	-------	0.00	0.00
Private Infrastructure	-------	0.9119	------	0.9119
Portfolio Return	11.51	12.71	11.51	12.71
Portfolio deviation	29.7195	1.7952	29.7195	1.7952
Sharpe Ratio	**0.17177**	**3.5126**	**0.17177**	**3.5126**

Source: Extract from Microsoft Excel

The assets considered in each portfolio were as follows;

Portfolio 1 - listed real estate, listed equity. Portfolio 2 - listed real estate, listed equity, and unlisted infrastructure. Portfolio 3 - listed real estate, listed equity, and listed infrastructure. Portfolio 4 - listed real estate, listed equity, listed infrastructure and unlisted infrastructure.

Portfolio returns and the corresponding portfolio standard deviations from the optimal case for each portfolio are also shown in Table 3 for comparison purposes. A detailed analysis of Table 3 is presented below.

Portfolio 1 - listed real estate and listed equity
This was treated as the traditional or benchmark portfolio against which all other portfolios were measured. The optimal weights which maximized risk-adjusted returns were 100% for listed equities and zero for listed real estate. The subsequent Sharpe ratio amounted to 0.385. In emerging markets, holding a portfolio made up of listed equity and listed real estate does not add any value to institutional investors in the risk-return sense.

Portfolio 2 - listed real estate, listed equity, and unlisted infrastructure
Adding unlisted or private infrastructure to a traditional portfolio proved worthwhile as the Shape ratio increased from 0.17177 to 3.5126. Portfolio returns increased from 11.51 % to 12.71%, indicating that private infrastructure effectively enhances portfolio returns. This concurs with Panayiotou and Medda's (2014) results which indicated that private infrastructure investments are portfolio return enhancers. On the risk frontier, the resultant portfolio is less risky (1.7952%) than the traditional portfolio (29.7195%). This demonstrates the power of using negatively correlated assets to derive diversification benefits. Private infrastructure is excluded from the euphoria that often grips stock exchanges over time; hence, its returns are constant with low volatility.

Portfolio 3 - listed real estate, listed equity, and listed infrastructure

In contrast to the conclusions reached by Oyedele (2015) and Schmidt (2016), listed infrastructure and listed real estate behave the same. Hence, adding listed infrastructure to the traditional portfolio does not change either the portfolio risk or portfolio return in emerging markets. Adding listed infrastructure to a portfolio made up of listed real estate and listed general equity did not add any value to the portfolio. Thus, unless other factors besides risk and return are considered when making the asset allocation decision, there is no value in including listed infrastructure in a portfolio made up of listed real estate and general equity in emerging markets.

Portfolio 4 - listed real estate, listed equity, listed infrastructure and unlisted infrastructure

The overall power of improving returns and reducing portfolio risk by investing in private or unlisted infrastructure is evident in this portfolio made up of all the asset classes under consideration. Portfolio 4 resembles all aspects of portfolio 2 as the risk-adjusted return is maximized by allocating funds to unlisted infrastructure and general equity in emerging markets. Unless investors are pursuing other goals besides risk and return, there is no rational reason to include listed infrastructure and real estate in their portfolios in emerging markets.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using yearly data from 2009 to 2018 (the post-crisis period) from emerging markets, and applying portfolio optimization and the Sharpe ratio, it was evident that private or unlisted infrastructure was a return enhancer and portfolio risk diversifier. Based on the study's findings, it can be safely concluded that listed and unlisted infrastructure complement each other as they exhibited significantly different risk-return profiles which can be manipulated by institutional investors for positive returns. This is mainly due to the heterogeneous nature of private and public stock markets.

It was found that listed infrastructure did not add any value in a traditional portfolio made up of listed real estate and general equity in emerging markets. Given that listed infrastructure and other listed assets are positively correlated, they can be treated as substitutes. Unless institutional

investors are concerned with factors besides risk and return when making asset allocation decisions, there is no value in including listed infrastructure in a traditional portfolio.

Based on these findings, institutional investors are encouraged to consider the heterogeneous nature of infrastructure when investing. Subsector analysis might also add value given the heterogeneous nature of the infrastructure sector. The same can be said of emerging markets which are also heterogeneous, implying that generalizations might be problematic. This study thus serves as a pioneer study on emerging markets.

It is also recommended that institutional investors monitor developments in the infrastructure market on an on-going basis due to the fact that, as industries grow and mature, increased deregulation and privatization become the order of the day, calling into question their ability to deliver superior returns. Firms in the infrastructure sector should make more information available to the public so that their assets are rationally priced. It should not be assumed that a firm's value will be volatile simply because it is listed whilst its counterparts are stable because they are privately held. Such inconsistencies might affect the firm's credit rating as well as merger and acquisition values.

The findings of this study imply that investors should not expect rewards for investing in listed infrastructure if they have already invested in general equity in emerging markets. Another implication is that listed and unlisted infrastructure investments need to be treated as complementary as their stochastic behavior and risk-return profiles are different. Given the positive role of unlisted infrastructure in a risky portfolio, institutional investors are capable of achieving their 'performance seeking' goals using unlisted infrastructure. However, infrastructure firms should be wary of the way their fundamental assets are priced in financial markets. On the same note, there are several issues associated with alternative investments above and beyond the typical risks associated with traditional investments. Such issues include: higher fees, very complex less transparent, less liquid and may not diversify risk in extreme down markets. Further studies could focus on infrastructure sector sub-categories to cater for the heterogeneous nature of this sector. On the same note, other risk-adjusted return measures like the Sortino ratio and Jensen's Alpha could be considered in future research.

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SELF-REPORTED ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: A CASE OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMERCE STUDENTS AT GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned about the significance of demographic factors on academic dishonesty in the Munhumutapa School of Commerce at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU). A quantitative research design was used and self-administered questionnaires were used as an instrument for data collection on 280 students. Purposive and Judgmental sampling methods were applied on the participants. A Logit regression model, derived from Stata was used in the analysis of data. Of the demographic factors under study, extra-curricular activities and one's department were found to be significant. Age, gender and parents' education were found to be insignificant in influencing academic dishonesty. The study recommends that University authorities craft policy on academic dishonesty in the institution and explicitly define in policy manuals what they consider as an act of dishonesty. The study further recommends that when formulating cheating policies, there is need therefore for greater involvement from students so that they follow rules they help formulate.

KEYWORDS: Academic dishonesty, Cheating, Demographic factors, Ethics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty has become a matter of great concern in higher education over the years (Aslam, 2010). Dishonesty has been in existence since the first standardized examinations were administered to choose civil servants in ancient China when the penalty of dishonesty was death (Whitley and Keith-Spiegel, 2002). That academic dishonesty was prevalent in institutions of higher learning is not in doubt as statistics show that 60% to 70% of students are involved in cheating (Caruana, Ramaseshan, and Ewing, 2000). In earlier researches, Bower (1964) sampled 5,000 students from 99 various colleges in the United States of America and found out that at least 50% of them were engaged in academic dishonesty. Later on, McCabe and Bowers (1994) conducted a survey of students from nine more campuses to the previous study and concluded that 52 percent of the students admitted to cheating. In 2002, McCabe and Trevino (2002) revealed that there was a fourfold increase in the number of students who use cheating material in exam (i.e. from 6 to 27 percent). Moreover in China, Chapmanand Lupton (2004) revealed that 80% of high achieving scholars admitted to cheating at least once while Lin and Wen (2007) found out that about 61.72% of

students in Taiwan were found to have cheated at least once.

McCabe and Trevino (1997) noted that the number of students who cheat have been in the range of 13%-95% in America. The authors attributed this to the loss of moral values among the American people. In a study by Sims (1995) academic dishonesty was found to positively correlate with work related dishonest activities. Similar results were found in studies by Happel and Jennings (2008), Trost (2009) and Williams and Hosek (2003) who argued that cheating was correlated with lack of professional integrity at work. Hence the need to carry out this study on future captains of industry.

Such high rates of academic dishonesty are a cause for concern for university authorities and business leaders. According to McCabe et al (2006) understanding cheating among business students was important because these students would be tomorrow's business leaders. Furthermore, McCabe et al (2006) found out that in the light of scandals in corporations, business schools have been searching for ways to send students the message that ethics are important. Attention to students' likely cheating behavior has some role to play in that process. Research has shown that undergraduate business students cheat more than their non-business counterparts (McCabe et al, 2006). Taderera et al (2014) revealed that 61.5% of commerce students at the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe had either cheated or seen someone cheating as compared to 33.3% from Science and Technology, 25% from Arts and 44.4% from Social Sciences.

According to Chinamasa et al (2011), Zimbabwe's universities enjoy the autonomy and academic freedom to award grades. The lecturer designs the course outline, sets and marks assignments and examinations as well as teaching the course. Examinations are then subjected to external examiners who act as the quality control agents who moderate the examination question papers and the marking of examination scripts, Chinamasa et al (2011). In most cases universities in Zimbabwe, require students to pass all courses for one to graduate. The corporate world uses the same grades when selecting prospective employees. This in turn puts pressure on students to make sure they pass by all means possible for them to be absorbed into the labour market.

This study has three major objectives: (1) to test the significance of demographic factors that influence Commerce students' academic dishonesty; (2) to examine the prevalence of academic dishonesty to determine which of the four commerce departments at Great Zimbabwe University cheat the most and (3) to suggest strategies for promoting academic integrity among students in commerce programs.

Although previous literature have looked at academic dishonesty in Zimbabwe among various universities and colleges dwelling on the rationale for dishonesty and strategies to circumvent the scourge (Chinamasa et al 2011, Chireshe, 2014, Kasayira et al, 2007 and Taderera et al 2014), to our knowledge this is the first research on the influence of demographic factors on academic dishonesty specifically zeroing in on commerce students.

The research is pioneer in its nature in Zimbabwe on the relevance and influence of demographic factors on self-reported academic dishonesty in Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning. The research

is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the influence of demographic factors on the moral standing of students while at the same time assisting university authorities, academics and leaders of business in the formulation of policies to deter this vice. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows; the next section reviews related literature, third part develops the methodology followed by results and analysis. The final section concludes the study by suggesting some policy recommendations for educators and business leaders.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Motivations for Academic Dishonesty

Frost and Hamlin (2015) traced the source of academic dishonesty as media influence, lack of family training, peer pressure and the changing societal norms. Academic dishonesty comes in different forms such as cheating, fraud and plagiarism, the theft of ideas and violations of other forms of intellectual property be they published or not. Motivations for academic dishonesty are varied. Saana et al (2016) highlighted that one's lack of proficiency in the English Language as well as unavailability of resources and institutional support are reasons as to why students may engage in acts of dishonesty. Jager and Brown (2010) consented to the fact that the use of English Language is also a factor contributing to academic dishonesty especially in non-English speaking nations. Plagiarism was found to be more prevalent in low-income countries due to lack of anti-plagiarism training and support, Saana et al (2016). Davis et al (1995) highlighted key variables that cause students to cheat. They cited pressure to obtain good grades, student stress and weaker penalties as the major causes for dishonesty. They went further to explain that weak penalties are further aggravated by the averseness by lecturers and students to report and expose wrongdoers. Supporting this were McCabe and Bowers (1994) and Jendrek (1992) that academic staff would rather deal with cheats on a personal basis than letting the system deal with them. According to the Deterrence Theory, an act of dishonesty results from the perception that one has on the severity of the imposed penalty, Sagan (1994). In most studies it was found out that the more severe the punishment the lesser the incidences of cheating, McCabe et al (2006). More specifically, the desire to attain higher grades was cited by Lovett- Hooper et al (2007) as the main motivating factor. Related to this is the study by McCabe et al (2006) that business students were motivated to cheat based on perceived high salaries of captains of industry as well as their competitiveness vis a vis grades. Similar sentiments were echoed by Chinamasa et al (2011) that students are motivated to cheat for the solitary reason that education augments life and thus improve one's quality of life. They went further to suggest that students cheat because of the expectancy theory. Students expect the world to reward high pass marks handsomely. Ledesma (2011) found out that class size in the study institution lowers the chance of cheating. Classes in low income countries usually have higher teacher student ratios and thus academic dishonesty is more prevalent.

In another research by Cizek (1999), four motivations for academic dishonesty were put forward. These are competition for good grades, unfair or difficult assignments, lack of interest in the course and inadequate time to study for the examinations. Other reasons forwarded by Lovett- Hooper et al (2007) were lack of interest in the course and also students who feel dissatisfied with

schoolwork as the ones who are likely to be motivated to cheat. Higher levels of anxiety about academic performance always put students at the mercy of cheating. According to the Social Learning theory by Bandura (1986), students are motivated to cheat when they observe other students' behavior and the outcome. Thus when students observe other students successfully cheating, their desire to cheat and be successful is enhanced. Chinamasa et al (2011) also noted that in Zimbabwe, in addition to the above, students are motivated to cheat due to lack of supervision when candidates enter the exam room or go into the toilet during examinations as a result of inadequate invigilators. Taderera et al (2014) noted that students at Midlands State University (MSU) cheated so as to please their parents and due to an educational system that emphasizes results and not learning, the fear of repeating as well as fear of failing given high fees. In addition to the above students at MSU were motivated to cheat because of relaxed invigilation processes as well as being adventurous at risk taking.

In another research by Young, (2016) dependence on technology led to the fact that many students do not see the need to learn and commit to memory when their phone can yield results in a matter of seconds. His views were supported by Barlett (2016) who opined that cheating has gone universal due to essay mills that are found on the internet. Students therefore do not find any need to memorize information due to the availability of material on the online mills. Wolverton (2016) and Seaman (2018) attributed cheating by students to lecturers' ignorance to newer methods of students' cheating. Such methods include paying for a whole course to be completed clandestinely by a paid pretender.

2.2 Acts of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty comes in various forms. Various acts of dishonesty have been committed by students and such transgressions have been grouped into either severe or not severe. Rakovski and Levy (2007) summarized these acts and came to the conclusion that exam-related cheating and plagiarism were to be considered more serious dishonesty acts; whereas, collaborating on homework and not contributing to group projects were considered less serious dishonesty acts. Almost every university has a list of these acts and the punishment that goes with transgressing any. At Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) before the start of each examination, students are reminded of examination rules and regulations as well as the penalties to be imposed on offenders. Notwithstanding, Great Zimbabwe University does not have a code of ethics on academic dishonesty practices but rely most on the unwritten laws.

Major studies like the one carried out by Taderera et al (2014) identified major cheating strategies as the use of crib notes (CDs), writing on body parts and ordinary objects like calculators, impersonation, exchanging examination booklets, copying someone else's work and leaving notes in toilets. Taderera et al (2014) further noted that students cheat by taking into the examination already written scripts, talking before examination starts, exchange question papers with answers and using sign language as some of the acts of dishonesty that students commit. Taderera et al (2014) looked at cheating during examinations while Nazir and Aslam (2010) looked at cheating encompassing all aspects of student learning. According to Nazir and Aslam (2010), the following were cited as acts of academic

dishonesty. These dishonesty acts are copying examination sheets during examination, copying project / internship report, copying home assignment from other's assignment, helping others to copy exam sheet and home assignment, submission of another's assignment / project as your own, allowing others to use your project report in preparing their project reports, copying from the internet without mentioning the source of information and stealing exam material. The authors, being lecturers have observed that most students cheat in their assignments by simply acknowledging non-existent sources or attributing false quotations to authoritative sources.

2.3 Strategies to circumvent Academic Dishonesty

The plague of academic dishonesty has to be nipped in the bud before it spreads like a tumor. The demoralizing effects of this vice can never be exaggerated. As alluded to earlier on, previous studies have shown a positive correlation between academic dishonesty and work related dishonest activities, (Caso, 2005 Roig, 2005 and Sims 1995). Also academic dishonesty was found to be correlated to national corruption indexes. Strategies to reduce academic dishonesty can best be looked at through addressing the motivations for cheating. For cheating to be wrong, one must justify the rules for forbidding cheating. Taderera et al (2014) suggested the use of CCTV, publicizing of offenders, incorporating academic ethics in syllabi, and motivating staff handling examinations as some of the ways to deal with cheating. Moreover, Chinamasa et al (2011) recommended that in order to reduce cheating lecturers should avail themselves to students for consultations. Felder (2011) suggested that lecturers have to be fair in setting assignments and examinations and that authorities should define cheating unambiguously in manuals.

2.4 Demographic factors' influence on Academic Dishonesty

Demographic variables' influences on academic dishonesty were found to be mixed. McCabe and Trevino (1997) noted that demographic variables were strongly related to academic dishonesty. In this study we will particularly look at age, gender, parents' education, extra-curricular activities and the student's department.

2.4.1 Age

Several studies have addressed the students' dishonest behaviors on the basis of age. Cizek (1999) revealed that the associations between age and academic dishonesty were complex. However, Diekhoff et al., (1996), Graham et al, (1994) and McCabe and Trevino (1997) noted that younger students are more academically dishonest than older students. The reason being that young people have their own code of ethics in society and they lack morals as compared to older people, Coombe and Newman, (1997). In another similar study with similar results by Whitley et al., (1998), the young and the unmarried were found to be less ethical. On the contrary Lipcon and McGaven (1993) found out that older students cheat more than younger students.

2.4.2 Gender

Frontiers in the study of the link between gender and academic dishonesty were of the view that males cheat more than their female counterparts, Bowers, (1964), Roskens and Dizney, (1966), Davies, (1992). Moreover, Cizek (1999) ,Whitley (1998) and Crown and Spiller (1998) conducted a comprehensive

study of the variables of cheating and their review found out that gender as a demographic factor was an important variable in determining academic dishonesty. The above scholars found out that being male was linked with a higher statistical risk of cheating than being female. The main reason put forward was the socialization theory which states that males are socially more inclined to disobey rules than females, Bandura (1986). Chinamasa et al, (2011) also found out that male candidates cheat more (83%) than female (17%) candidates in a study on five universities in Zimbabwe. On the contrary Leming (1980) found out that women cheat more than men. Similar results were found by Antion and Michael (1983). However, Trost (2009) and Taderera et al (2014) found out that gender was not significantly associated with academic dishonesty.

2.4.3 Extra-Curricular Activities

In earlier studies on the influence of extra-curricular activities on academic dishonesty (Bowers, 1964), academic dishonesty was high among students who were involved in extra-curricular activities. Then, students involved in extra-curricular activities were seen to be less committed to their school work because of extra-curricular commitments. Bowers (1964) in his study revealed some interesting relationship that students who were financially assisted because of their athletic abilities were more likely to cheat. The reason was that they were at college for reasons not related to their academic capabilities. McCabe and Trevino (1997) revealed that students who are involved in extra-curricular activities reported more academic dishonesty. They contended that more extra-curricular activities normally would exert pressure on student's time and may lead to cheating. For the purpose of this study, a variety of extra-curricular activities such as student activism and council, musical and religious groups, college publications, various sporting activities and clubbing will be combined to refer to extra-curricular activities.

2.4.4 Parents' Education

Parents' educations as well as their income have been studied to determine if they influence academic dishonesty. Bowers (1964) suggested that students from highly educated homes were less likely to engage in academic dishonesty as compared to students from less educated parents. However, Kirkvliet (1994) noted that there was a weak relationship between academic dishonesty and parents' education. He was of the view that parents' education does not influence academic dishonesty at college. Similar results were shared by McCabe and Trevino (1997) when they revealed that parents' education was not a significant factor in influencing academic dishonesty.

2.4.5 Department

Unlike other demographic factors that have been studied extensively, one's department within a faculty has been less studied. However, in studies that were almost similar, students in the faculty of commerce were found to be more inclined to cheat than any other faculties, McCabe et al (2006) as well as Taderera et al (2014). This study will look at the influence that the four departments in the Munhumutapa School of Commerce have on academic dishonesty. To the best of our knowledge, this variable is being studied for the first time on students at Great Zimbabwe University.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample and Research Design

Data for this study was obtained from primary sources. A target population of 520 students from the 4 departments of the School of Commerce at Great Zimbabwe University were surveyed. Both Purposive and Convenience sampling procedures were employed. These methods were chosen as they were the most cost effective and time effective sampling methods available. A quantitative research design was adopted due to the nature of the variables under study. Self-administered questionnaires were sent to 280 students from the departments of Banking and Finance, Management Studies, Accounting and Economics. 250 questionnaires were returned representing a 90% response rate. Stata was used in the analysis of the data, computations and interpretation of results. Data was thus presented in the form of frequency tables and models.

3.2Model Specification

This study focused on the relative influence of demographic factors on academic dishonesty. In order to achieve this objective, demographic factors were categorised and a Logit Model was used to determine the statistical significance of the demographic factors on the dependant variable. In this regard the following variables were of interest; age, department of student, gender, parents' educational level and extracurricular activities. It follows that the estimated Logit Model equation:

Acadishon =f (Age, _Department, _Gender,_Parents' education,_Extra-Curricular Activities)

Using the Logit Model the following equation is estimated:

$$\boldsymbol{Acadishon = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + e}$$

Where:

$\boldsymbol{\beta_0}$= is the intercept (constant)

$\boldsymbol{Acadishon}$ = Academic Dishonesty

$\mathbf{X_1}$= Age, $\mathbf{X_2}$=Department, $\mathbf{X_3}$=Gender, $\mathbf{X_4}$=Parents' Education, $\mathbf{X_5}$=Extracurricular Activities, **e**=error term

3.3 Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable measure, academic dishonesty, adapted from McCabe and Trevino (1997) was a composite measure where participants were to self-report on the frequency of academic dishonesty on a five-point scale. To collect the data, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed among commerce students to four different departments at Great Zimbabwe University's Munhumutapa School of Commerce. The students were asked to indicate how frequently they were involved in academic dishonesty on a two-point scale. The students were asked to indicate if they had never cheated or cheated at least once from the 10 acts of academic dishonesty that were provided. This research uses a two-point scale (never=0 and at least once=1).

Five independent variables were adopted for the purpose of this study. These were age, gender, parents' education, extra-curricular activities and department.

For the age variable the following scale was used (18-23 years=0, 24-29years=1, 30-34 years=2), for gender females were coded 0 while males were coded 1. Parents' education was a measure of the level of education attained by each student's parent. It was measured on a five scale measurement (no formal education=0, primary education=1, secondary education=2, diploma=3 and degree=4). For extracurricular activities, non-participants were coded zero while those involved in at least one activity were coded 1. The departments were coded as follows (Economics=0, Banking & Finance=2, Accounting =1 and Management Studies =3). The level of significance adopted in this study is 95%.

4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Response Rate

Table i. Degree of Academic Dishonesty

Explanatory Variables	Categories	Frequency		Percentage	
		Not Cheated	Cheated	Not Cheated	Cheated
Age group	18-23	38	95	15.2	38
	24-29	30	50	12	20
	30-34	10	27	4	10.8
Total		**78**	**172**	**31.2**	**68.8**
Gender	Females	43	87	17.2	34.8
	Males	35	85	14	34
Total		**78**	**172**	**31.2**	**68.8**
Parents' Education	No Form. Ed	15	25	6	10
	Primary	25	46	10	18.4
	Secondary	21	55	8.4	22
	Diploma	11	30	4.4	12
	Degree	6	16	2.4	6.4
Total		**78**	**172**	**31.2**	**68.8**
Curricular Activities	Non-Participants	13	31	5.2	12.4
	Participants	65	141	26	56.4
Total		**78**	**172**	**31.2**	**68.8**
Department	Economics	24	56	9.6	22.4
	Accounting	5	20	2	8
	Banking	44	80	17.6	32
	Mgt. Studies	5	16	2	6.4
Total		**78**	**172**	**31.2**	**68.8**

From the above table, 31.2% of the participants testified that they have never been involved in any form of academic dishonesty while 68.8% were involved in academic dishonesty. Students alluded to various forms of academic dishonesty. Such acts involve copying attachment reports, copying home assignment from other's assignment, helping others to copy one's exam sheet, submission of another's assignment as your own, copying from internet without mentioning the source of information, stealing exam material, impersonation, not contributing to group assignments and acknowledging non-existent authorities in assignments (Sims, (1995). The high rate of academic dishonesty clearly indicates that academic dishonesty was prevalent in the Munhumutapa School of Commerce.

4.2 Interpretation of Logit Results

Table ii: Stata Logit Output

Academic Dishonesty	Coef	Std.Error	P. Value	95% C.I

Age	0.01452	0.19338	0.940	-0.36449 0.39355
Gender	0.19501	0.28308	0.491	-0.35982 0.74984
Parent Edu	-0.06221	0.12184	0.610	-0.30102 0.17659
Department	-0.67200	0.28463	0.018	-1.22988 -0.11412
Extra Activities	0.85550	0.31619	0.007	0.23577 1.47524
Constant	0.88126	0.34640	0.011	0.20233 1.56020

Age

The co-efficient of variable, age has a p value of 0.940. At 5% level of testing, p-value is greater than 0.05. This shows that the co-efficient of age is statistically insignificant at 5%. The results indicate that age does not affect academic dishonesty among the participants. The results concur with Cizek (1999)'s findings that the association between age and academic dishonesty was complex. The results were in sharp contrast to McCabe and Trevino (1997) and Graham et al., (1994) findings that age influences academic dishonesty. The main reason for this result could be that there were no significant variations in terms of participants' ages. The ages for the undergraduate students ranged from 23 to 34 years.

Gender

At the 5% level of testing, gender has a p value of 0.491which is greater than 0.05. This shows that the co-efficient of gender is statistically insignificant at 5%. The results indicate that gender is not an important factor in influencing academic dishonesty among commerce students. Thus the study revealed that there is no association between gender and academic dishonesty. The study shows that students cheat because of other reasons that are not related to gender. Being male or female does not influence one to cheat. Similar results were found by Trost (2009) and Taderera et al (2014) in their findings. They showed that gender was insignificant in determining academic dishonesty. However, the results contradicted Cizek (1999), Whitley (1998) and Crown and Spiller (1998) who revealed that gender has an association with and is correlated to academic dishonesty.

Parents' Education

The p value of the co-efficient is 0.610and at 5% level of significance; the co-efficient is statistically insignificant to show that parents' education explains academic dishonesty among commerce students. This serves to confirm that parents' education does not have an impact on academic dishonesty on commerce students. Students cheat not because their parents are not formally or informally educated. Similar results were forwarded by McCabe and Trevino (1997) and Kirkvliet (1994) who suggested that this factor was insignificant and that there was a weak relationship between dishonesty and parents' education. The results contrasted Bowers (1964) who posited that students from highly educated families were likely not to cheat.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The p value of the co-efficient is 0.007and at the 5% level of significance; the co-efficient is statistically significant to show that extra-curricular activities explain academic dishonesty among commerce students. This serves to confirm that extra-curricular activities do have an impact on academic dishonesty. Similar findings were noted by Bowers (1964), McCabe and Trevino (1997), Jensen et al (2002) who alluded to the fact that students who involve themselves in

extra-curricular activities were motivated to cheat more than non-participants.

Department

The p value of the co-efficient is 0.018.and at the 5% level of significance; the co-efficient is statistically significant to show that one's department explains academic dishonesty among commerce students. This serves to confirm that one's department has an impact on academic dishonesty. Students in the departments of Banking and Finance as well as Economics were found to have high rates of academic dishonesty. The major reason to this was the fact that the two departments involve a lot of mathematical formulations in most of their modules.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Academic dishonesty in institutions of higher learning has always been a matter of paramount importance which needs to be circumvented at all costs. The study has shown that age, gender and parents' education do not have an influence on academic dishonesty while extra-curricular activities and one's department does have an influence on academic dishonesty. The study further revealed that the vice was rampant among commerce students with 68.8% of the students having involved themselves in at least one form of academic dishonesty. With the Zimbabwean economy currently gripped with high levels of corruption and unethical conduct at various workplaces, the source of such behaviors may have emanated from academic dishonesty.

In view of the above, the study recommends the following:

- University authorities should craft and document academic dishonesty manuals since currently they are not available. Such manuals need to incorporate the nature of punishments that go with each violation of unacceptable behavior.
- Extra-Curricular activities need to be diarized in such a way as not to inconvenience participants in their academic life. This will thus not pressurize students actively involved in extra-curricular activities.
- When formulating cheating policies, there is need therefore for greater involvement from students so that they follow rules they help formulate.
- Lecturers should attach lists of formulae for all courses that are of a mathematical nature especially in economics and finance courses where a lot of formulas are involved.
- Lecturers need to be fair to students in assignment and examination setting so that students return the favor by being honest.
- Both students and lecturers strictly support and enforce honor codes so as to reduce cheating. This in turn will make sure offenders are reported and dealt with accordingly with the system rather than on a personal note.
- Universities incorporate academic ethos in syllabi more specifically for commerce students who will later on become custodians of industries.
- Universities are urged to publicize offenders in newspapers and indicate acts of misconduct on academic transcripts so as to deter students from cheating as this has a bearing on the future employment opportunities.
- In courses that are mathematically involving, lecturers are encouraged to make sure that in-class tests constitute coursework rather than giving students home assignments.

Finally, the study left some unsearched areas of this field to be addressed in future studies.

These may include undertaking all-encompassing research on all state universities in Zimbabwe as well as looking at other factors such as the influence of students' personality traits on academic dishonesty.

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THE STATE OF LITERATURE ON ZIMBABWE'S GASTRONOMY AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ELEMENTS.

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Abstract

This paper reviews the state of literature on Zimbabwe's gastronomy (culinary) elements as intangible cultural heritage (ICH). It does an analysis of previous researches which have been carried out with a view of ascertaining if anything has been done in safeguarding some gastronomic elements as intangible heritage. Since this is a review paper, data was collected by searching local libraries and online for publications, reports and articles that are on Zimbabwean culinary elements. This search was informed by the fact that the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (UNESCO-ROSA) is currently resident in Zimbabwe overseeing the implementation of various UNESCO conventions, including the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The office has facilitated the establishment of the Southern African Intangible Cultural Heritage (SAICH) Platform, which is currently hosted by Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT). In this platform, seven countries, namely, Malawi, Eswatini, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe upload various ICH elements from their territories. It is therefore likely that any work on ICH elements, be they gastronomic, may be done across borders involving any of the seven countries. It is for this reason that this paper used a methodology that incorporates literature that may be from any of these countries. The research is qualitative in nature and it also relied on content analysis of the concerned literature. The paper established that while there has been some significant work on food science, and limited research on Zimbabwean traditional foods, there is almost no literature at all which looks at Zimbabwean gastronomic elements as living heritage. Sporadic references are made by some scholars on food as being a part of a historical legacy of a community but there is still a dearth of literature which analyses food products as ICH.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage, gastronomy elements, gastronomy tourism, traditional food.

1.0 Introduction

This paper assesses previous researches that have been done on Zimbabwean culinary

elements. It is necessitated by the observation that very little attention has been given to Zimbabwean indigenous culinary dishes as forms of intangible cultural heritage elements. The paper is inspired by the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Zimbabwe, having ratified this convention in 2006, is obliged to take deliberate steps towards its implementation. However, as it has been highlighted elsewhere (Ndlovu, 2018), the implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention in Zimbabwe and other surrounding countries has not been happening at an accelerated pace. This review of the state of literature on the subject in question is being done incorporating what other countries within the region have done as well. This is so firstly, because the 2003 Convention actually requires that if a country is to submit a nomination file of an element to be included in the representative list, and that element is also found in another country of community, the submission can be done jointly. Secondly, Zimbabwe is a name given to a country which is marked by colonial borders. When Europeans partitioned Africa, they did not respect ethnic boundaries. As a result, a community that may be found in Zimbabwe today, may also be found in a neighbouring country such as South Africa and Botswana. Thirdly, UNESCO has a regional office that is currently housed in Zimbabwe which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of its projects in nine countries in Southern Africa (seven for the SAICH Platform project). Given these three reasons, it therefore makes sense for a research such as this one to be conducted within a framework that does not look at Zimbabwe in isolation, but as a member of this seven-member sub-regional block.

2.0 Methodology

The research was qualitative in nature, and relied on content analysis. It was not the intention of this study to establish the number of researches that have been done on the subject, but to review what has been done so far in studying Zimbabwean foods as a form of intangible cultural heritage. The review of literature is important for the following five reasons: (a) identifying what has been written on a subject or topic; (b) determining the extent to which a specific research area reveals any interpretable trends or patterns; (c) aggregating empirical findings related to a narrow research question to support evidence-based practice; (d) generating new frameworks and theories; and (e) identifying topics or questions requiring more investigation (Paré, Trudel, Jaana, & Kitsiou, 2015). This paper was done with a view of addressing all of these concerns. The researchers identified scholarly work that has been written on Zimbabwe's culinary elements as a form of intangible cultural heritage. This was searched for on all scholarly platforms that the researchers were exposed and had access to. Attention was given to work that had been done on Zimbabwe and the region. Regional papers were considered because some of them make reference to Zimbabwe. Content analysis was then done on each of the papers is order to establish its depth in dealing with Zimbabwe's indigenous culinary elements. The intention was however not to establish new frameworks and theories but to bring out the gap, if any, in the concerned area. Therefore, in terms of methodology, this research is a desk research.

3.1 The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

After making several treaties and conventions aimed at preserving heritage in different parts of the world, the United Nations, through one of its arms, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) came up with a pact which is specifically aimed at safeguarding that part of heritage which is intangible in nature. It was at the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference that was held in Paris from 29 September to 17 October 2003 that the treaty now known as The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003 was drafted and declared. According to Kurin (2004), 120 member states who were at this meeting voted for the convention. Only a few countries, amongst them, Australia, Canada, the United States of America and Switzerland abstained from voting. It was created after the realisation that other declarations and conventions that were already in existence did not fully champion the need for the protection or safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. These include the United Nations Universal Declaration for Human Rights of 1948 (UNESCO, 1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (UNESCO, 1966), the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972) and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989 (UNESCO, 1989). All these declarations and others not mentioned acted as forerunners to the 2003 ICH Convention. A closer look at all of these previous declarations shows that they have articles and sections which to some extent address issues that have to do with the protection and safeguarding of intangible heritage. However, this important aspect somehow seemed to be overshadowed by other mandates that each of them have. It was also observed that despite the existence of these conventions, with some of them such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights having been in place from as far back as 1948, intangible cultural heritage continued to disappear. This was being further worsened by the risks coming from globalisation and social transformation, as observed by (Severo & Venturini, 2016).

Kurin states that 'the Convention commits nations to develop inventories of their intangible cultural heritage and to work with local communities, groups and individual practitioners on various, appropriate means of 'safeguarding' those traditions' (Kurin, 2004, p. 71). This creation of inventory lists is a rational way of identifying and itemizing intangible cultural heritage as a prelude to management – just as is done for other cultural 'property' like monuments and archaeological sites. That way it would become easier to locate, identify and safeguard the ICH. As it is, before the 2003 Convention, the protection of the ICH was accidental. In Southern Africa, UNESCO established a Regional Office of Southern Africa (ROSA), which amongst other duties, drives the implementation of the convention in those Southern African countries that have ratified the convention. So far, the office is working with seven countries in the SAICH Platform project and these are Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It is these countries that this paper will also look at in terms of literature that focuses on what has been done in as far as the inclusion of culinary or

gastronomy elements on any of the inventory lists that the 2003 Convention says each member country must have.

3.2 Culinary or Gastronomy Elements and ICH

According to de-Miguel-Molina, de-Miguel-Molina, Santamarina Campos, and del Val Segarra-Oña, (2016, p. 293), 'intangible heritage is a relatively new concept and one that has undergone significant development over the past half-century'. This view is also supported by Kurin (2004) who states that most people do not know what ICH is. This lack of knowledge partly rests on the fact that the notion of intangible heritage is itself a new one. It is therefore not surprising that most people in most African communities are not able to link their gastronomy elements to ICH. Probably this is the reason why there is a dearth of literature in the area. It is probably important at this stage to define the key terms that this paper is based on. These are heritage, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and gastronomy (culinary). The term heritage has been defined differently by diverse scholars to an extent that it has become a bit ambiguous. However, in this paper, we use the definition by Welch which simply puts heritage as 'anything valued by people today that was also valued by previous generations. Heritage is what we have accepted as gifts from those who came before us' (Welch, 2014, p. 1). This definition is in line with what Harvey (2001) had earlier own said when he defined heritage as a cultural process, a concept that evolves over time to create a form of identity, power, and authority throughout society. We are not going to dwell much on the ambiguities that surround the term but we will only state here that heritage is in two forms. These are the tangible heritage and the intangible heritage. Tangible heritage, as the term suggests, refers to that form of heritage which is concrete and visible in nature. This is the form of legacy that quickly comes into people's minds when the term is mentioned. This is probably due to the fact that the world has for a long time concentrated on this form of inheritance, at the expense of giving a similar emphasis to that other form. Our major focus in this paper is on intangible cultural heritage, which is defined by the 2003 Convention as:

> the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO, 2003).

While the above definition does not make a specific reference to food or gastronomy or food, these are inferred, especially in the first sentence of the definition. Terms such as practices, knowledge and skills can be expanded and be put into perspective to imply food practices, knowledge of preparing food and skills of preparing food. These practices, knowledge and skills, as the definition goes on to say, will be recognized

by communities as part of their cultural heritage. While practices, expressions, knowledge and skills are purely intangible, it is interesting to note that the definition includes elements that seem to be tangible. Instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces are all tangible and even visible forms of heritage. The question therefore may be how do these tangible forms of heritage qualify as intangible cultural heritage? The response to such a question is that they are a manifestation of the intangible aspect that is behind each of them. The knowledge and skills of making and playing or using a certain instrument is intangible in nature. The knowledge and skills of designing and making a certain object or artefact is also in itself intangible in nature. While cultural spaces are physically visible places, the practices that are performed in those places are intangible in nature. A good example is a study of Ntaba zika Mambo that was done by Munjeri (2009) where a debacle ensued between the government and the locals who wanted to continue performing their rituals on the site. So, the site itself is tangible, but what is done there is intangible, which is where the link between the two is. Therefore what is coming out here is that intangible and tangible heritage are two sides of the same coin.

Gastronomy is defined by Vanhonacker et al., (2010, p. 453) as:

> A traditional food product is a product frequently consumed or associated to specific celebrations and/or seasons, transmitted from one generation to another, made in a specific way according to gastronomic heritage, naturally processed, and distinguished and known because of its sensory properties and associated to a certain local area, region or country.

This definition is interesting in the sense that it mentions the word 'traditional'. That is key especially to this paper because the 2003 Convention places emphasis on intangible heritage elements that are local. In fact, what is coming out is a striking similarity in the definition of ICH above and that of gastronomy. The phrases; transmitted from generation to generation, consistently recreated by communities, made in a specific way according to gastronomic; which are evident or implied in both definitions show that the two, gastronomy and ICH are interwoven and in fact gastronomy is a part of ICH. So, according to the definition, the food must be made in a specific way and according to gastronomic heritage and this include seven the utensils used. Further to that, it must be naturally processed and distinguished in a way that will associate it with a certain local area, region or country. So, if the same food product is processed and prepared by foreigners in that community in a different way it loses some elements which qualify it to be a traditional gastronomy. If western methods are used in the preparation of that food product it means certain sensory properties will be lost thereby losing its traditional nature. This is interesting because there are a lot of counterfeit food products, especially in restaurants that have heavily commercialized the production of most of these culinary items. While commercialization itself is not bad, it must be coupled with an equally matching level of quality assurance. Processes of quality assurance that are inherent in traditional specific ways of preparing these traditional dishes are lacking in commercialized

products, thereby leading to a mass production of counterfeit products.

The above definition of traditional gastronomy by Vanhonacker is also supported by Matviyiv (2014, p. 314) who adds that gastronomy incorporates 'the national dishes of all countries should cook using local ingredients of country cuisine.' So these will be dishes that are prepared using locally found ingredients and nothing imported. Barrère, Bonnard and Chossat (2012) add an interesting dimension to gastronomic heritage. They argue that gastronomy heritage also includes the manner of drinking and eating. What is coming out here is that it does not end with what goes into the preparation of the food itself, but it goes further to include the way in which the finished product is presented and consumed. The Kalanga, for example, have as their treasured traditional cuisine pearl millet *hadza*. This food product is consumed with bare hands, and not spoons or forks and knives. This means that the way in which the product is consumed also has a bearing on whether one is going to enjoy it or not. It may have been prepared following every step but the person consuming it may miss it in the manner in which he is supposed to consume it.

4.0 Discussion

Data for this paper was gathered through desk research. A content analysis of the retrieved articles was therefore done in order to ascertain how much has been done in researching gastronomy elements as ICH. On a global scale, de-Miguel-Molina et al. (2016, p. 299) discovered that

> 'while intangible heritage studies have increased in frequency in recent years, the study of gastronomy as intangible heritage is an area that academic literature has yet to explore, with interdisciplinary research in this area being of special interest for the future.'

This dearth of literature on a global scale is what is cascaded down to Zimbabwe on a local scale. While the concept of ICH is itself a new phenomenon, with the convention having declared in 2003, Lupton (2008) observes that it was not until 2008 that UNESCO shifted towards new categories of heritage and, specifically, towards a consideration of gastronomy and its symbolic role in societies. So originally, gastronomy elements were not thought of as being a part of ICH. This explains why ICH literature on gastronomy elements only seems to date back as far as 2010, seven years later, after the convention had been put in place. This was after Mexico had submitted to the Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage a nomination file entitled *Traditional Mexican Cuisine – Ancestral, Ongoing Community Culture, the Michoacán Paradigm* for inclusion onto the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This list consists of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance. This was one of the three proposals that were submitted to the committee for inclusion into the list. The other two were *The Gastronomic Meal of the French* which was submitted by France and *The Mediterranean Diet* which was jointly submitted by Morocco, Italy, Spain and Greece. These three were accepted and were put on the list (de-Miguel-Molina, de-Miguel-Molina, Santamarina-Campos, & Segarra-Oña, 2016).

In view this late entry of gastronomic elements onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, it was therefore not surprising to discover that

all literature on Zimbabwean cuisine that was found during the study did not link it to ICH. Amongst the scholars that we encountered during the research was Oktay and Sadıkoğlu (2018). They assessed how the former colonial gastronomic cultures have had an impact on the African cuisine. They sampled four African countries, namely, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Zimbabwe. They discovered that when European settlers came to Africa, they brought their own culinary culture. In South Africa, these settlers were the Dutch, the British, the French and the Germans. The scholars assert that the Germans are the ones who introduced South Africans to the sausage which is locally called *boerewors*. *Boerewors*, is a kind of traditional sausage which is commonly consumed in the whole country. The British coupled their coming with bringing slaves from their other colonies such as India. The Indians brought with them a wide variety of herbs and spices. These spices are a part of every meal in South Africa, including the *boerewors*. The French introduced the inclusion of cream and mutton. This means that the South African culinary culture was affected by gastronomic elements from these foreign nations. This is an observation which is also made by Anyango, de Kock, and Taylor (2011). These scholars observed that these elements mixed well with the local foods, producing a rich and unique form of a hybrid cuisine. It is not clear whether South Africa ratified the 2003 Convention, but what is clear is that it recognises the existence and need to safeguard the ICH. South Africa has not yet ratified the 2003 Convention according to the UNESCO list of 178 member states that have either ratified or accepted it. The prerequisite, according to the South African legal procedures for the ratification of such international standard setting instruments, is to have a national policy for the concerned domain or issue. South Africa developed a national policy on living heritage several years ago (Damir 2019). The draft policy fully recognizes the provisions of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and as such the two are complementing each other. South Africa's delay in the ratification of the 2003 Convention is due to the processes of adopting the national policy first before the Cabinet may consider the ratification of the Convention. Manetsi (2011) gives a detailed critique of this national policy on living heritage.

Concerning Zimbabwe, Oktay and Sadıkoğlu (2018) claim that the original traditional food for Zimbabwe was cassava. There was a shift later on to the present dominant cuisine of *isitshwala/ sadza/ hadza. Isitshwala* was also traditionally prepared from flour that came from pearl millet and finger millet, and this varied from region to region. Later on, the Portuguese traders introduced maize to the Zimbabweans. Oktay and Sadıkoğlu's claim is not true because, like maize, cassava was introduced into Africa by Portuguese traders from Brazil in the 16th century (Okgbo, 1980; FAO and IFAD, 2005). This is further cemented by the fact that, currently there is no part of Zimbabwe that has cassava as its traditional food. In fact, most Zimbabweans do not know what cassava is, let alone how it is prepared into food. Those that know it are those who have had an opportunity to travel to countries further North towards Central and West Africa where there are communities who still have cassava as their staple food. The scholars agree though that both cassava and maize were introduced to the locals by European traders. They do not say what the people who are called Zimbabweans today used to eat and consider

as their staple food. Again, due to the nature of their research, which looks at how European dishes affected local ones, they could not relate the preparation of these foods to ICH or at least use ICH terminology. This is despite the fact that their study was carried out 15 years after the adoption of the convention and 8 years after the first set of nomination files with gastronomic elements was accepted by the Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage and included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of humanity. For reasons stated above, we only focus on their discussion on Zimbabwean culinary dishes and for those of surrounding countries.

A study which has been generally regarded as pioneering work on indigenous and traditional foods is that by Gomez (1988). He came up with a resource inventory of indigenous and traditional foods in Zimbabwe. Gomez's work sought to cover the whole of Zimbabwe which therefore made his work to be shallow in terms of how he discussed each food product. He noted that due to a number of factors, modern rural communities have shifted from the broad diversified traditional food resources base. This has been a major cause of food shortages especially in Southern Africa. Gomez goes on to state that a more serious problem is on the abstract side. This is 'the loss of a vast and ancient legacy of knowledge in identifying and recognizing these resources and of the often elaborate traditional technologies for their utilization' (Gomez, 1988, p. 53). The ancient legacy of knowledge that is being referred to here is what has come to be known as intangible cultural heritage. At the time Gomez did his study the term intangible cultural heritage had not yet been developed, but intangible heritage was already there. This ancient legacy of knowledge was often coupled with traditional technologies, which Gomez says were elaborate in nature. Traditional technologies are also a part of the ICH. So as early as 1988, some researchers such as Gomez had already noted with concern that the loss of ICH was more serious than that of physical heritage. The loss of physical heritage was itself a manifestation of a bigger underlying problem, which is the loss of ICH. Gomez's inventory of traditional foods may easily act as a starting point for Zimbabwe as a State Party to the UNESCO 2003 Convention in beefing up its Representative List of ICH elements as required by the convention.

Mahachi-Chatibura and Saayman (2015) tackle the challenges that hinder the promotion of the local Setswana cuisine in Botswana. They identify several factors which act as challenges that suppress the uptake of local cuisines in hotel restaurants. In this review we will focus on two of the challenges that they discovered. The first challenge has to do with supressed supply. Most indigenous people do not produce indigenous foods at a commercial scale but for subsistence. This means that demand for local gastronomy elements easily exceeds supply such that hotel restaurants end up not producing enough food. The supply chain is simply not reliable and it will be a great risk for the restaurants to base on it. There is therefore a need for some players to take the production of indigenous gastronomic elements such as indigenous free-range chickens, to a commercial scale. Further to supply irregularities, the scholars also established that the quality of the supplies was also inconsistent. Quality is a major concern for everyone when it comes to food. Restaurants have a reputation to protect, so as to keep clients. They therefore cannot afford

to be sloppy on that by allowing standards to go down.

One way of dealing with the problem of supply is to adopt a model of serving 'vegetables in season' on certain days. This model will be based on the fact that indigenous communities have different vegetables in different seasons. If there is a need to have a constant supply of certain indigenous vegetables throughout the year, then the process of drying these vegetables should be done at a large scale. Southern Africa has discrete highly predictable seasons in terms of how they follow each other. That on its own makes it possible for Africans to plan for seasons when certain types of vegetables will not be season. One such way of planning is drying the vegetables. Fresh or dried vegetables can still be served together with other delicacies that come our way throughout the year.

The other challenge that Mahachi-Chatibura and Saayman discovered in their research is that of lack of knowledge. A Botswana Tourism Organisation representative is quoted by the two scholars stating that there is limited knowledge on traditional food preparation. This shows that the knowledge and skills of preparing local cuisines is no longer shared by everyone. This is of particular interest to this paper because the knowledge and skills that is being referred to make up the ICH that we are so concerned about in our endeavour to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Our western oriented form of education also worsens the situation by concentrating on teaching students how to prepare European and Asian foods. Africans spend a lot of energy learning how to prepare such foods at the expense of mastering how to prepare their local cuisines which is a part of their heritage. What this means is that firstly, the sustainability of this ICH element is under threat. It is no longer passed on from one generation to the next at a scale that is commensurate with the demand for it. Secondly, the employment policy of the restaurants has no provisions for chefs with special skills in the preparation of local cuisines. What is coming out here is that there is a high probability that the training of their chefs is biased towards western recipes, with little or no training at all on recipes for indigenous dishes. However, the two scholars do not use the term intangible cultural heritage in their study. The limited and irregular supplies of the indigenous produce they refer to may be a symptom of limited knowledge in the ICH of making that produce. The fact that they do not use the term intangible heritage means they may not be aware that what they are referring to is intangible heritage. This is in line with an observation that was made by Kurin (2004) that most people do not know what intangible cultural heritage is.

Parawira and Muchuweti (2008) review the trend and status of food science in Zimbabwe over a period of three decades. They note that significant research has been done on fermented milk and sorghum-based foods but there are still gaps on a lot of other traditional cuisines. The two scholars define fermented foods as

> 'those that are indigenous to a particular area and have been developed by the local people using old-age techniques and locally available raw materials. Traditional recipes are handed down through generations are still used in processing food in Zimbabwe' (Parawira & Muchuweti, 2008, p. 600).

This definition fits very well with that of intangible cultural heritage above. However,

the two scholars seem not to be aware that what they are describing is ICH. This is despite the fact that they did their research three years after Zimbabwe had ratified the 2003 Convention. Their study is informed by western scientific epistemology and focuses on food science, but they do make reference to cultural methods. They however do not refer to those methods as ICH.

Mahati and Bourdillon (2001) assess the role of women in processing millet in Nyamadzawo Village, Chimanimani District in Zimbabwe. The scholars established that pearl millet undergoes a number of processes that are arduous and time-consuming prior to milling. These processes are mainly performed by women and they involve threshing, winnowing, dehulling, baking, grinding and cooking. In the case studies that the two scholars did, they established that women in Nyamadzawo village still prefer processing millet using their traditional methods, despite the invention of dehulling machines such as the hammer mills. Although the traditional method of dehulling is time consuming, arduous and labour intensive, the women still believe that the finished food product is better than that which will have been processed using the hammer mill. Such confidence is encouraging and is necessary for the sustainability of the living heritage because the definition of heritage that is given above mentions the importance of 'a specific way' of doing something. The women in Nyamadzawo appreciate and see the value of preserving that specific way. The fact that the two scholars are concerned that the traditional methods take too much of the Nyamadzawo women's time, shows that they do not realise the importance of ICH. But on the same note, it could have been such an attitude that pushed UNESCO into realizing that existing instruments then were not doing enough in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

In Malawi, which is one of the seven countries which are under ROSA, *nsima*, was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017. This was the first gastronomy element from Southern Africa to achieve such a status. That on its own is evidence that research and work on safeguarding gastronomy elements as ICH in Southern Africa is still at its infancy. *Nsima* is what is called *isitshwala* (Ndebele), *sadza* (Shona) and *hadza* (Kalanga) in Zimbabwe. There are variations though in the processes that are employed in the preparation of *nsima* from community to community. These range from the type of grain which produces the flour to the way in which the final food product is consumed. In Zimbabwe, efforts are currently underway to prepare a nomination file for pearl millet *hadza* amongst the Kalanga, which will be submitted for consideration to be inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It is a cause for concern that an element which is a staple food for most communities in Southern Africa had its variant submitted only 14 years after the convention was voted for. This shows that other Southern African culinary elements, which are special, are in extreme danger. If it has taken such a long time for an element which is a form of staple food, it will even take longer for food products that are not frequently prepared.

5.0 Conclusion

It was generally observed during the research that while there has been some significant research on food science and technology in

Zimbabwe, very little has been done in terms of research on the ICH part of those food products. Most researches have been done on the nutritional value and content of Zimbabwean foods. There is still a gap on the traditional methods of making such foods. These methods and skills of making local cuisines and processing gastronomic elements are what make the ICH of Zimbabwean dishes. There is therefore need for clear recipes and cooking methods because such knowledge is intangible heritage. The lapse in the documentation and preservation of such skills and knowledge has also affected quality assurance mechanisms for traditional dishes. The little literature that the research managed to retrieve does make some reference to traditional food, but does not brand it as a form of ICH. Proper branding and packaging using the correct terminology will assist in ICH awareness raising efforts. There is now an influx of inadequately trained cooks, who produce counterfeit dishes which fall far below the standard of what local cuisines should be. This problem is exacerbated by factors such as lack of literature or scholarly work in the area. There is some significant work on food science mainly because there are food science departments at tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe and other countries, but this is not replicated on the ICH part. It is therefore recommended in this paper that equal attention should be given to the ICH aspect of the local traditional foods because they are a part of our heritage and most importantly, their continued practice may contribute towards alleviating food shortages.

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FOSTERING COEXISTENCE AMONG WOMEN FROM DIVERSE POLITICAL BACKGROUNDS THROUGH PEACE GARDENING: THE CASE OF GUTU AND BIKITA DISTRICTS IN ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the use of peace gardens as an agent for promoting coexistence among women from diverse political groupings in Gutu and Bikita districts in Masvingo province. The historical antiquity of Zimbabwe has demonstrated active participation by women in various political roles ranging from serving as spirit mediums, freedom fighters, and liberation war supporters. Zimbabwe has been characterized by memoirs of political violence since pre-colonial times and consequences of such a violent history have been strained relationships; polarisation and a traumatized society. Zimbabwean women have not been spared of partisan conflict challenges bedevilling the country. The motivational factor for writing this paper arose from the realization that polarization was fueling an unconducive atmosphere for women to become threat proxies to peace and security in communities. This was a qualitative study based on data generated through focus groups, interviews, and the available literature on women's participation in the political trajectory in Zimbabwe. The study was carried out with a sample of 36 women participants from the key informants and focus group discussions from which an action team of 10 participants was formed. The research findings from this study revealed that partisan politics has become the focal base for conflict and disharmony among politically active women in Zimbabwe. The findings further discovered the efficacy of the peace gardening intervention strategy in promoting women promoting a culture of peace. This paper makes a contribution to scholarship in a neglected area of women empowerment through the use of peace gardens towards broader peacebuilding. The study, therefore, recommends more prolonged homegrown intervention strategies and readily available resources in promoting the change of women's mind-sets in fostering durable peace.

Key Words: Coexistence, Fostering, Mind-set and peace gardening

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the fostering of coexistence among women from diverse political backgrounds through peace gardening in Gutu and Bikita districts in Zimbabwe. The historical antiquity of Zimbabwe has demonstrated active participation by women in various political roles ranging from serving as spirit mediums, freedom fighters, and liberation war supporters. Zimbabwe has been characterized by memoirs of political violence since pre-colonial times and consequences of such a history has been strained relationships; polarisation and a traumatized society. Zimbabwean women have not been spared of partisan conflict challenges bedevilling the country. The motivational factor for writing this paper arose from the realization that polarization was fuelling an unconducive atmosphere for women to become threat proxies to peace and security in communities.

The phenomenon of polarization which has reached alarming levels in Zimbabwe has fuelled conflicts among the locals including women from diverse political backgrounds. The lack of peaceful coexistence among the victims and perpetrators of violence in Zimbabwe and the lack of effective context-specific intervention strategies have created a divisive form of conflict in Gutu and Bikita rural communities. This study sought to explore the worth of using peace gardens in promoting coexistence among women in Gutu and Bikita districts in Zimbabwe. Previous attempts to promote similar initiatives of encouraging women from rural communities to embrace political diversity have been tried by some donor funded organisations but failed to realize successes on the basis that the initiatives were not owned by the locals but by the external actors Smith (2010). The motivational factor for addressing this problem arose from the philosophical perspective that working together for a common goal builds sustainable and long-lasting peace among women from Gutu and Bikita districts. This study, therefore, suggests the use of peace gardening ventures in smaller numbers and allowing women from diverse political upbringings to take leading roles in executing context-specific and home-grown intervention strategies towards fostering coexistence.

The conflict in Zimbabwe was caused by national political disunity and economic hardships perpetuated by the economic embargo the country is reeling under from the United States of America and her allies. The solution proposed by this study was underpinned by two essential components, i.e. community participation and local ownership of solutions. In analysing this case, the intention was to identify broad indicators that could expand knowledge of community peacebuilding, for example, that of sustainability. Does local participation by women and ownership usually enhance sustainability of a peacebuilding effort? de Coning (2016) posits that " for a peace process to become sustainable, resilient social institutions need to emerge from within, i.e. from the local culture, history and socio-economic context." This study case utilised participatory action research (PAR) as a research method well suited to integrate theoretical analysis and knowledge of how conflicts can be transformed into peace, irrespective of context. The concepts of community-based peacebuilding and PAR are conceptualised differently in that PAR is a research methodology that has broad applications while community-based peacebuilding is specific to peacebuilding. The study focused on the centrality of local ownership and participation as the means of creating solutions. The results of community-based peacebuilding efforts tend to be very positive, but there are general issues that I believed needed to be considered for this case: the degree to which (a) a solution can be sustainable; (b) national policies may cause conflict or disrupt a community's peaceful achievements; (c) participation is utilised since this can range from superficial to full collaboration.

Sustainability

I consider sustainability to be a crucial consideration in the fostering of coexistence among women from diverse political

backgrounds. De Coning links sustainability with the community's capacity to self-organise: "sustaining peace should be about stimulating and facilitating the capacity of societies to self-organize" (de Coning, 2016). A community articulates its own problems, identifies complex issues, utilises its own knowledge of realistic solutions, and draws on its unity. Such methods tend to take place organically with solutions taking shape in nonlinear ways without predetermination. One such sustainable peacebuilding effort is illustrated in Seke, Zimbabwe, in which Chivasa (2017) designed a study aimed at reducing political violence. His initial investigation identified culturally held knowledge of conflict resolution, then utilising this knowledge, assisted in the formation of a peace committee, which included religious, political, government, and community representatives. News of the successes of the Seke peacebuilding committee spread to neighbouring communities where similar committees were established. One of the key elements was that of collective discussions and decision making. This study supports de Coning's contention linking sustainability to self-organisation. Sustainability can also be conceptualised as an outcome of effective peacebuilding initiatives, meaning that they are likely to withstand internal and external influences.

National and Local Policies

In terms of the influence of national policies, local ownership is acknowledged as the most effective approach to conflict resolution; however, local and national institutions complement and act upon each other. National issues such as widespread poverty, inequalities, and political disunity have destructive influences on a local community. In South Africa, for example, inequalities and poverty are deeply entrenched in Black communities and are the causes of conflicts and high rates of crime (Harris & Vermaak, 2015). Community protests regarding poor government service delivery result in violent responses (Breakfast et al., 2019), who note that "violent service delivery protests have been the main daily diet across the country for a few years." In the Eastern Cape, Zimuto (2020) investigated the use of nonviolent methods to solve problems of poor service delivery and was told by participants that violence was necessary as otherwise government would not listen to their complaints. The existence of gaps between external and internal initiatives and the associated lack of intrinsic motivations has been identified as contributing to the failures of peacebuilding interventions (Nascimento, 2017). National support of local peacebuilding efforts is uneven. Autesserre (2017) points out that challenges occur even with well-intentioned interventions: Examples include peacekeeping forces that produce mixed results, confusion existing amongst the various stakeholders, or inadequate financial support provided. " although foreign actors routinely contribute to conflict resolution, peacebuilding efficacy relies primarily on the actions, interests, and strategies of domestic entities" (Autesserre, 2017). Conversely, the possibility of successful local peacebuilding efforts contributing to national solutions needs further investigation so that local lessons learned can be translated into effective national peacebuilding strategies. The lessons deduced from both national and local efforts imply that there is a vital need for continuous reflection, for challenging assumptions with the aim of arriving at broader knowledge. the possibility of successful local peacebuilding efforts contributing to national solutions needs further investigation so that local lessons learned can be translated into effective national peacebuilding strategies.

Participation

Participation is widely seen as central to all peacebuilding and development programmes. Donais and McCandless (2017) argue that there is a major shift towards inclusivity in peacebuilding, that "inclusivity means acknowledging both the presence and legitimacy of a potentially wide range of civil society and non-state actors." This perspective provides a framework for change, noting that complex issues need to be resolved in order to achieve a truly consultative, unified process in resolving conflicts. On the local level, participation is defined as "the inclusion of the local context, local communities and agencies," (Leoardsson & Rudd, 2015). Local participation is increasingly advocated by

international institutions that "now call for 'local ownership' of peace processes and post-conflict state-building efforts" (Roll, 2016). I postulate that when people are involved in a participatory and consultative process, conditions are created for a collective solution to be reached. However, simply to say a study is participatory is insufficient without recognising that it is a complex and thoughtful process, requiring constant internal and external critique and evaluation throughout the process. Feedback from both observers and participants is also necessary as often an observer or "outsider" sees a problem that those intimately involved may miss. The awareness of assumptions and the process of challenging them are furthermore essential, given that false or misleading assumptions can easily lead to unexpected or even harmful effects.

Pre-intervention situations in Gutu and Bikita districts

This study explores ways of fostering coexistence among women from diverse political groupings in the aftermath of the Zimbabwe post-independence election-related violence. The situation in Zimbabwean up to now portrays divided societies and groups, including women Sachikonye (2010). The writer of this article witnessed these glaring divisions having worked in Bikita district for eighteen years and being a resident in Gutu for around twenty years now. The community relationships mainly among women have continued to show elements of tension as a result of the political polarization. This study purports to explore the potential use of peace gardens as peacebuilding tools in fostering coexistence among women from Gutu and Bikita districts. The type of inquiry used in this study is an advocacy participation world view while the research design is qualitative with exploratory, action research and evaluation components (Creswell 2009: 5). The outcome of the study thrives to foster coexistence among women in these two districts so as to promote their political broadmindedness.

Zimbabwe's elections, which have been held regularly since independence in 1980, have been dented by election-related violence which left post-conflict challenges among women in Gutu and Bikita districts (Zvobgo 2016). The aftermath of the election-related disturbances is being felt in the referred two districts by political party supporters, mainly women who were also participating in acts of political violence as either victims or perpetrators of violence during the election-related violent campaigns. These women are now living together in communities on a daily basis but have remained divided along partisan lines and are still showing signs of cracked relationships. Partisan politics, disunity and continuous reference to each other as political adversaries have remained the order of the day in Bikita and Gutu (LeBas 2006: 435). There are sad cases where community members have failed to attend funeral services within their neighboring communities due to different political groupings and the recollections of past violent election-related acts, an act which is purely unAfrican and does not auger well with the African concept of *Ubuntu or Unhu* (Rukuni 2019)

The economic situation in the two districts leaves the community members, especially the women at risk of manipulation by politicians who promise them food and money for continuous allegiance and support even through violent acts during election times (Fuller 2010). The level of distrust among the women in the two districts in question is very high and is foiling cooperative attempts in the area (Alexander and McGregor 2013: 752). There have been some peacebuilding initiatives of bringing women together in the past through sports and money lending projects by some Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) but the lack of cooperation and partisan divisions have

hindered such enterprises (Manungo, 2018). The consequences of such a dented community have been a society lacking trust and characterized by broken relationships based on past memories of political violence. This study proposes through the contact theory (Allport 1979), a study that uses peace gardens in fostering coexistence among women from the country's rival political parties. It is important to note that peace gardens in themselves, however, are not the only solution to the post-conflict challenges in Gutu and Bikita but are an example of one which can be useful. Peace gardens are representative of initiatives that bring women together and give them a common purpose of belonging.

Context of the Research

World over, more than 1.5 billion people have been affected by conflict through wars and political violence and are struggling with post-conflict challenges including women (Tsuma, Pentori and Mashiko 2014: 45). The thrust in peacebuilding initiatives in modern times should focus on localizing peace intervention strategies in order to foster durable and sustainable peace (Funk 2012: 392). Moix (2016: 59) highlighted that the participation of local actors in peacebuilding has yielded tremendous results and has contributed meaningfully to sustainable peace.

Moyo (2013) and (LeBas 2006: 433) highlighted that considering the fact that Zimbabwe has gone through cycle(s) of election-related violence, the scenario exhibits a dire need for emphasis on formulating home-grown intervention strategies in addressing local conflicts (Rukuni et al. 2015: 76). There are on-going attempts at the national level by various actors to transform post-conflict zones but the challenge is that they still use the trickle-down theory which has proved to be a failing strategy over the years.

The current context in Gutu and Bikita districts is characterized by local community members including the women who have remained divided along party lines in the aftermath of election-related violence and there is evidence of division, disunity, and lack of cooperation among community members (Tesoriero 2006: 185). There have been some initiatives in the two districts by external and local community members to solve conflicts like sports and poultry projects. Peace gardens will build on those initiatives with the emphasis on transforming post-conflict relationships mainly among women from.

Peace gardening intervention strategy

Gardens have been and are still cherished very highly in Zimbabwe. Peace gardens will be a term used in this study to mean any enclosed portion of land used for the purpose of cultivating vegetables or any other garden produce with the sole purpose of mending or transforming post-conflict relationships (Rukuni 2018). The majority of the population in Zimbabwe use gardens for income generation, enhancing food productivity all year round and household nutritional purposes. The Zimbabwean scenario has shown that gardening can be an individual, a family on its own or collective activity which requires cooperation. This study proposed collective gardening which serves as both the means of addressing economic challenges as well as transforming post-conflict relationships among the women in rural communities.

A great deal of research has been conducted on the use of gardens for empowering communities, improving psychological well-being, restoration of good health, rural livelihoods and communal cooperation (Erickson 2012: 89). However, the aspects of how gardens have been used in transforming post-conflict relations among women from seem to have been under-researched.

Gardens became prominent in the United Kingdom in early 1819 and in the 1830s while Western Europe had also embraced the gardening culture by then (Local Histories 2014). Gardens became widely used in the American city of Detroit in the 1890s while in Africa gardens are believed to have existed since prehistoric times (Taylor and Francis 2009). Gardens came in all sizes and shapes and have brought people of different age groups together; transmitting heritage stories, dismantling cultural barriers and integrating members into their food system among other things (Hoffman 2010: 174).

There has been a long history of using gardens for various reasons i.e. empowering communities, improving people's psychological well-being, social relations and restoration of good health (Erickson 2012: 89). Having been initiated back in the 18th and 19th centuries, gardens resurfaced strongly during the course of the second world war in 1939 (Maroyi 2009). Gardens enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in many developed market economies such as England and Australia and today gardens have come in all shapes and sizes (Pearson, Firth and Maye 2011: 555). Gardens have been used for the purpose of uniting neighbors on a small scale and have produced positive community-building outcomes since time immemorial on the African continent (Cohen, Vega and Watson 2011).

Peace gardens facilitate people's desire to reconnect with nature and the community (Pearson, Firth and Maye 2011). There is a need, therefore, to explore more about the garden effects and find out their potential role in transforming post-conflict relationships. Research has shown that gardening activities have the potential to improve community relationships (Hoffman 2010: 173). Much of the community gardens literature usefully describes how these particular initiatives work to re-build a sense of community and transform post-conflict relationships along the way (Armstrong 2000, Hancock 2000, Wilson 2001, Twiss et al. 2003). The concept of using gardens for various reasons including rebuilding communities, restoration of good health and wellness is not a new phenomenon, it has been observed throughout history up to the present but I saw the essence of using them for fostering coexistence among women from diverse political groupings (Erickson 2012: 89).

Peace gardens have always served as a great way of bringing communities together to plan, work and care for a common project for the enjoyment of all (Pax Christi 2015). Those positive effects of the peace gardens need to be strengthened and extended to rebuilding communities damaged by political violence especially among women from diverse political backgrounds. Concurrently, social science research on peace gardens is also growing as evidenced by the following works which have all been centered on various uses of community gardens: Irvine et al (1999), Armstrong (2000), Schemelzk (2002) and Glover (2004).

There has been a mass establishment of gardens in Zimbabwe, but the thrust has been on maintaining sustainable rural livelihoods and household nutritional purposes (Chazovachii, Mutami and Boora 2011). These gardens have provided opportunities to enhance social capital, promote interactions and social inclusion (Glover 2004, Kingsley and Townsend 2006, Quayle 2008). Literature has demonstrated that gardens have the potential to transform relationships but have not been used extensively in transforming post-conflict relationships. Research has been advanced by various scholars that the use of gardens in general for community building is paramount (Armstrong 2000, Hancock 2000, Wilson 2001, Twiss et al. 2003). However, the use of small numbers to empower local

participants with peacebuilding skills and knowledge specifically focusing on community methods towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding has been under-researched.

2.0 Methodology

The sample population

The total study population for both key informants and FGDs comprised of 36 participants. The Action Team comprising of 10 women participants from the two main political parties, was drawn from the study population of 36 women participants drawn from the country's main political parties. Morgan (1997) suggests that data saturation should be used to determine the sample size. This sample was generated from politically active women in Bikita and Gutu districts.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study included political party supporters and other Zimbabwean nationals who lived in Masvingo province's Bikita and Gutu districts. Children and other apolitical Zimbabweans who lived in these defined areas were excluded from the research processes.

3.0 Research process and the early reaction by the women participants

This section gives a description of the action research process which was carried out in Gutu and Bikita districts with women drawn from diverse political backgrounds over a fairly long period of time. Series of consultative and logistical sessions were conducted before a decision was reached with my participants on what intervention strategy to take. These consultative meetings were carried out with the local traditional leadership and the farm owner where the peace garden was to be established. The meetings were meant to map out modalities in the way the research was to be carried out. When the research concept was first introduced to the rival political party supporters, there was a great deal of acrimony among these community members. The preliminary logistical meetings were unquestionably tension-filled with the political party supporters from either side vowing never to work together on the basis of their political differences. Though this initiative was unimaginable at first considering its sensitive nature, the platform was used to explain in detail the aims and objectives of the study to the people concerned who later on accepted the idea and agreed to participate. The majority of the members were at first sceptical of being perceived as sell-outs by other political members and were also afraid of being blamed for disclosing party secrets to rival political party supporters.

The reaction by the action team participants served as a clear indication that the study participants do not change their attitudes over a short period of time. Some were sceptical of the intervention strategy, a development that led them to remain undecided, a scenario which warranted the need for more cycles or to have individual follow-ups on such action team members. The fact that the project had been given the green light by all of the leadership of the two political parties helped in convincing the supporters from either side to participate in the peace gardening initiative. The participants were also persuaded to take peace gardening seriously upon the realization that when ordinary people were banded together, they do extraordinary things such as community cohesion and transforming tainted relationships for the better.

Reasons why peace gardens were preferred by the action team participants

The action team opted to engage in peace gardening as an intervention strategy for fostering the mindsets of women from diverse political backgrounds at the expense of other communal projects on the basis that they viewed peace gardening in small numbers as an unexplored avenue for

promoting harmony among political rivals. The participants had seen similar ventures being employed for community development elsewhere involving large numbers faltering and creating more conflicts among the project participants. The women thus opted for peace gardening in small numbers on the basis that it facilitates dialogue platforms among them as highlighted in the following statement:

> *We preferred participating in small numbers in the peace gardening project as people coming from diverse political backgrounds on the basis that similar attempts to unite people had been tried but did not yield positive results. Positive results were not realized previously because too many people took part in the projects and as a result, the projects ended up brewing conflicts and creating negative perceptions.*

There was consensus among the action team members that there was a need to do peace gardening together in order to rebuild their relationships which had been broken by partisan-related clashes since 1980 as pointed out by one of the action team members who pointed out that:

> Since 1980, it is sad to say that we have been doing nothing to curb the ugly effects of partisan-related violence and that has compelled us to be harmed by the effects of political violence over and over again and this peace gardening initiative will help us to mend our broken relationships and enhance our political broadmindedness.

Peace gardens were also selected since they were perceived as having the potential to re-build community cohesion after a series of election-related episodes since 1980 when the country accomplished political independence from their former colonial masters. The women finally chose peace gardening on the basis that Peace gardens provide physical space in life where they were anticipating being free from political competition.

The peace gardening journey

During the first session, members spend significant time re-telling their experiences of the past election-related violence and how they anticipated the peace gardening project to change their mindsets for the better. The session also used a simple game to teach people about the importance of respecting other people's different views. In that game, number 3 would be placed in the middle of the garden with groups of people being asked to view it from the northern side, southern side, eastern side, and the western side respectively. The game taught the action team members how important it was to accept other people's views even in the field of politics as was summed up by one of the action team members when he stated that:

> The political broadmindedness game of putting the 3 in our midst to be viewed from different angles helped us a lot to view the political issues differently. We learned through the game to accept other people's views and their political affiliations. There is no need to coerce others to view things in the same manner as us but to accept and respect their political choices.

The other session saw the women starting proper gardening and this session proved different from the previous two sessions in that by then participants were actively intermingling with each other with limited fear and suspicion. This session saw participants carrying out land preparation so that the first gardening crop could be planted. The peace gardening project was, however, slowly helping the team to develop reconciliation and forgivingness, aspects which were vital in our quest towards transforming post-conflict

relationships among the women from different political backgrounds. My continuous observations on what was happening to the women revealed that their relations were slowly bonding as you could easily see women from opposing political parties chatting freely and laughing together as they took part in the peace gardening process. Modalities on how to start the peace gardening project and on what crops to start growing were mooted during this meeting session.

The evaluation session

The preliminary evaluation session was held for the purpose of carrying out an evaluation of how the peace gardening project fostered relationships among women from diverse political background. By the time the evaluation was carried out, there were growing elements of suspicion in the peace gardening activity where fellow political members were suspecting that their fellow members had sold out or defected to other political parties. The evaluation session coincided with the campaigning period for the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe. The time which we had for this exercise was put to good use and the following information was deduced about the study and the peace gardening. The participants pointed out that the peace gardening initiative promoted collaboration across the political divide by transforming previously tainted relationships.

The women pointed out that peace gardening had demonstrated the potential to build durable peace through providing platforms that encouraged dialogues in promoting concentration on the present than spending time reminiscing about the violent acts which occurred in the past. This kind of mentality came out of the realization that regardless of the women's political preferences, we still remain as one people, living in Zimbabwe and, hence, there is no justification for the women to maim, combat and hate one another. Literature has also supported the women's thrust by pointing out that pain that is not transformed is transferred, meaning that the pain that the people had endured was still going to be passed on to future generations, a feature which has been referred to as intergenerational conflict (Ngwenya and Harris 2015; Barge 2016: 72).

The women concurred that the thrust of their peace garden was to strengthen the existing peacebuilding efforts in local communities in order to avert violence and transform tainted relationships among women from diverse political backgrounds. This peace gardening strategy sought to transform relationships among the women by providing a neutral platform for people of diverse political orientation to mingle, work and plan together in ways that would promote their sustainable livelihoods and peace. Based on values of inclusiveness, integrity, and diversity the peace garden intended to strengthen the abilities of local communities in conflict management and resolution initiatives with the goal of restoring the economic function of victims of election-related violence.

The women agreed as a team that they had seen community gardens being used before for various reasons and noted that for their peace gardening venture to work as an effective intervention strategy, there was a need for them to vary their approaches in their operational modalities such as working with small numbers to avoid situations where the peace garden would end up brewing conflicts among participants. Just like Keim's (2007) remarks in the role of sport in peacebuilding, the way in which peace gardening could play a successful role in transforming post-conflict relationships depended on its organization. The participants generally agreed that the peace gardening project had the potential to take the society forward by transforming tainted relationships and fostering their political mindsets, considering that, if not properly organized, the same peace garden could be

a source of conflict that would inadvertently reinforce old preconceptions and detachments.

4.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This study managed to explore ways in which peace gardens could be used in fostering relations among women from Gutu and Bikita districts in Zimbabwe. The study established that if executed well the use of peace gardens serve as a proper intervention strategy in fostering relationships among former warring women political party supporters. This study also found out that the role played by peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships amongst the women cannot be underestimated. Apart from transforming post-conflict relationships amongst the women from rival political parties, this study found out that gardens world over has a powerful unifying force. This study, therefore, recommends the implementation of peace gardens in more Zimbabwean communities for transforming conflict relationships among women from diverse political backgrounds. The study recommends the need for ensuring that women in peace initiatives work in small numbers so as to achieve their goals of transforming relationships and not relapse into violent acts that do not benefit them. The study, therefore, recommends more prolonged homegrown intervention strategies and readily available resources in promoting the change of women's mind-sets in fostering durable peace.

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ACADEMIC VALUE ADDITION (AVA): INTERROGATING AND ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO STAKEHOLDERS.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of Academic Value Addition (AVA), that is, the value generated for the various stakeholders in the higher education sector as a result of effective implementation of quality assurance interventions in higher education. AVA looks at the value that is derived from instituting effective and efficient quality assurance policies and processes in academic provision. The various stakeholders that derive value from quality higher education are identified; students, parents, employers, communities, partner organisations, governments and higher education institutions. The different dimensions of academic value added for these stakeholder groups are interrogated theoretically and empirically. A dearth exists on literature that specifically focuses on the value that is created through effective implementation of various quality assurance interventions in higher education and this paper endeavours to close that gap by articulating the different dimensions of value derived by various stakeholders from a quality higher education system. Based on both theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, conclusions are drawn and recommendations proffered.

Key words: Academic Value Added (AVA), higher education, quality assurance, stakeholders

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic provision in higher education can be viewed as a value adding process in national development systems (Ewell, 2002; Faegerlind, 2016; Leal Filho, 2015; Paterson, 2011). The value of higher education cannot be under estimated as over the past centuries economies the world over have been developed and continuously improved through innovations, patenting and commercialization of inventions, and industrial revolutions that were backed by transformation of research and development outputs into tangible goods and services (Agrawal, 2018; Edokpolor, 2017; Gulden, 2020; Jingura, 2020). The past few decades have, however, witnessed a sporadic and spontaneous growth of HEIs, both public and private (Buckner, 2017; Knight, 2013; Siemens, 2017) as nations liberalized the higher education sector due to growing numbers of high school graduates that qualified for higher education (Salto, 2018) and the need to drive innovation and industrialisation at a higher scale (Aleixo, 2020; Crespo, 2017; Tian, 2019; Uslu, 2019; Xing, 2017; Yitmen, 2011). This growth has not been without its own challenges as higher education has lately been commercialized

(Curtis, 2019; Jokila, 2020; Methula, 2017; Naidoo, 2017), privatized (Ahmad, 2018; Chakhaia, 2018; Cone, 2020; le Grand, 2018; Jokila, 2020; Methula, 2017; Williamson, 2021), commoditized (Caudill, 2020; Curtis, 2019; Nigamananda, 2017; Patnaik, 2018; Williamson, 2021) and internationalized (Agrawal, 2018; Altbach, 2007; Jokila, 2020; Marginson, 2006). Competition among the HEIs has also increased over the years (Deshmukh, 2020; Kaganovich, 2020; Kaganovich, 2020b; Maguad, 2018; Marginson, 2006; Matei, 2019; Musselin, 2018).

Another major challenge has been the significant deterioration of the quality of academic provision, giving rise to the questioning of the value of higher education by various stakeholders (Cavallone, 2020; Dicker, 2019; Essel, 2018; Goldenberg, 2018; Hauptman, 2020). In a bid to address the deterioration of higher education quality, the concept of quality assurance, which traditionally had been dominant in industry, was introduced into the higher education sector (Swanzy, 2019; Beerkens, 2018; Mursidi, 2019; Rifa'i, 2018; Seyfried, 2018; Steinhardt, 2017). The establishment of effective and efficiently administered quality management systems in higher education institutions has thus taken centre stage in recent times (Marginson, 2006; Rifa'i, 2018; Siemens, 2017; Steinhardt, 2017). There has been greater emphasis the world over, on quality assurance to ensure that there is value addition in higher education academic provision. Previous studies have concluded that where high quality standards have been upheld, there has been an enhancement of the HEIs impact and value created (Allais, 2017; Dicker, 2019; Muhammad, 2020; Wright, 2020), which can be measured through different facets. Firstly, HEIs have had social impact through serving societal needs, resulting in the improvement of the institution's reputation (Heffernan, 2018; Lafuente-Ruiz-de-Sabando, 2018; Moslehpour, 2020; Nielsen, 2012). Secondly, in a bid to improve their own performance and also from a moral standpoint, HEIs have over the years, continuously demonstrated commitment to implementing quality management systems that assure high standards of academic provision. This has seen HEIs going beyond institutional accreditation and certification but ascertaining sustainability of the quality assurance processes (Crespo, 2017; Jose, 2017), what Nielsen & Parker (2012) have termed normative impact of quality standards (Leal Filho, 2015; Nielsen, 2012; Salto, 2017).

Thirdly, quality assurance has had an educational impact, which has resulted in the continuous improvement of the standards and quality of educational programmes, teaching and learning processes, student performance and graduate employability (Clarke, 2018; Nwajiuba, 2020; Rowe, 2017; Succi, 2020; Veld, 2015). The fourth impact is measured in terms making quality part of the organisational culture, focusing on the extent to which implementation of quality standards has inculcated a quality culture in higher education (Kruger, 2011; Vilcea, 2014). These different facets of the impact that quality assurance has had on higher education also have varied dimensions of the value that is created for or added to various stakeholder groups for the HEIs. This study thus explores the academic value added (AVA) through the implementation of various quality assurance initiatives in HEIs, and the various stakeholders or beneficiaries of this academic value.

2. Academic Value Addition (AVA)

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are pivotal in socio-economic development and organisations such as UNESCO have made deliberate efforts to support their members stated in building knowledge economies through initiatives such as Education 2030 Agenda, which facilitates the provision of sustainable employment opportunities and good standards of living for all (UNESCO, 2021). HEIs and other external quality assurance agencies have thus been developing policies, standards and guidelines, and strategies for the implementation thereof, which emphasise the creation and sharing of value for the various education system stakeholders. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is responsible for the external assessment of quality in higher education institutions (HEIs). The QAA maintains the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, a voluntary code which sets out what HEIs are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the various other external stakeholders, including the general public can expect of them (European Commission, 2021). In the United States of America, there are a number of external quality assurance agencies, which include the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Higher Learning Commission and the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (Lemaitre, 2018; Tandberg, 2019). The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) regulates quality assurance in HEIs across Europe (ENQA, 2021; Anisimova, 2020; Gruwdoski, 2021). The National Assurance and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India and the Asia Pacific Quality Network are also typical examples of external quality assurance agencies covering Indian, Asian and Pacific countries (Patil, 2019). The African Union gives policy direction on quality in higher education through its African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA). These ASG-QA are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education designed to bring added value to higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies through the provision of a unified framework for the enhancement of institutional and educational quality (HAQAA, 2021; Kwandayi, 2021).The main external quality assurance agency in South Africa is the Council for Higher Education (CHE), which is also responsible quality assurance policy direction for both public and private universities (Baumgardt, 2013; Soudien, 2007). In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) is the external quality agency which monitors the quality of academic provision in both public and private HEIs (Jingura, 2020). At institutional level, HEIs have also developed quality assurance policies, standards and guidelines that guide the implementation of various quality assurance interventions aimed at creating value for the diverse higher education stakeholder groups (Grifoll, 2016; Henard, 2012; Morse, 2006; Okae-Adjei, 2016). Globally, the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), which now has a world-wide membership of over 300 higher education quality assurance agencies, has also been active in promoting quality assurance in higher education. Both external and internal quality assurance agencies have over the years been making concerted efforts to incorporate the International Standards Organisation (ISO) standards and guidelines that are applicable to higher education, as part of the continuous improvement of the quality

of academic provision globally. One of the standards that has been implemented with success across a number of HEIs is the ISO 9001:15 (Jingura, 2020).

Through these external quality assurance and institutional internal quality assurance agencies, various measures are employed to evaluate the quality of higher education and these include fitness for purpose (Cheng, 2017; Essel, 2018; Prakash, 2018), compliance with standards (Cardoso, 2019; Hassan, 2020; Goldenberg, 2018; Vardanyan, 2017), customer satisfaction (Chen, 2017; Mwiya, 2017; Pedro, 2018; Razinkina, 2018; Santos, 2020; Weerasinghe, 2017, 2018), continuous improvement (Hassan, 2020; Latif, 2019; Nguyen, 2020; Ruff, 2021) and value creation and/or addition or value for money (Bendixen, 2017; Cheng, 2017; Kundu, 2019; Nguyen, 2017; Saunders, 2017). In this study, the latter measurement of the quality of higher education is explored and termed Academic Value Addition (AVA) as a concept in higher education quality assurance, which looks at the value that is created for or added to the various higher education stakeholder groups through the quality assurance interventions that HEIs implement. What value is created by higher education quality assurance and who are the beneficiaries of AVA? This study identifies seven key stakeholder groups that would derive value from a quality education system which are; 1) the students, 2) their parents, 3) employers, 4) the community, 5) the government, 6) partners, and 7) the HEIs themselves (Beerkens, 2017; Latif, 2019; Rodman, 2013; Senthilkumar, 2011; Teeroovengadum, 2016). The AVA that quality assurance interventions are envisaged to add to or create for these stakeholder groups is discussed below.

2.1 To the Students

Students are the primary beneficiaries of any education system and as such they have a legitimate expectation of receiving value for their time and money (Cheng, 2017; Dicker, 2019; Martirosyan, 2015; Kundu, 2019; Nguyen, 2020; Saunders, 2017). This expectation is ideally met through the provision of quality education, which can be measured in various facets. A conducive learning environment, characterized by quality teaching and learning processes, accommodation and recreation facilities, effective and efficient administration systems and processes, is one of the critical elements in creating value for a student in a HEI (Gunn, 2018; Franke, 2017; Pigden, 2020; Pistor, 2017; Tomlinson, 2018; Quinlan, 2021). Responsiveness to inquiries, requests and queries also makes the student's life on campus more enjoyable. The quality of the learning material or content being disseminated by faculty also matters to the student (Gourlay, 2017). Availability of reading material in electronic and hard copy form and library facilities that are suitable, clean, well ventilated, and have good ambience are part of what creates a quality learning environment for the student and HEIs that pay attention to these elements of quality education create value for the student (Aloklul, 2020; Becker, 2017; Gunn, 2018; Moses, 2017; Wilkinson, 2020). Other ancillary facilities such as restrooms, sporting facilities and entertainment also make campus life for the student enjoyable and support the core learning activities (Okoro, 2021). Quality delivery of the learning material supported by diverse teaching and learning methods, good lecture room management, great scope for student participation, timely and meaningful feedback from lecturers also add value to the learning process (Chan, 2019; López-Chao,

2019; Nkala, 2020; Ssentamu, 2020; Wong, 2017). Quality begets quality. The quality of both academic and administration staff in HEIs can therefore not be over emphasized (Daumiller, 2020; Tawafak, 2018; Whitchurch, 2018). Quality academics demonstrate their skills and expertise through quality delivery of learning material, quality research output, capacity to mentor other researchers, and meaningful contribution to their communities through innovative problem-solving among other key variables (Badran, 2019; Daumiller, 2020; Dicker, 2019; Harrison , 2017; Stander, 2017; Whitchurch, 2018). External Quality Agencies (EQAs) ensure that HEIs employ faculty that have the requisite qualifications and experience as part of ascertaining that there is quality delivery of academic provision (Bell, 2019; Gilavand, 2017; Papanthymou, 2017; Pereira, 2018). Traditionally, the other aspect of value derived by a student from a quality HEI has been graduate employability (Pigden, 2020; Wilkinson, 2020). While this remains critical, in recent years, the capacity to create employment by graduates from HEIs has become pronounced as a critical outcome from a quality education system (Assaad, 2018; Guerrero, 2018; Jones, 2017; Mok, 2018; Penprase, 2018). While hard skills, which are profession- or discipline-specific are important, soft skills have also become a paramount element of the value set that the student would enjoy from a HEI that delivers quality academic provision (Ansar, 2018; MacDermott, 2017; Ricchiardi, 2018; Succi, 2020; Tang, 2019; Tseng, 2019). Quality higher education to a student is thus measured in terms of the extent to which the variables discussed above can create or add value to the student.

Extant literature encapsulates empirical evidence on the need to implement quality assurance interventions in higher education that contribute to value creation for and/or addition to the students. Using a sample of 74,687 undergraduate students from 39 Chinese universities, Guo etal (2017) demonstrated that learning approaches had a mediating effect on the relationship between perceptions of the learning environment and learning outcomes. In a review study that summarized evidence on Quality Management (QM) within Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) from 52 studies over a 10-year period (2006 to 2016), qualifications and experience of faculty were cited as some of the major critical success factors in improving the quality of academic provision (Papanthymou, 2017). Findings from a study by Becker etal, (2017) involding 394 student respondents at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, in which they were assessing the use and quality of library services, accessibility of facilities, confirmed the positive correlation between quality of library facilities as well as services rendered by library personnel, and student satisfaction. Findings from another study by Johnson (2017) also revealed that public and private HEIs in Ecuador were competing for faculty as they sought to strengthen their quality management systems, a demonstration of an acknowledgement that the quality of faculty has a bearing on the value added to the student in a higher education system. The importance of graduate employability as a critical value that a university graduate should ideally derive from a quality academic system was demonstrated through a qualitative study involving 35 participants (15 final year undergraduate students, 9 industry experts and 11 university professors) in Nigeria (Okolie, 2020). The findings of the study were that most universities in Nigeria

were not imparting high level generic skills, which were envisaged to improve the employability of the graduates. This was attributed to poor learning environment, lack of industry experience among academic staff, and an overly theorized teaching approach. One of the key recommendations was thus a reorientation of the Nigeria higher education system to incorporate the needs of industry and society in their curriculum. In support of the focus on improving graduate employability, another qualitative study, involving respondents from Thailand, United Kingdom, and Vietnam, recommended strategies such as participation of employers in curriculum design, technology application and soft skills development (Tang, 2019). In another study involving 300 respondents (131 employers from Italy and Germany, and 169 recent graduates and students), 85.5% of the respondents affirmed the need to invest more time and other resources, by both academics and employers, in the development of soft skills among higher education students (Succi, 2020). These soft skills could be categorized into personal (for example commitment, professional ethics and stress tolerance), social (such as communication, negotiation and cultural adaptability) and methodological (for example adaptability to change, analysis and decision making) (Haselberger, 2012).

2.2 To the Parents

When parents pay for their children's education, they are literally investing in their children's future and as such they expect value for money from their investment (Kim, 2017; Latif, 2019; Harrison, 2018; Wright, 2020). Any meaningful investment would give the investor a reasonable return on investment and the quality of education that HEIs deliver and the knowledge, skills, competences and qualification attained by the student should not disappoint the investor (Blagg, 2018; Kim, 2017; Patimah, 2018; Psacharopoulos, 2018). Parents derive some level of comfort in knowing that the future of their child is secure through the attainment of a qualification which guarantees employment (Kim, 2017; Pigden, 2020; Wilkinson, 2020; Wright, 2020). While there is no 100% guaranteed in certain economies where unemployment levels are high, the employment creation or entrepreneurial mindset becomes key (Guerrero, 2018; Jones, 2017; Penprase, 2018). Role modelling to siblings is another value off spin, where one would have gone through a quality education system, attained a good qualification and pursued a successful, fulfilling and rewarding career (Bennett, 2020; Jasiński, 2018; Malik, 2019; Mutsumi, 2018; Pavlin, 2019). Such achievements can potentially inspire siblings, other family members, and communities in which the successful graduates live. Parents to such graduates thus derive value from the comfort of a secure future for their children and from the prestige of being associated with the success of their children attributable to HEIs that offer quality education.

Various studies confirm the parents' expectation of quality higher education that guarantees their children's employability and contribute towards shaping their career paths. In a study involving 36 Korean parents by Kim (2017), the findings confirmed that parents had aspirations that quality higher education would shape their children's careers. Through the analysis of the factors that informed their disposition towards their children's future careers, the parents were categorized as Autonomy Supporters (middle income), Study Supremacists (high income), Apologetic Supporters and Value Enthusiasts (both low income) (Kim, 2017). In a study involving 251 parents and 100 students, in

mainland China, where the researchers were investigating factors influencing the choice of a higher education destination, the results indicated that parents considered improved employability and immigration prospects as the most important factors in selecting HEIs for their children (Bodycott, 2009). The interest of parents in their children's access to quality higher education is also confirmed through the findings of a study involving 452 Russian parents, whose children we studying at 13 universities in the Ural Federal District, Russia, wherein the parents indeed confirmed that they were very knowledgeable about these universities and were willing to participate in any interventions that could improve the quality of higher education, for the benefit of their children. (Ambarova, 2020).

2.3 To the Employers

In recent years organisations have created competitive advantage through qualified, skilled and competent human capital (Hamadamin, 2019; Kamukama, 2017; Kianto, 2017; Siddiqui, 2012; Surijah, 2016). Graduates from HEIs offering quality education are envisaged to bring in quality input to the organisations that employ them – ideas, innovations, analytical skills, applied knowledge which distinguish the organisation from its competitors (Akhmetshin, 2018; Ansar, 2018; Antonella, 2018; Lin, 2017; Malik, 2019; Nawaz, 2019). Some of the innovations manifest themselves in the form of significant contribution to new product development, product and systems improvement, enhanced productivity, profitability and overall organisational growth (Jugend, 2018; Kim, 2018). Organisational profiles tend to be enhanced as high performance employees contribute to good corporate image. Good performance for the organisation in turn attracts more high performers leading to continued improvement in performance, which inevitably attracts investors as the latter are guaranteed of return on their investment (Awino, 2020; Chinomona, 2013; Mdhlalose, 2020; Stoffers, 2009; Sweis, 2016). Organisations employing high quality graduates create capacity to attract more new customers and enjoy continued patronage of existing customers as they are attracted by the quality of products and services (Aburayya, 2020; Gandhi, 2020; Huang, 2020; Pitafi, 2020). In recent times industry has also placed an expectation upon HEIs to impart soft skills to graduates, for example ethical and intercultural understanding (Penprase, 2018). HEIs that produce graduates who have the right soft skills, great hands-on skills, who are innovative and have great potential to drive the organisation's vision are thus deemed to be great value creators for employers.

In a study involving 154 employers in New Zealand, to assess the preparedness of business graduates for the workplace, the findings revealed that employers considered some business work experience to be important for graduates joining industry before completing their tertiary education (Hodges, 2003). Mason etal (2009) confirmed in another study that employer involvement in designing and delivering teaching material can significantly contribute towards improving graduate employability. Findings from the same study also suggest that a structured approach to imparting practical work skills to graduates during the training process positively contributes towards graduates securing employment in graduate-level jobs (Mason, etal 2009). In another study modelling skill transfer among 674 business graduates from 39 different Australian universities, the findings confirm

that learner, learning programmes and workplace characteristics influence the transferability of graduate skills in the work environment. (Jackson, 2016). The author further asserts that through application of a generic model, there is scope for assuring the employer return on investment on their newly recruited graduates, on one hand, while on the other hand HEIs benefit from fulfilled quest for preparing graduates for industry readiness. The graduate employees are also envisaged to benefit from good career progression and the indirect benefits accruing from superior organizational performance. In a national survey across higher education institutions in Slovenia, Pavlin (2019) concludes that the employability of graduates' discourse is gradually taking centre stage and significantly contributing to the modernisation of higher education. The conclusion was informed by evolving public expectations of higher education and calls to strengthen its orientation towards the job market requirements. All these and many other studies confirm that there is an expectation from the employer that quality higher education should be value adding and/or value creating through the production of graduates that have the requisite knowledge, skills and aptitude for the job market.

2.4 To the Community

Graduates from HEIs that deliver quality education and inculcate the culture of volunteerism perpetuate that culture at corporate level and champion corporate social responsibility initiatives that contribute significant values to the communities that surround the entities that these graduates lead (Berei, 2020; Clark, 2020; Kristen, 2020; Quirk, 2019; Seotsanyana, 2020). HEIs that promote volunteerism also impart the culture of giving back to community at a personal level; serving on community boards, giving to the needy, and participation in community projects among other activities that add value to the community (Berei, 2020; Matti, 2020; Quirk, 2019). Quality education advocates social employment or student corporate social responsibility/volunteerism, and with certain HEIs, a student has to serve a certain minimum number of hours of community work before they graduate (Bhagwan, 2020; Clark, 2020; Llenares, 2020; Yizengaw, 2020; Zheng, 2021). HEIs also create significant value for communities through running training and development programmes for communities on a *pro bono* basis and engaging these communities for running projects collaboratively, imparting skills and expertise in the process (Al-Zyoud, 2020; Joseph, 2020; Langrafe, 2020; Papadimitriou, 2020; Sabra, 2020). This kind of volunteer work by HEIs can significantly contribute to community growth and development.

Various studies have confirmed the value contributed to the communities by student bodies and staff from HEIs through volunteerism and community engagement. In an exploratory study wherein 14 students from Durban University of Technology volunteered to participate in various community organisations and schools, the findings reflected that these students benefitted from their community engagement experiences and affirmed that universities had a significant role in community engagement (Bhagwan, 2020). The researcher further concluded that HEIs need to seriously consider communities as learning spaces and accelerate the rate of community engagement as part of the learning process. Zheng & Li (2021) also confirmed the value of volunteerism to both students and the

community, having observed the impact of some community engagement activities by medical students in Canada during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic-imposed restrictions, the medical students could neither go for clinical rotations nor could they pursue summer electives or research positions as per the norm, a significant disruption to their normal routine, which could potentially lead to inertia and anxiety. Through volunteerism, the medical students started offering virtual one-on-one and small group musical or art performances for some communities for the elderly. This experience helped to avert depression and loss of self-esteem among the medical students on one hand while providing the much needed socialisation for the elderly community, who were now isolated due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In another study assessing the impact of volunteerism on student resilience and gratitude, involving 80 students, 38 of which had volunteering experience, Llenares etal (2020) observed that the volunteers had significantly higher resilience and gratitude scores compared to their peers with no volunteer experience. It was further observed that the more hours students spent in volunteering work, the greater their sense of resilience and gratitude became, positively contributing to the improvement of the students' well-being. Langrafe etal (2020) empirically test the extent to which improved relations between HEIs and their stakeholders can create more value, based on the principles of the stakeholder theory. Their findings confirm that improved relations between the HEIs and their sstakeholders (including the communities in which they operate) create more value for both the institutions and their communities. Thus quality higher education indeed has a dimension of creating value for the communities in which they operate, directly and indirectly through various interventions by both staff and students from HEIs.

2.5 To the Government

Governments have the onerous responsibility of creating employment for their citizens and also creating an environment conducive for employment creation by the private sector. HEIs that offer quality education contribute to the achievement of this feat as graduates from their systems significantly support this role as they join both the private and public sector, reducing the levels of unemployment (Guerrero, 2018; Jones, 2017; Penprase, 2018). The contribution of quality higher education has been confirmed to significantly contribute towards national economic growth, employment creation, improvement of the quality of life of the citizens and the continuous improvement of the political systems (Faegerlind, 2016; Radić, 2020; Xu, 2020). Quality academic provision also results in the creation and registration of patents and other forms of intellectual property, which are key in facilitating national growth and development (de Matos Pedro, 2020; Hanushek E. A., 2020; Kulyagina, 2020; Nwabueze, 2020; Suryahartati, 2019). The provision of high quality employees in both private and public sector, who are graduates from HEIs that uphold high standards of academic provision, has certain levels of ascertaining productivity and return on investment (Agolla, 2018; Frankham, 2017; Psomas, 2017; Schaeffer, 2018; Xing, 2017). Where skilled human capital is available and other resources are abundant to support economic activity, there is greater scope to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) from multinational corporations that have comfort in investing in economies where requisite skills and expertise are abundant, much to the delight of governments that want to see the promotion

of industrialisation (Huang, 2020; Tian, 2018; Xing, 2017). High quality graduates are also a great opportunity for skilled labour exports, especially where there is excess capacity. The government as the policy maker, also has interest in the value that higher education creates from a policy perspective, as quality higher education informs policy direction on one hand, while on the other hand the dynamic and evolving nature of higher education calls for continuous policy review for its sustainable relevance to the various stakeholders of HEIs (Brooks, 2021; Civera, 2020; Franco, 2019).

In a study investigating the link between higher education, innovation and economic growth across 42 countries over a 21-year period (1996-2014), the cointegration relationship between variables was empirically tested and the results confirmed the cointegration relationship. The findings also confirmed the existence of a positive effect of innovation in higher education on economic growth (Bouhajeb, 2018). The researchers thus concluded that in the current knowledge economy, competitiveness and sustainable development can only be achieved through continuous development of skills and competences, hence the need for organisations to focus on some critical factors such as human capital, knowledge management and innovation (Bouhajeb, 2018). Another study covering 284 European regions over an 18-year period (from 2000 to 2017) concluded that the increase in the number of universities in a particular region created a conducive environment for its economic growth. The study also concluded that the quality of research was a significant contributor to the growth of the region's GDP per capita (Agasisti, 2020). A study utilising panel data over the 1960–2000 period, investigating the effect of higher education human capital on economic growth in African countries concluded that all levels of education human capital, including higher education human capital, have a positive and significant impact on the growth rate of per capita income in African counties (Gyimah-Brempong, 2006). In their study of the impact of higher education on economic growth and development in Africa, Bloom etal (2014) also concluded that higher education improves technological adaptation, significantly contributing to the maximisation of Africa's potential to attain rapid economic growth. It was the researchers' assertion that investing in tertiary education in Africa could expedite technological diffusion, inadvertently reducing both knowledge gaps and poverty in the region. Hanushek (2016), however departs from the generalisation that more graduates lead to faster economic growth and posits that differences in cognitive skills across knowledge economies account for differences in growth rates. He further assert that continuous increase in the number of years spent in higher education without corresponding increase in cognitive skills has limited positive impact on economic growth. Overall, quality higher education has a positive significant impact on national econimc growth and development hence governments as stakeholders to the HEIs have great interest in the value created and/or added through higher education.

2.6 To the Partners

A number of organisations partner HEIs in various ways, which include provision of research grants, collaborative research, joint project implementation, scholarships, and donations towards various projects among other interventions (Barringer, 2018; Colasanti, 2018; Franklin, 2021; McClure, 2017). Partner organisations include alumni

associations, donor funds, scholarship funds, non-governmental organisations and private corporates (Jiani, 2017; Meiners, 2018; Owens, 2017). It is in the interest of these partner organisations to ensure that their contributions to the HEIs they support or partner are optimally utilized to create the greatest possible value. Such organisations thus take pride in being associated with HEIs which have quality management systems that ensure quality academic provision (AlKalbani, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Percival, 2018). The association with HEIs that optimize the value of these partner organisations' contributions in enhancing the value of academic provision can translate to good image and brand recognition, much to the advantage of the partner organisations (Taylor, 2019; Tierney, 2018). Thus, these partner organisations derive value from the continuous improvement of the quality of education by the HEIs they support.

A number of studies examine the relationships between partner organisations and HEIs. In their study of HEIs in North Carolina, USA, based on the social network theory, McClure etal (2017) argue that highly selective and research-oriented institutions, are strategically positioned in the donor community network and, therefore, have competitive advantage in accessing donations from partner organisations, compared to baccalaureate institutions that serve students from marginalized backgrounds. Harrison (2018) studies HEIs' stewardship strategies and involvement impact on organization-public relationship (OPR) outcomes for higher education donors at three different levels of donation. The study findings indicate that as donors increase their level of giving to an institution, they experience stewardship and OPR outcomes more positively. In a qualitative study to understand the motivations of mega-gift donors to HEIs, Worth, etal (2020) intimate that these mega-gifts are important for HEIs and donor motivations fall into four broad categories: altruism, exchange, desire to have impact, and leaving a legacy.

2.7 To the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

HEIs that have consistently maintained quality academic provision over the years make a significant social impact and gain institutional reputation and prestige in the higher education space ((Dicker, 2019; Jingura, 2020; Manzoor, 2020; Nielsen, 2012). The good corporate image that is created through quality education evidenced by quality graduates creates value for the institution through attraction of more students who would like to earn prestigious qualifications and enjoy the honour of being associated with an such institution (Berndt, 2019; Erkan, 2021; Gyasi, 2017; Lee, 2018; Lee, 2019; Manzoor, 2020). Examples of HEIs that have attained such status include Harvard, Massachusetts, Oxford, Cambridge, Stellenbosch, and Witwatersrand just to mention a few. Such institutions also create value for themselves through the contributions from their alumni who take pride in being associated with their institutions (Berndt, 2019; Gyasi, 2017; Schlesinger, 2021). Attraction of strategic partners for projects is another distinction as partners are assured of value for money on their investments (Colasanti, 2018; Franklin, 2021; Meiners, 2018; Owens, 2017). The HEIs also have great intrinsic value as they derive satisfaction from their own performance (Tomlinson, 2018). In addition, HEIs that have a reputation of offering high quality education tend to attract highly qualified and experienced faculty, who are bound to strengthen the capacity of the HEIs

to perpetuate the continuous improvement in the quality of academic provision (Johnson, 2017; Matongolo, 2018; Wilder, 2017).

Extant literature has a number of studies that focus on the value of quality assurance and its contribution to the HEI's image, well-being and sustainable growth. The results of a study aimed at understanding the factors influencing a university's image, involving 427 university students, confirmed that the quality of faculty, academic provision, research and physical facilities positively impact a university's image (Erkan, 2021). In another study in which 1000 university alumni participated, Schlesinger etal (2021) postulate that their findings confirmed that university brand image is a key driver for positive word of mouth intentions by alumni. The study findings further attested that alumni's university identification and satisfaction had a mediating role on the relationship between the HEI's brand image as influenced by the quality of academic provision, and the alumni's word of mouth intentions. Matongolo etal (2018) also confirmed that employer branding had a significant positive relationship with employee attraction and retention, through a cross-sectional survey involving 218 respondents from two public universities. In another study involving 223 international students from two Malaysian universities, Manzoor etal (2020) concluded that a good university image positively contributes to student satisfaction and enhances student citizenship behavioural outcomes, for example, advocacy, which in turn would contribute towards the university attracting more international students. They further assert that this could indirectly contribute to universities sustainability. Thus, the various quality assurance interventions that HEIs endeavour to implement contribute to value addition and/creation for the institutions themselves, over and above the value added for other stakeholders.

3.0 Methodology

This study took a qualitative approach, predominantly based on content analysis and interpretation. Quality Assurance was explained as a concept and its rationale in higher education was clearly articulated. The value that quality assurance has added to the whole higher education system was critically analysed and interpreted through review of extant literature and empirical studies. Various stakeholders, who are beneficiaries of the academic value addition processes were identified and the nature of the value derived from a quality higher education system in their respective spheres of influence is explored and articulated. Empirical evidence to support the concept of academic value added through quality assurance was presented, where QA had been effectively implemented in higher education, resulting in significant improvement in the quality of academic provision in HEIs.

4.0 Conclusions

From the analysis of concepts and empirical evidence, there is academic value addition or value creation for various stakeholders through the effective and efficient implementation of quality assurance systems in higher education. There are various dimensions of AVA and different categories of beneficiaries of the value created through quality assurance in higher education. There is abundant empirical evidence that where HEIs have implemented quality assurance policies, standards and guidelines as recommended by the various quality assurance agencies, significant value has been created for different higher education stakeholders (Dill, 2003; Gillen, 2020;

Harvey, 2010; Madden, 2014; Viennet, 2017). HEIs stand to benefit from good institutional image, attraction of high-quality students, investors and are intrinsically motivated to be consistent in quality academic provision as they enjoy the results thereof (Berndt, 2019; Erkan, 2021; Gyasi, 2017; Lee, 2018; Lee, 2019; Manzoor, 2020; Owens, 2017, Wilder, 2017). Students also benefit immensely from AVA as they enjoy quality learning environment, have access to quality content, stand greater chances for employability, and have scope for employment creation (Gunn, 2018; Franke, 2017; Pigden, 2020; Pistor, 2017; Tomlinson, 2018; Quinlan, 2021). Parents also derive value for money from their investment in their children's education and have the peace of mind that their children's future is more secure with high quality education as evidenced by the findings of various studies (Bennett, 2020; Guerrero, 2018; Jasiński, 2018; ; Jones, 2017; Malik, 2019; Mutsumi, 2018; Pavlin, 2019; Penprase, 2018). Innovation, new product development, product and service improvement, productivity, profitability and good corporate image are all benefits that accrue to organisations that employ high quality graduates (Aburayya, 2020; Awino, 2020; Chinomona, 2013; Gandhi, 2020; Huang, 2020; Mdhlalose, 2020; Stoffers, 2009; Sweis, 2016; Pitafi, 2020). Communities are also beneficiaries from AVA as high-quality graduates invest back into the community in various way (Joseph, 2020; Langrafe, 2020; Papadimitriou, 2020; Sabra, 2020; Zheng; 2021). Governments that have quality higher education systems derive value from employment creation, attraction of FDI, skilled labour export and the creation and registration of patents (Agolla, 2018; Frankham, 2017; Psomas, 2017; Schaeffer, 2018; Xing, 2017)..

Implications of the Study Findings

The value that is created for or derived by various stakeholders from quality higher education should inform the extent to which HEIs invest in quality management systems. The formulation and implementation of various strategic interventions for continuous and sustainable improvement of the quality of higher education should remain top on the agenda of HEIs for their continued relevance to the various stakeholder groups identified in this study. Similarly, the various stakeholders that derive value from the quality of academic provision in HEIs should have their interventions in supporting HEIs informed by the value that they expect to receive as outputs and outcomes from these HEIs. The adoption of global, continental and regional quality assurance standards and guidelines by HEIs across the world, will also continue to facilitate student and staff mobility, comparability of programmes, transferability of credits across programmes, facilitate benchmarking, and continuous improvement of the higher education systems globally. The ultimate effect of the various quality assurance interventions implemented by both external and internal quality assurance agencies is the consistent creation of value through higher education, for the benefit of various stakeholders to the higher education sector.

5.0 Recommendations

In view of the AVA through quality assurance in higher education, it is incumbent upon HEIs to put in place and effectively administer quality assurance systems so that the value of academic provision is retained and continuously improved for the benefit of all concerned stakeholders. External Quality Assurance agents at national and regional level should intensify the formalization and

standardization of quality assurance in HEIs and ensure that Internal Quality Practitioners are formally trained to effectively and efficiently implement quality assurance policies and systems. Innovation and industrialisation in most developed economies have their roots in HEIs that provide quality academic provision and the same can be attained in other economies in transition. A continuous review of the various higher education stakeholders' expectations would also assist in ensuring that relevant policy frameworks are regularly realigned to guarantee consistent value addition and value creation through quality academic provision in HEIs. Further research in this area can be carried out focusing on quality assurance of online learning given the prominence that it has taken in recent times.

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