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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

Teachers' perceptions of the contextual teaching and learning of junior secondary school science curriculum in the Manzini region of Eswatini.

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating teachers' perception of the contextual teaching of junior secondary science curriculum in the Manzini region of Eswatini. Four research questions were raised. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The sample comprised of twelve science teachers from six randomly selected secondary schools in the Manzini region. Instruments used to collect data were an interview schedule for contextual teaching and learning, a questionnaire for contextual teaching and learning and an observation schedule for contextual teaching and learning. Data was analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that teachers do not use all the suggested contexts in teaching Integrated Science in junior secondary schools in Eswatini. It was concluded that contextual teaching and learning (CTL) was not fully implemented in Eswatini secondary schools due to lack of resources such as science pupils' books and laboratory equipment as well as time limitation to follow the contextual approach when teaching science. The study recommended that teachers change classroom practices to adhere to curriculum demands, employ recommended context types and balance the use of primary and secondary teaching strategies.

Keywords: contextual – teaching and learning, perception, science curriculum

Introduction

Contextual teaching and learning: what is it? (anon) summarises contextual teaching and learning (CTL) as an approach to teaching and learning that integrates students'

interests, experiences, cultures and their diverse skills into what, and how, they learn, as well as how they are assessed. In CTL students engage in interactive and collaborative activities that are directly connected to their everyday-life situations. The activities utilise real-life and vocational contexts to which students can relate, thus, showing both the content to be learned and the importance of learning that content. Contextual teaching and learning activities are also interdisciplinary and involve both classroom and community activities. Through CTL students not only draw on their skills, but they also learn many transferable skills that become useful in other content areas and vocational endeavours. CTL, therefore, promotes meaningful learning and develop self-regulated learners.

For many students, school science appears completely dissociated from what they experience at home and in the community. Students generally fail to see the importance of what they do in science at school to their everyday-life activities. They also cannot see the connection between the science they do at school and the

science that they do in other places or in their everyday life (Portman and Richardson, 1997; Hara-Gaes, 2005). Frobisher and Orton (1996) view science as a powerful tool with great relevance to the real world. Further, they suggest that for this to be appreciated by the learners they must have direct experiences of using science in a wide range of contexts throughout the curriculum so that they will be able to apply it to their everyday experiences. A frequent argument for contextualising science teaching is that it provides relevance to the learning of school science (Campbell and Lubben, 2000). Mwamwenda (1996) argues that to explain natural phenomena, examples from a learner's immediate environment need to be stressed. Empirical studies of the learners responses to context-led approaches show that everyday context improve learners enjoyment of science (Ramsden, 1997; Lubben, Campbell and Dlamini, 1996). There is also evidence to support the view that contextualisation motivates learners (Lubben, et al., 1996) and helps their understanding of school science concepts (Ramsden, 1997).

According to Lubben et al. (1996), many people see science as abstract. Science educators have advocated that school science be taught in close connection with its applications for the learners to appreciate the applications of scientific ideas in real

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life. Teachers who are not creative enough are less likely to embark on proper lesson preparations and may also overlook the use of learners' experiences as the starting point of their teaching. Teachers also tend to use abstract examples when teaching science, which does not help the learners see the connection of school science to their everyday lives (Makari, Gervasius and Kasanda, 2006).

According to Lubben, et al. (1996) science educators should make CTL part of their instruction. That is, connecting educational theoretical knowledge to community practical applications (relating classroom content to the 'real' world). In doing this the teachers will succeed in:

- breaking the barriers between home and school learning experiences;
- making the link between the science in the school syllabus and the science that is used in the community;
- showing that the community is a good resource for science; and
- above all, making school science more relevant, meaningful and enjoyable to learners.

In 2002, the context-based approach was adopted in the development of junior secondary level science materials in Eswatini. The Eswatini National Science Panel, which is the body mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training to oversee science education in the country, tasked a team of writers and reviewers comprising science educators, secondary school science teachers, curriculum developers, and science inspectors to embark on this writing project (Ministry of Education, 2005). The involvement of science teachers in the development of the curriculum materials was seen as something positive. According to Bennett and Lubben (2006), involving teachers in the planning, writing, and trial phases of curriculum development assures that the design of the curriculum reflects the realities of life in the school classroom.

Therefore, the purpose of this study to investigate science teachers' ability to use the curriculum materials developed to reflect the realities of life in the classroom. Hence, this study investigated the teaching and learning of junior science in a contextualised manner.

Statement of the Problem

The approach of teaching science in the context of the learners' everyday-life experiences is said to make school science more relevant, meaningful and enjoyable to learners. Within the same experience learners become more motivated and interested in doing science. However, Dlamini (2012) reports that teachers hold different views about CTL and were uncertain about whether their teaching was indeed implementing CTL. This observation may raise questions about what teachers actually perceive about the CTL they are expected to implement in their science classrooms.

Research questions

The following four research questions were raised: -

1. To what extent does the JC curriculum in science integrate contextual teaching of Science?
2. What types of everyday contexts are used in contextualised science classroom in secondary schools in Eswatini?
3. What are the pedagogical strategies used by teachers in teaching science in contextualised science classrooms?
4. What factors hinder the effective implementation of contextual science teaching and learning in secondary schools in Eswatini?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the social constructivist theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978). Social Constructivism is the theory of learning that suggests that people acquire knowledge by experiencing things in conjunction with knowledge that they already possess ('construct') that is their own understanding of these things. In constructivist classrooms, teachers establish in students a sense of interest and confidence and a need for understanding. Hands-on activities that encourage students to think and explain their reasoning instead of merely memorizing and reciting facts are used. Such activities also help students to see the connections among themes and

concepts rather than present them in isolation, which is the primary goal of contextualisation (making connection between what is learned in class and everyday-life experiences).

Contextualised teaching and learning can benefit from the principles of constructivism if teachers can observe and follow when teaching learners. The five principles are:

1. Teachers seek and value students' points of view. Exposing students' points of view enables teachers to identify starting points in their teaching. Thus, students are encouraged to communicate and elaborate their ideas and justify their opinions.
2. Classroom activities challenge students' assumptions. In constructivist teaching student are encouraged to explore different situations provide points of view of that situation. In this way students are challenged to broaden their views.
3. Teachers pose problems of relevance. Teachers structure classroom activities to enable learners to experience personal meaning of material learned through exploring complex, real world problems. Relevance emerges with teacher mediation.
4. Teachers build lessons around big concepts. Teachers organise information around conceptual problems, questions or situations that enable students to learn and master certain essential concepts, such as understanding cause and effect, critical analysis of documents, or inquiry based exploration.
5. Teachers assess learning in the context of daily teaching. Assessment of students' learning is formative and is, thus, embedded in normal or daily classroom activities and is not a separate entity.
6. https://study.com/academy/lesson/constructivist-teaching-principles explanation.html [26/11/2019]

Empirical studies

Makari and Kasanda (2013) investigated the extent to which CTL was applied in Grade 11 and Grade 12 Mathematics classrooms in secondary schools in the

Gobabis area in Namibia. The study involved teachers teaching Mathematics at the Namibian secondary school certificate (NSSC) level. Two mathematics teachers from the selected secondary schools were involved in the study and 25 NSSC Mathematics lessons were observed. Four questions were raised for the study.

Two instruments were used to collect data. These were the interview schedule and the observation of Mathematics lessons. The researchers found that the use of context was only utilised to the point where numerical information needed for substitution in a formula was extracted. Furthermore, an average of 1-8 classroom episodes per lesson related to everyday contexts. The Namibian curriculum provided fewer aspects than needed by the teacher to fully implement contextual teaching and learning. For example, relevant aspects such as portfolios and projects were not part of the final Grade 12 examinations. The teachers viewed the use of contexts as having a potential of demonstrating relevance of and the use of Mathematics to learners. The teachers also indicated that the use of CTL had the potential to increase learners' performance, due to increased motivation, learners' interest and classroom participation. Time constraints and lack of resources were identified as the major factors hindering the effective implementation of CTL of Mathematics by the teachers.

The study concluded that CTL was not fully implemented in the two secondary schools because of lack of resources as well as lack of knowledge and experience in using CTL on the part of the teacher.

The low use of everyday-life experiences in teaching Mathematics was also observed in an earlier investigation by Mutemeri & Mugweni (2005). They investigated the extent to which mathematics instructional practices made use of children's experiences in early childhood education in Zimbabwe. Their study involved 20 Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers who completed a questionnaire, four teachers who were interviewed and three teachers who were observed while teaching. They found that teachers' practices generally ignored children's background knowledge and out-of-school situations and experiences. The teachers considered these experiences as a hindrance to learning, and thus, did not make them part of the process of helping children learn Mathematics. Teachers' efforts to

connect school mathematics to children's experiences were minimal, so were their attempts to link the culture of home to the culture of the classroom.

Ngman-Wara (2015) investigated junior high school science teachers' knowledge about contextualised instruction in Ghana. The study comprised of 204 (180 males and 24 females) junior high school science teachers. Two questions were raised for this study.

The study employed descriptive design to collect data. A test to determine science teachers' knowledge on contextualised science instruction was administered; descriptive and correlated data analyses were performed on the collected data. Major findings were that most of the knowledge about contextualised science instruction was weak but correlated positively and significantly with the teachers' highest professional qualification. The study concluded that a majority of the teachers were not knowledgeable in contextualised science instruction.

Makari and Kasanda's (2013) findings varied slightly from Dlamini's (2012) study in terms of curriculum provisions, class level and extent of implementation of CTL in classrooms. Dlamini (2012) used a questionnaire (33 teachers), lesson observation (three teachers) and focus group discussion (nine teachers) to investigate junior secondary science teachers' views of contextualised science teaching (CST), implementation of CST and challenges of implementing CST. Dlamini (2012) found that teachers' views of CST were consistent with the concepts and terms used in official curriculum documents. The teachers' implementation also reflected use of the contexts and practical activities suggested in the teaching material provided, suggesting that the teachers followed the CST curriculum materials. However, participants indicated some uncertainty whether their practices indeed constituted CST. Their implementation of CST was constrained by overcrowding in classrooms, shortage of pupils' books and the context–content gap.

A more recent study by Massam (2019) demonstrates the strengths of a contextualised science curriculum in not only helping Tanzanian students deepen their conceptual understanding, but also their understanding of the applications of science in different real-life settings. For the students science became relevant and

learning was more meaningful. Furthermore, contextualised science learning contributed to interpersonal development of students through stimulating collaboration among teachers and students during class activities. Challenges identified in the use of CTL were the nature and demands of the syllabus, teacher pre-service preparation and dominant paper-and-pencil assessment formats used. These observations were derived from an investigation of the experiences of 180 students, and their teachers, of a contextualised science curriculum in one school in Tanzania. The investigation employed mixed methods techniques to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data that were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey. The sample comprised of twelve science teachers from six stratified randomly selected secondary schools in the Manzini region of Eswatini. Three instruments were used to collect data. These were the interview schedule for contextual teaching and learning (ISCTL), questionnaire for contextual teaching and learning (QCTL) and the observation schedule for contextual teaching and learning (OSCTL). The researchers visited the selected schools to administer questionnaires to the teachers, which were collected on a date set for administering of the other instruments. On the set dates, Integrated Science lessons were observed at the six selected schools using the observation schedule, copies of lesson plans were also collected. The lessons were audio recorded with the permission of the teachers. This was to assist in the identification of contexts used and the pedagogical strategies used for teaching science through the contexts. Science teachers were interviewed on the same day.

Analysis of the curriculum documents was also carried out to ascertain the extent of their contextualisation. The curriculum materials analysed consisted of a teaching syllabus, Science in Everyday Life (SIEL) Teacher's Books 1 - 3, and Science in Everyday Life Learner's Books 1 – 3.

Data was analysed using thematic content analysis and descriptive statistics.

Results

Research question 1: To what extent does the JC curriculum in science integrate contextual teaching?

Analysis of the curriculum materials showed that the learners' books provided personalised stories that are used to link scientific concepts to everyday-life experiences. For example, during an observed lesson about electricity, the teacher used a story about one Mkhulu's (old man) non-functional torch to introduce the lesson about electricity. The story presented a problem the old man was experiencing with his torch. The books also have 'Over to you' sections where learners debate the problem and suggest strategies for solving the problem. Such over to you sections give learners the opportunity to further develop skills relevant to their everyday-life experiences. The curriculum is learner centred. Learners are allowed to do practical work, which also develops their psychomotor skills. Basically, the curriculum materials fully support CTL.

The curriculum also requires assessment that allows learners to see the direct relevance of science to their lives. This means teachers are required to use context-based assessment.

Research question 2: What types of everyday contexts are used in contextualised science classroom in secondary schools in Eswatini?

Data from questionnaire item dealing with type of contexts teachers use in their science lessons were analysed and presented in Table 2 below. The type of context used was presented as episodes or statements that referred to everyday contexts.

Table 2: The type of everyday context used in science classroom

Type of everyday context	Number of teachers who used the context	Percentage (%)
1. Referring to the mass media	0	0.0
2. Referring to personal experience: telling stories	5	41.7
3. Referring to common out of school experience.	2	
4. Referring to uncommon out of school experience.	0	0.0
5. Referring to common objects.	3	25.0
6. Referring to images from out of school experience	0	0.0
7. Referring to everyday knowledge	2	16.7
8. Referring to everyday words.	6	50.0
9. Using analogies and metaphors based on everyday experience.	2	16.7
10. Using everyday contexts for classroom activities.	1	8.3
11. Developing skills for use in everyday life	0	0.0
12. Referring to industry.	0	0.0
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Data in Table 2 show that episodes referring to everyday words had the highest frequency, 50.0% (6) of teachers asserting using it. This is followed by those referring to personal experience and telling stories, with 41.7% (5) teachers claiming to be using it. Next were those episodes referring to common objects with 25.0% (3) teachers using it. Lastly was the use of analogies and metaphors based of everyday experiences, referring to everyday knowledge and referring to common out-of-school, with 16.7% (2) teachers each indicating to be using them. The episode on use of everyday contexts for classroom activities was selected by only one teacher (8. 35%). However, it was observed that none of the of the teachers identified contextualised episodes that referred to the media, industry, develop the skills of the learners for use in everyday life, uncommon out of school experience and images from out of school experience as being of use to their lessons. This shows that teachers use only some everyday contexts, provided in the Mayoh and Knutton (1997) taxonomy.

Research question 3: What are the pedagogical strategies used by teachers in teaching science in contextualised science classrooms?

Table 3 below presents a summary of the responses participants gave during an interview session, where they were asked to indicate strategies they use. Pedagogical strategies suggested by teachers were classified into three categories: primary and secondary strategies, according to a classification by Kasanda, Lubben, Gaoseb, Kandjeo-Marenga, Kapenda and Campbell (2005), and a third category: depends on topic at hand. Primary strategy involves using a context as a starting point in introducing a scientific concept while a secondary strategy involves using a context as an alternative to a non-contextualised teaching approach that has not been successful in helping learners understand the scientific concept presented.

Table 3: Types of pedagogical strategies used by teachers in teaching science in contextualised science classrooms.

Pedagogical strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary strategy	7	58.3
Secondary strategy	3	25.0
Depend on the topic at hand	2	16.7
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Evident from the data shown in Table 3 above is that the majority of the participants, 58.30% (7) stated that they use the primary pedagogical strategy in teaching science, and 25.0% (3) participants stated that they use the secondary pedagogical strategy to teach science. For 16.70% (2) participants the strategy they used depended on the content they are teaching at that time. Worth noting is that the curriculum material suggests the primary strategy for all the units while less than 60% of the teachers seem to adopt it.

Research question 4: What factors hinder the effective implementation of contextual science teaching and learning in secondary schools in Eswatini?

Table 4 below summarises the teachers' responses on the open ended item dealing with factors they consider to hinder the effective implementation of contextual teaching. The identified factors are organised into five categories, and are ranked according to the frequency of teachers identifying that category of factors.

Table 4:Factors hindering the effective implementation of contextual science teaching and learning of science in Eswatini secondary schools.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of resources	5	41.7
Time limitation	3	25.0
Large class sizes	2	16.7
High teaching loads	1	8.3
Background of the learners	1	8.3
Total	**12**	**100.0**

From the data in Table 4 it can be seen that 41.7% (5) participants referred to lack of resources in the school as a factor that constrained the effective implementation of contextual teaching. The resources referred to by teachers included textbooks and laboratory material. Twenty-five percent (3) participants stated limited time as a hindering factor. Teachers pointed out that the school programme always changes due to sporting activities, so they lose teaching time from the already limited time allocated for Science in the schools' teaching time-tables. Only 16.7% (2) participants mentioned large class size while 8.30% (1) participant referred to high teaching loads and another 8.30% identified the background of the learner, as factors hindering the effective implementation of contextual teaching and learning in science classroom.

Discussion

The findings from the study show that the JC Science curriculum integrates contextualisation to a great extent, as the materials used to teach this curriculum are fully contextualised. The material allows the teacher to teach science in the context of the learners' everyday-life experiences. The findings are in agreement with a study conducted by Campbell and Lubben (2000), which found that JC science lessons were contextualised by focusing on events common enough for learners to be able to relate to them. Examples are the exploration of the fizzy gas in carbonated

drinks, which led to a lesson on properties of carbon dioxide, Mkhulu's torch that led to a discussion about electric circuits. Also lessons allow learners to apply their science knowledge to solve problems.

Secondly, findings of the study show that most teachers use episodes referring to everyday words and those referring to personal experience, which include stories with a specific person in the main role. Episodes referring to uncommon out of school experience, mass media, industry and developing skills for use in everyday life were shown to be excluded from use by the teachers. This shows that not all types of context identified by Mayoh and Knutton (1997) are used by the teachers in their contextualised science classrooms in secondary schools in Eswatini. The finding is in agreement with findings from a study conducted by Kasanda (2001) in Namibia, which also found that not all types of context identified by Mayoh and Knutton (1997) featured in the lessons observed in Namibia.

Thirdly, findings of the study show that many science teachers use as a primary strategy. The observation suggests that CTL was used less as an alternative strategy on which teachers rely when a non-contextualised method failed. Another observation worth noting is that secondary strategy was employed by only teachers with none being initiated by the learners. This could be an indication of learners failing to recognise any connection between the lesson content and their experiences.

Similar findings on the low use of everyday-life experiences in teaching were also observed by Mutemeri and Mugweni (2005), though in Mathematics and in early childhood education. Teacher practices were found to minimally use children's background knowledge when introducing lessons; that is as a primary strategy. Teachers also made little attempt to connect school mathematics to children's' out-of-school situations and experiences during lessons.

Lastly, findings of the study show that the factors hindering effective implementation of CTL are lack of time, lack of teaching materials, high teaching loads and learners' background. Teachers indicated that they could not use CTL as often as they would like because they would not finish their JC Science syllabus within the allocated 3-

year period. This tended to force teachers to rely on the non-contextualised methods of instruction.

Teachers indicated that most learners do not have text books. This finding concurs with findings by Makari and Kasanda (2013) and Dlamini (2012) that CTL may not be fully implemented because of lack of resources as well as inadequate knowledge on the part of the teacher. Findings also concur to findings by Massam (2019) who identified teacher prior preparation as one factor inhibiting successful implementation of CTL.

Conclusion

Based on the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The junior secondary school science curriculum syllabus integrates contextualisation to a great extent
2. Teachers used episodes referring to everyday words and those referring to personal experiences.
3. Teachers rely more on the primary strategy to teach science in junior secondary schools in Eswatini.
4. Time constraint and lack of teaching resources were major factors hindering teachers from using CTL.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should teach science as stated by the curriculum and make more use of the ‘over to you’ sections to involve learners more in their learning.
2. The science teachers should put more effort in using all the types of contexts identified by Mayoh and Knutton (1997)
3. Teachers should use both primary and secondary teaching strategies equally and allow opportunities for learners to initiate these strategies during lessons, as the contextual teaching approach advocates that activities in the classroom should be learner based.
4. Maximise utilisation of time allocated for science on the time-table to provide optimum time for CTL of science in schools.

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Effects of scaffolding instructional strategy and gender on students' attitude to reading comprehension

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Abstract

Students' low performance in English Language has continued to be a cause of concern to all, generally to those in the main stream of education. English Language is the language of instruction at all educational levels, its teaching and learning in secondary schools has continued to suffer setbacks. Reading comprehension is an important aspect of English language in secondary school. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of Scaffolding Instructional Strategy (SIS) and gender on secondary school students' attitude to reading comprehension. The study adopted pre-test, post-test control quasi experimental design. Three research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instruments used in the study were Students' Attitude to Reading Comprehension Questionnaire with r =0.87 and English Language Reading Comprehension Passages Test at r =0.84 reliable index. Senior Secondary School Two (SSS II) classes comprising 120 students from two secondary schools in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State were purposively selected. The selected schools were randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups. Findings revealed that there was a significant effect of scaffolding instructional strategy on students' attitude towards reading comprehension ($F_{(1, 115)} = 12.977$; $p < .05$). There was no significant gender effect on students' attitude towards reading comprehension ($F_{(1, 115)} = .806$; $p > .05$). There was a significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' attitude towards reading comprehension ($F_{(1, 115)} = 3.994$; $p < .05$). SIS application to gender showed significant gain in improving students' attitude towards reading comprehension. The study recommends that English Language teachers in Nigerian secondary schools should use student centered instructional strategies in order to improve students' performance in English.

Keywords: English language, gender, instructional strategy, reading comprehension, students' attitude

Introduction

Reading is one of the most fundamental components of the secondary school curricula. It could be described simply as a communication process through which information is passed from the writer to the reader by means of written symbols. The reading process is complex and multi-dimensional. It involves the recognition and understanding of the nature of the linguistic symbols that constitute written language (Osikomaiya, 2013). Reading is an active process that requires full concentration and the thinking ability of the reader. Effective learning at schools and advanced educational institutions demand the possession and application of at least the minimum skill required for specific reading tasks (Osikomaiya, 2013). Jedege and Kolade (2017) define reading as the act of decoding symbols of a language in order to ensure intelligibility and understanding. Thus, reading is seen as a skill which forms the basis of literacy and civilization; it is through it that one attains a meaningful level of success in life because without reading ability, knowledge in all school subjects will not be attained from the primary to the university level (Sotiloye, Popoola and Michael, 2017). Osikomaiya (2013) describes reading as a communication process by which information is passed from the writer to the reader through the means of written symbols. Makinde (2017) defines reading as a process of looking at a series of written symbols with a view of getting meaning from them.

In reading, the eyes and the brain are deeply involved before any meaningful reading takes place. Reading is a complex process of deciphering the author the author's intension through the strategic use of thinking, questioning, anticipating, evaluating and interpreting skills (Adebileje, 2000). Decoding skills-quick word recognition and ready knowledge of relevant vocabulary, for example are essential to successful reading. Reading fluency is an essential key in reading. Reading is described as the process of deriving meaning from the text for the majority of readers; this process involves decoding of written text (Cline, Johnson and King, 2006).Hughes (2007)

describes reading as a complex interaction between the text and the reader. There are two important elements in reading which involve the visual and non-visual elements. Visual element is the identification of the letters that constitute the words and the words that are combined to form the interpretation and understanding stages of the written text (non-visual). Comprehension in reading occurs when the reader deciphers the writer's message (Osikomaiya, 2013). Thus, reading comprehension is getting meaning from what is being written; this implies that comprehension is a vital component of reading as a skill. Reading comprehension is a process in which readers make meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the views of readers related to the text (Duke, 2003).

A Major reason for this powerful relationship is that books are much more likely to contain the vocabulary, text structures, and complex sentence patterns that are the characteristics of decontextualized language, the language of schools and higher education (Osikomaiya, 2017b). It is obvious that a student's success would depend on the extent to which s/he can obtain information from the text quickly and efficiently. Reading comprehension is synonymous with intelligence, the ability to make a thorough logical analysis of conceptual or cognitive relationships (Adegbile, 1998).

Comprehension involves three levels: literal, interpretative (inferential) andcritical (evaluative) comprehension (Lisa, 2016; Osikomaiya, 2013; Mabekoje, 2012). Literal comprehension involves the understanding of ideas and information explicitly stated in the passage (Adegbile, 1998). The skills in literal comprehension include knowledge of words meaning; recalling details directly stated or paraphrased in the writer's own words and understanding grammatical cues (Osikomaiya, 2013). Comprehension at this level is a pre-requisite for comprehension at other level. Interpretative/inferential comprehension is the second level of comprehension that involves understanding ideas or information that are not explicitly stated in the passage (Mabekoje, 2012). The relevant skills here include reasoning with the information presented to understand the author's note, purpose and attitude, infer factual information, main ideas, comparison, cause and effect relationship not

explicitly stated in the passage and the summary of the story content (Adegbile, 1998). Critical/evaluative comprehension is the third level of comprehension that requires analysis, evaluation and personal reaction to information presented in the passage(Osikomaiya, 2017b). The relevant skills involve reader's ability to react personally to information in a passage and indicate its meaning. Proficiency in reading leads to academic achievement (Mac Bridge, 1973). Proficiency in a language rests on the user's ability to read, comprehend and understand the rudiments of reading as well as the pedagogical strategies through which reading concepts are transmitted to the learners. The use of different methods when reading arouses students' interest and this leads to effective teaching and learning. For effective teaching of the English language, the importance of qualified teachers and adequate teaching facilities is germane. Apart from this, curriculum should be designed to be student centered oriented while teachers are trained to facilitate lessons accordingly.

Instructional scaffolding involves teaching extensively with instructional support for language transition when concepts and skills are first introduced with the gradual removal of these supports when students begin to develop greater proficiency, skills and knowledge (Osikomaiya, 2013). Scaffolding is a communication process where presentation and demonstration by the teacher are contextualized for the learner (Osikomaiya, 2013).Teacher through scaffolding offers assistance in those skills beyond the students' capability. Belland, Walker, Kim and Lefler, (2014) opine that scaffolding leads to gain such that students can function independently in future. They further claim that scaffolding simultaneously help students to enhance skills and participate meaningfully in the performance of the target skills. It includes providing supportive materials or dialogues by adults or more skilled peers, while students engage in learning tasks (Osikomaiya, 2013). Such materials or dialogues give students the support to do the task independently. David, Seng, Wing and Chun (2004) observe that scaffolding can be achieved in multiple ways which include prompts, hints, comments, explanations, questions, counter examples and suggestions. Through scaffolding teacher plays the role of the expert as individuals who provide guidance, advice, and model through the course of acting upon task

(Walqui, 2006).The teacher sometimes makes modifications through scaffolding in order to respond to students' individual needs.

Method is very germane in content delivery. Modified conventional method is where the teacher dominates the teaching and learning situation; the students regurgitate information on the written text with the teacher evaluates (Osikomaiya, 2013). Modified conventional method in teaching reading, places much emphasis on testing rather than the interaction that exist between the reader and the print, which communicate the authors' thought (Osikomaiya, 2013). Modified conventional method sees language as immutable; teacher-centred and dominated. In a typical modified conventional method lesson, there is a passage for students to read, the passage is introduced to the students by the teacher. A typical example is lecture method and rote learning which relies heavily on textbooks. The use of the modified conventional method by English teachers could be responsible for students' deficiency in reading comprehension which invariably affects their performance in English language examinations. West African Examination Council (2010) indicates that the conventional teaching approach is deficient in meeting the needs of the majority of learners.

The importance of developing favourable attitude to reading is, therefore, a necessity since it has shown through various researches that students' attitude towards reading affects their proficiency in reading tasks. Being a successful learner starts with having a positive attitude towards learning. Abiodun (2009) observes that positive attitude promotes learning, while negative attitude debases it. Also, Lawal (2005) and Osikomaiya (2013) assert that positive attitude relates to high competence in reading comprehension while negative attitude relates to marginal competence in English Language. Attitude is a mental view, posture or disposition about a thing (Osikomaiya, 2013). Studies have identified variables such as age, status, gender, level of educational attainment, socio-economic status and experience, psychological, cultural and religious factors as some of the factors that can influence the development of attitude towards a goal or an object (Oladunjoye, 2003 and Ayedun, 2006). If students see reading as a lifelong enablement, their attitude is bound to change. It is necessary, therefore, that students should be

provided with the reading empowerment that would make them enjoy various school subjects. It is important that reading is taught in such a way that can cut across the various aspects of the school curriculum (Onukaogu and Ohia, 2003). Since attitude is very important in whatever one is doing in life, its importance cannot be neglected in the teaching and learning of reading. It should be noted that attitude can be acquired or learnt. Hence, attitude was examined as one of the variables that are likely to determine students' academic performance in reading comprehension.

Gender difference is a form of grouping in human beings which has been used in many ways to compare both male and female in many endeavours ranging from politics to education (Osikomaiya, 2013). Agboola (2008) agreed to the consensus that girls have been found in many Nigerian research to have only a slight positive but statistically insignificant edge over boys in language performance. Osikomaiya, Osijo, Okueso and Omotayo (2018) discover that both male and female showed positive attitude towards language learning and that attitude and gender are highly important in language learning. Again different studies have revealed that gender correlates with academic achievement. Ogunniyi (2001) asserts that gender differences in writing style and reading choice are evident. Also, Akande (2002) and Sotonade (2003) establish a correlation between academic performance and gender of a learner. Although the difference was not significant, Osikomaiya (2013) discovers that female students score higher in reading comprehension test than males. This study therefore examines the effects of Scaffolding Instructional Strategy and gender on secondary school students' attitude towards reading comprehension.

Theoretical Framework

This study has a strong base on Constructivism theory. Constructivist theory focuses on learner's ability to mentally construct meaning of their own environment and to create their own learning (Huitt, 2003). It values developmental and appropriate teacher-supported learning method that is initiated and directed by the students. Atheron (2005), Amineh and Asl (2015) make a distinction between cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. They maintained that cognitive constructivism deals with how the individual learner understands things in terms of developmental stages and learning styles while social constructivism emphasizes on

how meanings and understanding grow out of social encounters. Social constructivist scholars view learning as an active process where learners learn to discover principles, concepts and facts for themselves (Akinade 1996, Dixon-karuss 2001, Atherton 2005, Amineh and Asl 2015). Teachings in constructivism promote scaffolding, meta-cognitive reflective inquiry strategies to encourage students to engage in critical thinking and response to the content while the teacher assists the students in developing new insights and connecting them with their previous learning (Hanley 1994, Osikomaiya, 2013 and Bada, 2015). In constructivist theory, the teacher is recognized and expected to perform the role of a facilitator against the conventional method where students are not given free hand to construct meaning within their environment. Constructivist theory has profound implication for this study as both knowledge deconstruction and knowledge sharing which occur as the teacher interacts through conversation and collaboration to construct meaning from the passage read. Constructivist theory is relevant to the study because it emphasizes interactive learning activities that students need to engage in when reading.

Statement of the Problem

Students' written and oral communications in English bear evidence that contemporary Nigerian secondary school students can hardly read and comprehend text independently. Coupled with this, is the results of internal and external examinations in English language which indicate that students' comprehension ability is poor. Despite the role of English language as a cut across subject and as a compulsory subject in which students must have a credit pass before being admitted into higher institutions, certain problems have been identified to be associated with the teaching and learning of the subject. These problems include students' inabilities to accomplish reading tasks; poor methods of teaching and poor handling of reading comprehension by teachers who adopt teacher-centred teaching methods. Apart from the above, students' negative attitude towards reading as well as poor reading habits, a lack of reading culture, environmental factors and school factors. Efforts to address these problems have led researchers to experiment with various instructional strategies. As a way out, scholars have suggested a shift from teacher-

centred to student-centred methods. This study, therefore examines the effect of scaffolding instructional strategy on students' attitude to reading comprehension. It also determines the moderating effect of gender on the dependent variable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Examine the effect of scaffolding instructional strategies on students' attitude towards reading comprehension.
2. Establish the relationship between gender and attitude of students towards reading comprehension.
3. Determine the interaction level of scaffolding instructional strategies and gender on students' attitude towards reading comprehension.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided this study.

1. There is no significant effect of scaffolding instructional strategy on students' attitude towards reading comprehension.
2. There is no significant effect of gender on students' attitude towards reading comprehension.
3. There is no significant effect in the interaction level of scaffolding instructional strategies and gender on students' attitude towards reading comprehension.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted quasi experimental research design and it utilized a pre-test post-test control group. Quasi experimental research design is a nonrandomized, pre-post intervention studies which involves manipulation of independent variables (scaffolding instructional strategy and conventional modified method). Dependent variable of the study was attitude while gender (male and female) served as a

moderating variable. Also, intact classes were used during the experiment in order not to disrupt normal school programme.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of this study consisted of all Senior Secondary II students in public secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State. Ogun State has three senatorial districts and simple random sampling technique was used to select Ogun East Senatorial District. Ogun East Senatorial District has nine (9) local government areas; simple random sampling technique was used to select Odogbolu Local Government Area. At the second stage, purposive sampling was used to select two schools with 380 students in SSII. These two schools were exposed to the treatment and control group. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools in order to prevent interaction of participants. The first school had a total of 182 students at SSII while the second school had 198 students at SSII. The participant age ranged from 13-16 years. Each school had an intact class of 60 students and 120 students constituted the total sample used in the research.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments used in this study were: English Language Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (ELRCAT)and Students' Attitude to Reading Comprehension Questionnaire (SARCQ). ELRCAT contained eight comprehension passages adapted from Adegbile (1998) which was designed to measure the students' performance in reading comprehension before and after treatment. It consisted a 40 items that measured the students' cognitive achievement proficiency in vocabulary recognition and comprehension. The achievement test was based on comprehension of a passage, identification and comprehension of new lexical items (unfamiliar words) and synonyms and antonyms of some lexical items in the passage. A test re-test method was used to establish the reliability index, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at r = 0.84. Students' Attitude to Reading Comprehension Questionnaire consisted two sections: demographic data of the students (name of school, age, class, gender, etc.) and 20 item questionnaire that sought the students' attitude towards reading comprehension. The questionnaire responses were based on four points Likert rating scale type of Strongly Agree (4),

Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The content validity of the instrument was ascertained using experts in the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument at 0.87.

Research Procedure

The research was carried out in five phases. Twelve weeks were used for treatment procedures. Initially six schools were selected and visited. Thereafter two schools were selected based on geographical reasons and reasonableness of the school system to accommodate the research:

- **Phase One:** The researcher visited the two selected schools to seek for permission to carry out the research in the schools. During this visitation, English language teachers who served as research assistants and participants were selected. The teachers were selected based on the following criteria:
    a. Between 8-10 years teaching experience
    b. University graduate (First Degree) with B.Ed in English Language.
    c. Gender made up of both male and female

  This phase lasted for one week.

- **Phase Two:** The investigator organised a training programme for the research assistants who were trained. A total of four teachers were selected using Teacher's Observation Rating Scale (TORS). Two teachers were trained on how to use Scaffolding Instructional Strategy to teach reading comprehension to students in the experimental group. Two other teachers were used in the control group but they were not exposed to any training. At the end of the training programme in experimental group, demonstration lessons were conducted by the researcher to serve as model to the research assistants. This lasted for two weeks.
- **Phase Three:** Adequate briefing was made to explain the purpose of the study to the participants. The questionnaires were administered to the participants as the pre-test assessment tools. The questionnaires were

collected; days and time the research assistants would meet with the students were agreed upon with the treatment group.

- Phase Four: The treatment was administered to the students for a period of 8 weeks in their respective treatment groups.
- Phase Five: After the treatment, a week was used to administer achievement test to the participants as post-test. The questionnaires were collected after completion.

Treatment Procedure for Scaffolding Instructional Strategy Instructional

Procedures of Scaffolding Strategy (Experiment group I) **Step I:** The teacher explained that reading involves thinking and making sense of what is read (5minutes). **Step II:** Teacher prepared and spurred the students' interest in reading comprehension by asking those questions that would stimulate their prior knowledge on the passage they were going to read. Teacher elicited students' experiences related to the topic read. (10minutes). **Step III:** Students read the passage silently. They later read aloud to get the story within the passage. As they read, they verbalised their thoughts and shared their reading experiences as the teacher further modelled desired behaviour in them through questions and comments generated from both the teacher and the students. (15minutes).**Step IV:** Teacher provided assistance with the students helping out. The students took over the task with the teacher helping and intervening when necessary. Teacher watched without assisting the students as they used the strategy independently. (5minutes). **Step V:** Teacher and the students further explored the passage; by responding to specific questions, the students shared their understanding of what the passage meant. (5minutes). Step **VI:** Support in the form of explicit teaching continued until students understood the passage (5minutes). **Step VII:** The students answered the comprehension questions. (15minutes). Lastly, sixty minutes (60) was used for a class session.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using univariate analysis of covariance, pair wise comparisons and line graph to show the level of main and interaction effects of treatment and gender on students' attitude to reading comprehension.

Results

Table 1: Between-Subjects Effects of Posttest Scores of Attitude to Reading Comprehension

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1710.346[a]	4	427.587	5.599	.000
Intercept	11170.995	1	11170.995	146.290	.000
Attitupretest	11.073	1	11.073	.145	.704
Group	990.945	1	990.945	12.977	.000
Gender	61.578	1	61.578	.806	.371
group * gender	304.956	1	304.956	3.994	.048
Error	8781.654	115	76.362		
Total	549172.000	120			
Corrected Total	10492.000	119			

a. R Squared = .163 (Adjusted R Squared = .134)

The results in Table 1 indicated that there was a significant effect of treatment on students attitude to reading comprehension ($F_{(1,\ 115)}$) = 12.977; p < .05). The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant effect of scaffolding on students' attitude to reading comprehension was rejected by this finding. The implication of the finding was that instructing students with the treatment had a significant effect on students' attitude to reading comprehension. There was no significant gender effect on students' attitude to reading comprehension (F ($F_{(1,\ 115)}$) = .806; p > .05). This implies that students' attitude to reading comprehension is not affected by gender. Also, there was a significant two-way interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' attitude to reading comprehension ($F_{(1,\ 115)}$) = 3.994; p < .05). This implies

that gender would moderate in the effects of scaffolding instructional method on students' attitude to reading comprehension. In effect, scaffolding instructional strategy showed significant gain in the improvement of students' attitude to reading comprehension.

Table 2: Pairwise Comparisons of Group Differences in Posttest Attitude to Reading Comprehension

(I) Treatment Group	(J) Treatment Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scaffolding Instructional Strategy	Modified Conventional Method (Control Group)	5.922*	1.644	.000	2.666*	9.179
Modified Conventional Method (Control Group)	Scaffolding Instructional Strategy	-5.922*	1.644	.000	-9.179*	-2.666

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The Mean Difference (MD) is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

The results in Table 2 showed that Scaffolding Instructional Strategy had a significant effect on students' attitude to reading comprehension over and above the conventional method control group (MD = 5.922; std error = 1.766; $p < .05$). This means that SIS is more effective than the modified conventional method in the improvement of students' attitude to reading comprehension. This result is graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

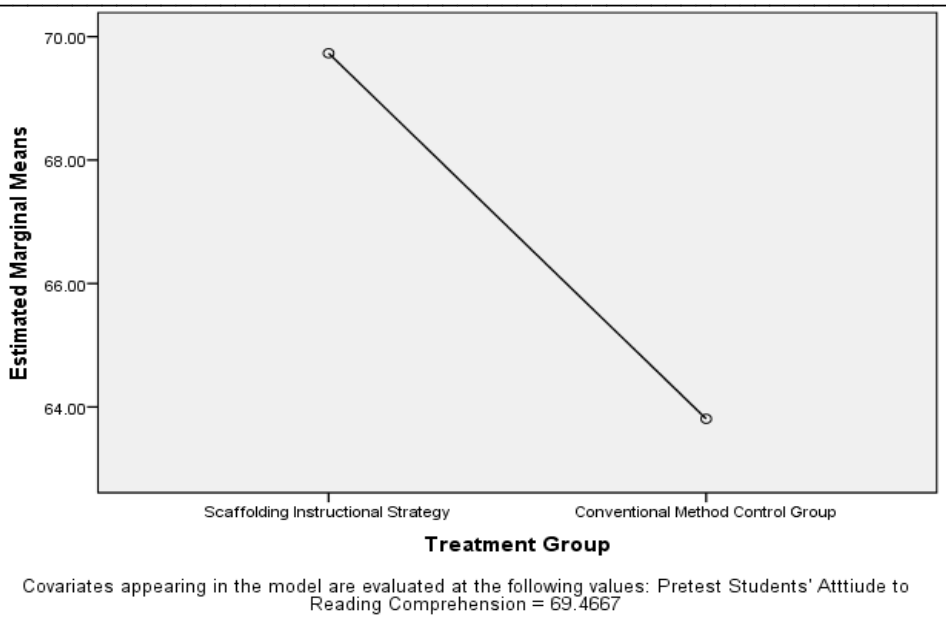

Figure 1: Estimated Marginal means of Post-test Students' attitude to reading comprehension

Table 3: Pairwise Comparisons of Group Differences in Post-test Attitude to Reading Comprehension by Gender

Treatment Group	Gender	$\bar{x}$	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scaffolding Instructional Strategy	Male	67.334[a]	1.874	63.622	71.045
	Female	72.127[a]	1.431	69.292	74.961
Conventional Method Control Group	Male	64.693[a]	1.803	61.122	68.263
	Female	62.923[a]	1.459	60.033	65.813

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest Students' Attitude to Reading Comprehension = 69.4667.

Results in Table 3 revealed that in the scaffolding instructional strategy whereas female participants had a mean attitude score of 72.127 in reading comprehension, male participants had a mean attitude score of 67.334. However, in the conventional group, while male participants had the higher mean attitude score of 64.693 in reading comprehension, female had a mean attitude score of 62.923. This means that SIS favoured female students than male students. This result is graphically illustrated in Figure 2.

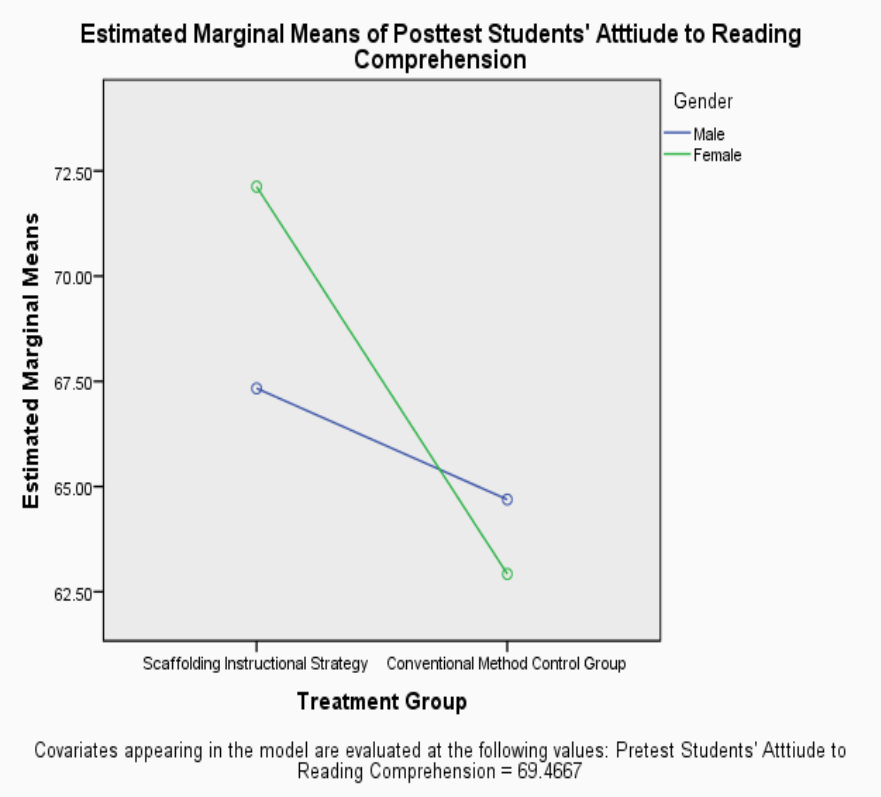

Figure 2: Estimated Marginal means of Post-test Students' attitude to reading comprehension

Discussion

The study revealed that scaffolding instructional strategy facilitated learning more comprehension of passages than the modified conventional method. Scaffolding instructional strategy is activity oriented. The result of the study agreed with previous studies by Forreste and Jantzie (2004); Wren (2005); Oyinloye (2010) and Osikomaiya (2013) who discovered that students who were exposed to activity based methods performed significantly better than those not exposed to activity based methods. Seng (2007) noted that scaffolding empowers students to take ownership of their learning as they move from teacher-mediated learning to a higher psychological functioning within their Zone Proximal Development (ZPD). The higher achievement scores in scaffolding instructional strategy group is probably because scaffolding is student-centered. The study confirmed that the scaffolding instructional strategy significantly developed students' positive attitude to reading comprehension. This corroborated the findings of Salau (2005) who discovered that methodology is significantly relevant to students' attitude to learning. The study revealed that students in scaffolding had a significantly higher post attitude mean in reading

comprehension than the conventional group. Jueli (2008) discovered that adequate methodology which emphasizes active students' engagement improves reading attitude towards English reading comprehension. This may be due to the fact that the students in scaffolding instructional strategy group had better learning opportunities through interaction, dialogue and discussion. This showed that the more students are exposed to language activities the better their attitude in learning the language. Finding also indicated a two-way interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' attitude to English reading comprehension. Female students in the scaffolding instructional strategy had a higher attitude mean score than the males. While in modified conventional method; males had higher attitude scores than the females. This implies that treatment and gender had effect on students' attitude to reading comprehension. The above finding was supported by Adebiyi (2006) and Osikomaiya (2013) who found a positive relationship between attitude and academic achievement. Ojo (2008) also noted that gender and attitude can determine the interest, competence and prospect in education attainment. The results indicated that the treatment (SIS) and gender had effect on the attitude of students towards reading comprehension.

Conclusion

The study concludes that scaffolding strategy is more effective for teaching reading comprehension than the conventional method. This study also discovered that the use of instructional scaffolds strategy is more effective in fostering students' attitude in English reading comprehension than conventional modes of instruction. Therefore, teachers of English language must recognise the importance of applying the instructional strategy to boost their teaching. Also, curriculum planner should emphasize the use of student- centred method in the teaching-learning process.

Limitations of the Current Study

The study was restricted to only SS II students, and this made it difficult to generalize the result of the study beyond the class. Also, uncooperative attitude of the research assistants was another problem especially when they discovered that there was no remuneration for the exercise but the researcher made effort to provide refreshment for the research assistants as well as the students. Getting the approval and support of the

school administrators' to use their schools was also a great challenge. Some of the students were not willing to take part in the study as a result, the researcher had to personally plead with and explain the academic benefits of the research to them before they could agree to take part. Also, some of the students were feeling shy to express themselves in the class but they were encouraged to speak with the research assistants correcting their mistakes. It should be noted that attitude do take time to manifest. Therefore extension of the study if adequately funded would have been an added advantage.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for the study:

1. Scaffolding should be recommended to English Language teachers to use in secondary schools because it yielded significantly better result than modified conventional method.
2. English Language teachers in Nigerian secondary schools should be encouraged to develop interest in the use of student centred instructional strategies in order to improve students' performance in English.
3. English Language teachers should encourage their students to develop positive attitude towards reading comprehension.
4. Curriculum planners and experts in English Language should design curriculum that are student centred.
5. Seminars, workshops and in-service training programme on educational research developments and innovations should be organized for teachers.

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Assessment of contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses

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Abstract

General courses are meant to equip undergraduates with the knowledge to solve contemporary social problems. However, the study seeks to examine this position by assessing the contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses. Quantitative descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for this study. The sample for the study consisted of 200 undergraduates selected from five faculties in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit the required information from undergraduates. Data collected were analysed using multiple regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The results of the study showed that the combination of social-environmental factors significantly influenced undergraduates' failure in general studies ($F_{(4,195)} = 3.337$, $p<.05$). In this study, the largest Beta coefficient value (.239) for parental factors means that this variable makes the strongest relative contribution to undergraduates' failure in general studies, followed by teaching-learning facilities (β=.188) and peer groups (β=.105). While the Beta value (.005) for institutional factors was very low, indicating that it made a less relative contribution. The study concludes that parental factors and teaching-learning facilities made a significant contribution to the prediction of

undergraduates' failure in general studies. It was recommended that parents of undergraduates should provide a supportive environment and encourage active learning in general studies courses.

Keywords: general studies, institutional factors, learning facilities, parental factors, social-environmental factors.

Introduction

University education is the training provided to individuals in order to make them mentally and morally prepared to work in various sectors of the economy or areas of the culture of a nation. Various programmes are therefore designed and taught so as to achieve this broad goal. Since a university has many courses to offer to prepare candidates for specialization in different fields or areas of work, students are made to take some general studies courses in order to expose them to some areas outside their fields of study for the purpose of gaining general knowledge. The National Universities Commission (NUC), a body empowered by the Nigerian law to set the minimum standards for all academic programmes in Nigerian universities, designed some courses tagged "General Studies" offered by undergraduates in Nigerian universities. The goal of General Studies developed by NUC is to produce all rounded graduates with vision and entrepreneurial skills in an environment of peace and social cohesiveness (NUC, 2007). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), one of the goals of education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education, to which the philosophy of Nigerian education is linked is "the development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society" (p. 2)**.**

It was observed that General studies in Nigeria have its own share of pathetic challenges, like in all other facets of national planning and development. The problem confronting undergraduates in these general courses especially "non-achievers" are numerous but the truth is that they lack knowledge of their abilities and strengths. Moreover, they have not developed the necessary study skills and

techniques and they lack the interest and motivation that are requisite for achievement, in it.

Obe (1996) identifies the causes of mass failure in examinations. According to him, factors responsible for mass failure include students' weak background, students' low intelligence, lack of aptitude and poor interest in the subject, students' bad study habits and poor study skills, students' weakness inability to express themselves, lack of qualified teachers in some subjects, lack of parental motivation and support, teachers non-dedication to duty, poor school teaching-learning infrastructure and poor learning environment, overcrowded classrooms, lack of good textbooks, laboratories, workshops, libraries and incessant strikes by teachers due to poor conditions of service.

Low academic achievement is not only limited to students in secondary schools alone but also rampant among students of tertiary institutions, especially those who offer courses in General Studies (GST) as it was observed by the researchers. This has been a subject of concern to education planners, administrators, stakeholders in education and the students themselves. The rate at which tertiary institution students fail is however different from that of primary and post-primary students, because of their level of commitment to studies and other social activities which consume most of their time in school. Despite the fact that university education is not compulsory for all citizens of a country, a good number wants to acquire university degree by all means without thinking of their ability (Roman, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Undergraduates by their nature do get involved in many activities outside their studies resulting in loss of interest in their studies leading into dropout from the university. This is considered not only a personal problem but also a social problem requiring fundamental measures to solve. Dropout of students from the university may affect the society in future, leading to brain drain and economic losses. From the researchers' experience, GST courses are some of the courses that undergraduates failed. Some undergraduates carry the course over because of their attitude towards GST courses. It seems the rate at which students fail General

studies courses is as a result of the influence of peer group, parental factors, institutional factors and lack of teaching-learning facilities (Obe, 1996; Roman, 2014). Moreover, assessment of the contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses is less frequent in the literature today. A possible explanation is that most recent studies in Nigeria and other countries tend to focus on the prediction of social-environmental factors on academic achievement of students both at post-primary and post-secondary school level. Hence it is crucial to investigate the combined influence of peer groups, institutional factors, teaching-learning facilities and parental factors on undergraduates' failure in general studies courses. It is also necessary to determine which of the social-environmental factors identified in this study contributed to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses. In view of this, the present study investigates the contribution of social-environmental factors such as peer groups, teaching-learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors to the causes of students' failure in General Studies (GST) courses in tertiary institutions. Specifically, this study is to:

- ascertain how the combination of peer groups, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors, influences undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST) courses in tertiary institutions.
- determine how peer groups, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors contribute to undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST) courses in tertiary institutions.
- examine if there is a difference in the perception of undergraduates on the causes of failure in general studies courses.

Three hypotheses guided this study:

- $H_0$1. The combination of a peer group, learning facilities, parental factors, and institutional factors has no significant influence on undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST).
- $H_0$2. There is no significant relative contribution of a peer group, learning facilities, parental factors, and institutional factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST).

- $H_0$3 There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduates on the causes of failure in general studies courses from the faculty of law, education, arts, science, social and management sciences.

Literature review

Examining the causes of students' failure in General Studies (GST) in tertiary institutions cannot be completed without considering the theoretical background on which some of the causes are based. Consequently, this study is anchored on a number of fundamental theories. These include the theory of social learning and achievement motivation.

Social learning theory refers to individuals observed as models. In social learning theory, children in the society are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, a character on children's TV, friends within their peer groups and teachers at schools. All these contribute to students' achievement positively or negatively. In most cases during the process of working towards achieving a particular goal, children pay attention to these models. At other times they may imitate the behaviour they have observed of them. If a child imitates a model behaviour and the consequences are rewarding, the child is likely to continue performing the behaviour (McLeod, 2016). If the behaviour is negative, this may influence the performance of the child negatively and result in academic failure in general studies courses in tertiary institution.

Achievement Motivation Theory (AMT) relates personal characteristic and background to a need for achievement. This is a theory that explains the integral relationship between an individual's characteristics and needs to achieve something in life. This theory was put forward by the following researchers in the field of Psychology: Murray (1938); Lowel (1953); Atkinson, Clark and Mc Cleland (1961) (Bhasin, 2018) (Bhasin, 2018). For an individual to achieve a specific goal he/she is governed by various internal and external factors. The internal factors include personal determination, willingness, and punctuality while include pressure, expectation and target set by a relevant organization, members of a family and society that the person belongs (Bhasin, 2018). No matter how motivated an individual is towards achieving organizational goals, lack of encouragement,

rewards, incentives and motivation from top management, always put the employee or undergraduate respectively on a back-foot. McClalland (1961) identified three motivations which everybody must have: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation, and a need for power. He referred these needs to Learned Needs Theory, which has a lot to contribute to learners' academic achievement.

Social-environmental factors

Baenett and Casper (2001) defined human social environment as the immediate physical surrounding within which people live or develops as well as the social relationship and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and how they interact. Despite differences in their reasoning ability, people of the same social-environment often think in a similar way. The social environment surrounding a decision maker is another factor that has been observed to influence rewards processing (Porcelli & Delgado, 2009). Kapur (2018) identifies the following factors to among others be epidemic toward students' performance: attitude of the student, school resources, leadership style of the school principal, skills and abilities of teachers, classroom environment, role of parents' social circle, psychological and health-related factors.

The social-environmental factors considered in this study for discussion are peer groups, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors. Castrogiovanni (2002) as cited in Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) defined peer group as a small group of fairly close friends of similar age, status, and interest that someone knows at work, school or community in which one belongs. What they share may be positive or negative activities as a result of pressure exerted during an interaction. The positive influence of peers is the good aspect of human influence that brings change in the academic performance of an individual, leading to peer improves grades, confidence and getting involved in school activities. While negative peers influence is the bad aspect of human influence that brings about a very tensed relationship with parents, truancy, drunkenness or drug use, accident, drinking and driving, physical injury, early unwanted pregnancy, and health issues like sexually transmitted diseases (Roper & Silver-stock, n.d). In a study conducted by Deepika and Prema (2017) in India, it was revealed that peer pressure is one of the sources

of deviant behaviour among school children. When the behaviour of children deviated, from their studies automatically their academic achievement declined.

Parental factors play important roles in the education of children. Parents are custodians of their children's education. Their attitudes to the education of their children may make or mar their children. The level of parents' education as well as their socio-economic status, exert a significant influence on children's educational achievement (Kapur, 2018). He further explains that parental and home environmental factors play a major part in the academic performance of students. In research conducted in government schools across Qatar by Kamal and Bener (2017), a total of 699 children who had experienced failure in their grade level were selected for the study. The result revealed that a very high percentage of parents (41.6%) showed no interest in their child's education and 41.3% never attended parent-teacher meetings. It was also shown that both boys and girls equally were found to have hatred towards certain subject (61.5%). In another study conducted by Ajila and Olutola (2000), they investigate parents' socio-economic status and university students' academic performance. It was reported that the family exerted great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic status. The family should provide an environment in which children have the opportunity to succeed and be happy (Esiobu, 2005). A conducive home influence manifests itself further in the school environment. Parents of children in secondary schools in Ekiti showed high level of parental autonomy to support their children, leading to students' level of cognitive self-reliance (Awopetu and Omoteso, 2014).

According to Onyishi, Okpagu, Amazue, and Ugwu (2014), unethical practices such as cultism, drug abuse, prostitution, sexual harassment, and admission syndicate and racketeering among staff and students of higher institution were attributed to a declining standard of education universities in Nigeria. It is obvious that such behaviour would have negative impact on the learning of general studies courses.

Institutional factors include learning environment, location of the school, rules and regulations guiding any academic programme, the size of lecture theatres used for GST and the timetable for general studies courses. According to a study conducted by Ramlee, Seri, Saemah, Yusof and Rahayu (2014), it was revealed that out of the

four institutional variables identified in their study, workload had the most influencing factor on students' academic, followed by assessment technique, learning community and learning resources. Yusuf (2001) conducted a study on the future of teaching and learning Mathematics in Katsina State, Nigeria. It was observed that pupils from educationally advanced homes, most often, required the teacher to confirm the knowledge and ideas they have already acquired informally, this was different from their waiting like others on the teacher as a custodian of knowledge in their pursuit. In other words, students who are from formally educated parents are likely to learn faster and achieve more in GST courses than students from illiterate parents.

Generally, education deals with human development in so many ways. In this process, education is given to students with different methods namely: Teaching, Demonstration, Laboratory Practice, and Field Study. The struggle to study with understanding is the main attitude of students during Teaching-Learning processes and to acquire relevant knowledge and skills that would enable him/her to survive in society (Nega, 2012). However, for this achievement to be attained students need infrastructure facilities in the university in order to acquire sufficient knowledge in their field. Every university is supposed to have facilities like suitable classroom and sufficient library amenities. Generally, students rely on lecture notes, reference materials and textbooks to maintain good performance in their studies. In contemporary times, basic learning facilities in Nigerian universities are not adequate for the number of students admitted to the universities. In this scenario, the rapid growth of students' number in each University, is observed, certainly affect the availability of basic facilities. On the other hand, poor academic achievement in General Studies courses could be attributed to many factors. According to Olatunde (2012) as cited in Faremi (2014) adequate laboratory helps to provide a forum wherein the learner is given the opportunity to put to his beliefs, ideas and theoretical proportion to tests. In the absence of adequate resources and equipment for practical activities, practical can rarely be experienced by students at any level. This implies that the mastery of general studies courses might not be fully achieved without the use of instructional materials. The teaching of general studies courses without instructional materials may certainly result in poor academic achievement.

Kapur (2018) found that lack of learning material such as textbooks, notebooks; technology, computers, library facilities and laboratory facilities in any school setting could lead to students' failure in general studies courses in tertiary institutions.

General Studies (GST) in University Education

According to Esiobu (2005), students form opinions about general studies in the early years of secondary school, and those beliefs become less favourable as students get older. One of the reasons people lack familiarity with general studies is the fact that very few people ever actually take a general course. Generally, a negative attitude toward a given subject leads to lack of interest in the subject. The general studies curriculum at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was formulated in June and July 1961 by the combined team of British and American Advisers, John Blake of the University of Keele and Edward Carlin of Michigan State University (Okonkwo, 1985). The team collaborated with staff of the University to design the four interdisciplinary courses, use of English, Social Science, Natural Science and Humanities. The teaching of the courses at the University of Nigeria between1963-1966 was dominated by Americans. The use of English course emphasized the development of reading skills extensive reading lists. By exposing students to all fields of knowledge, general studies would "bridge the gap" between specialists which was one of the problems in modern academic life. General studies sought to develop the students' powers of critical thinking and aimed at moulding good citizen and leaders. The centre for general studies (CGs) formerly called general studies programme (GSP) of the University of Ibadan was established in 1986. The aim of the general studies programme is to open students up to a course of liberal education through which they can develop and expand awareness of their social, cultural and natural environments (Nweke & Nwoye, 2016; Okonkwo, 1985; University of Ibadan, 2019).

Minimum Standards on General Studies

The National University Commission (NUC) is empowered by Decree (Act) No. 16 of 1985 as contained in the National Universities Commission amended Decree (Act) No. 48 of 1988 to lay down minimum standards for all programmes taught in Nigerian universities. In 1989, the Commission, in collaboration with the universities

and their staff, developed minimum academic standards for all the programmes taught in Nigerian universities and approved minimum academic requirements for graduation. General Studies in all Nigerian Universities; as such General Studies Courses have become compulsory for all categories of undergraduates (NUC, 2007; 2014).

The goals and objectives of the General Studies (GST) Programme have been fully outlined in Section 1.7 of the National University Commission (2014). In a nutshell, the aim of the General Studies Programme is to expose students to a course of liberal education through which they can develop and expand their awareness in their social, cultural and natural environments. The objectives of the programme include (NUC, 2007 & 2014):

- Fields of specialization of students for productivity, healthy living and promotion of peaceful coexistence.
- Development of competence in the use of the English Language as a tool for studies and effective means of communication in society and future employment/enterprise
- Production of graduates with a broad knowledge of the Nigerian nation and its people, with a view to inculcating in them mutual understanding and patriotism.
- Exposing graduates of Nigerian Universities to rudiments of ICT, for computer literacy and ability to live usefully in the contemporary ICT age.
- Preparing students for a post-university life with opportunities for job creation and entrepreneurial skills.
- Production of graduates capable of communicating effectively both oral and written.

Minimum standards on 2 units rated General Studies courses available are as follows:

- GST 111 Communication in English I
- GST 112 Logic, Philosophy & Human Existence
- GST 113 Nigerian Peoples and Culture 2

- GST 121 Use of Library, Study Skills and ICT
- GST 122 Communication in English II
- GST 123 Communication in French**/**GST 124 Communication in Arabic 2
- GST 125 Contemporary Health Issues
- GST 211 Environment & Sustainable Development
- GST 222 Peace and Conflict Resolution
- GST 223 Introduction to Entrepreneurship
- GST 224 Leadership Skills
- GST 311 Entrepreneurship

Students are expected to register for at least 10 units of GST courses from among the courses listed above (National Universities Commission, 2007 & 2014)

Causes of undergraduates' failure in general studies courses

Failure of undergraduates in GST courses has been attributed to many factors and theories such as social theory, sociological theory, psychological theory, economic theory and instructional theory. In a general view, most studies have classified the causes of undergraduates' failure into internal and external factors (Abbasi, Kalhori, Taheri, Heidari & Dehghani, 2015). Several studies have also been carried out on undergraduates' failure in GST courses. In a study conducted by Najimi, Sharifirad, Amini, and Meftagh (2013) on 280 students of different faculties in Isfahan University of Medical Science, Iran, the influence of the following six variables: family, students, instructors., learning environment, curriculum and socio-economic factors. Out of these six variables, curriculum had the highest influence; mean value of 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.62, while socioeconomic factors had the least mean value of 3.45 with a standard deviation of 0.69.

Roman (2014) identified five main causes of scholar failure:

- Difficulties of somatic nature;
- Intellectual deficiencies;
- Instrumental learning difficulties;
- Pedagogical difficulties and
- Difficulties of emotional origin;

Difficulties of somatic nature are all about the physical health of the child that focuses more attention on the living conditions of the child. Here, parents have a predominant role to play in preventing somatic disease that may hinder the success of their children. Intellectual deficiency is another major factor that contributes to students' failure in GST courses in tertiary institution. This may occur as a result of school factors, peer group influence, shortage of teaching-learning facilities and other institutional factors, which can result in intellectual deficiencies leading to retardation in learning. Instrumental learning difficulty is as a result of school factors like instructional factors and learning facilities which cause difficulties in learning activities. Pedagogical difficulties are placed within the school environment and parental factors. These occur due to poor learning facilities, inappropriate method of imparting knowledge by peer groups and the parents, lack of interest towards education as a result of previous performance or failure in one or two courses and the problem of employability after graduation. Also, the existence of a poor relationship between students and the teachers/lecturers may not be left out. Difficulties that are of emotional origin result in instability, examination anxiety and depression to students caused by institutional factors, pressure from parents for a good grade and peer group influence (Roman, 2014).

In a study conducted by Najimi, et al., (2013), students identify limited library facilities, lack of modern educational technology (teaching-learning facilities) to be major environmental factors influencing academic failure. Among the family factors contributing to academic failure is lack of appreciation for education by parents and failure to boost students' academic spirit by parents. Among socio-economic factors identified are lack of promising economic and occupational motivation, social respect to the field of study, absence of job security in the future after graduating from university (Najimi, et al., 2013) Ugwu (2001), Fakunle (2001) and Adepoju (2011) as cited in Suleiman and Hammed (2019), identify numerous factors that contribute to learners' failure in Nigeria secondary schools, among such factors are overpopulation of learners in the classroom, poor content and context of instructions and lack of good textbooks and Mathematics teachers.

Findings of the study conducted by Suleiman and Hammed (2019) revealed that insufficient numbers of qualified Mathematics teachers cause much disinterest in Mathematics. It was also revealed that most parents do not provide adequate textbooks in Mathematics for their children. Beside, Mathematics concepts are difficult to read and understand. The study also supported the view that the socioeconomic background of learners affects learners learning of Mathematics and this result in failure in Mathematics.

Another cause of students' failure is lack of personal confidence, emotional stability and non-temperamental tendency towards extraversion. Supporting these facts, Al-Methen and Wilkinson (2011) reported that failure of students is due to lack of confidence in the knowledge they possess, which in turn could affect their level of activity in the classroom. They also argue that students' academic problems arise from personal inadequacies such as low ability, negative self-concept, anxiety, and maladjustment, environmental influences like poor classroom conditions, curricular inadequacies, peer groups and lack of home support. In addition, Assefa, Ohijeagbon, Negash and Melese (2008) identified four major specific problems to be addressed as related to academic performance of students namely: lack of interest, poor problem-solving skills, poor understanding of the concept, and lack of skills in practical work. Kapur (2018) agrees that psychological factors like depression, exam phobia, attention disorder, learning disabilities and slow learning rates also contribute to students' poor performance.

In general, the various studies which attempt to explain academic failure do so beginning from the three elements that are involved in the education process and these are parents (family causal factors), teachers (academic causal factors) and students (personal causal factors). Among personal variables, the most studied are motivation and self-concept. Motivation is considered to be the element that initiates the subject's own involvement in learning: when a student is strongly motivated, all his effort and personality are directed toward the achievement of a specific goal, thus bringing to bear all his or her resources (Díaz, 2003).

Ways of reducing students' failure

Roman (2014) suggested various ways of reducing students' failure. He stated that students should be encouraged to develop good initiatives and increase confidence in their own capabilities. The lecturer should be fearlessly willing to deal with students and put students in a situation of school success by assisting them to switch from the mere posture of receiving information to the effective use of scientific reasoning so that the students will be able to process and apply the information received appropriate manner. In a research conducted by Pagani, Boulerice, Vitaro and Treniblay (1999) as cited in Najimi, et al. (2013) the major problems of higher education is students' academic failure which generates mental-psychological, social and family problems.

McEvoy and Welker (2000) as cited in Naijimi et al. (2013) stated that academic failure includes various aspects of education that hinder students' completion of university programme at any given period of time through frequent absence from class, drop out from school, repeat of the grade or low quality of education. Academic failure may be attributed to repeating the course, early dropout and decline in the educational quality of students (Delors, Paris & UNESCO, 1996 as cited in Najimi, et al., 2013).

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design of the survey type, for the purpose of researching on to large sample size in order to collect information about the population of interest. Furthermore, the study found out the contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies.

Population and sample size

The target population for this study comprises the entire 400 level undergraduates of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, who have spent a minimum of three academic years offering general studies courses at various levels before getting to final year. The year four students are suitable for this study due to their years of experience in general studies courses. The sample for the study consists of 200 undergraduates selected from five out of the six existing faculties in the university. The five faculties are the Faculty of Education, Law, Science, Arts,

and Social and Management Sciences. Faculty of Agricultural Science students are not included in the study, because the faculty is new and students in the faculty have little experience on undergraduates' failure in general studies courses. The sample size is selected using proportional stratified sampling technique. This technique is suitable because the samples were selected based on the existing population in each faculty and to avoid being biased in selecting a representation of each group.

Research instrument

A questionnaire titled "Social Environmental Factors and Undergraduates Failure in General Studies Courses" (SEFUFGSC) is the main instrument used to elicit the required information from respondents. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section is on the personal data of respondents. The second section is to elicit information on the contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses in tertiary institutions. This section contains items covering peer group factors, teaching-learning facilities, parental factors, institutional factors and causes of undergraduates' failure in General studies courses. The instrument was designed using a four-point Likert scale with Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) as the response set. The items on social-environmental factors and causes of undergraduates' failure were developed through the review of related literature based on the ideas of Roman (2014), Onyishi, et al. (2014), Awopeju and Omoteso (2014) and Najimi, et al. (2013).

Validity and reliability of the study

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity. The face validity was carried out in order to ensure the legibility and arrangement of the items, while content validity was carried out in order to ensure that identified variables in the study were properly captured so that the instrument measure what it is designed to measure. The instrument was tested for reliability by administering 20 copies of the questionnaire on selected undergraduates who are not part of the respondents for the study. A test-retest reliability method was carried out at two weeks interval and the data collected were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation with a

reliability coefficient of 0.70. This value indicates that the instrument was reliable in measuring what it is designed to measure.

Administration of the instrument

The researchers and three research assistants administered the instrument in an orderly manner. The instructions provided in the instrument guides the respondents on how to respond to the items in each of its section. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire immediately and return it after completion.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses formulated were tested using inferential statistics such as multiple regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. In order to protect the dignity and integrity of the respondents and to accord respect to their moral and cultural values, the following ethical issues were considered and strictly adhered to: Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation.

Results `

$H_0$1. The combination of the peer group, learning facilities, parental factors, and institutional factors has no significant influence on undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST).

Table 1: Regression analysis of the combined social-environmental factors

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	R	R- Square	Adjusted R
Regression	499.442	4	124.860	3.337	.011	.253	.064	.045
Residual	7296.238	195	37.417					
Total	7795.680	199						

Predictor variables: Peer group, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors

Dependent variable: Causes of undergraduate failure

As indicated in Table 1, the combination of Peer group, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors has a significant influence on undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST) ($F_{(4,195)}$ = 3.337, p<.05). The R square value is .064, this means that the predictor variables account for 6.4% of variance in the dependent variable, which is low. The adjusted R is .045 this means the predictor variables account for 4.5% of variance in the dependent variable in terms of population rather than the sample. The remaining variance can be attributed to other variables not included in this model.

$H_0$2. There is no significant relative contribution of the peer group, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors on undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST).

Table 2: Relative contribution of social-environmental factors to undergraduate failure in GST

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	64.997	4.145		15.680	.000
Peer Group Factors	-.400	.304	-.105	-1.319	.189
Teaching-Learning	.680	.297	.188	2.290	.023
Parental factors	-.571	.204	-.239	-2.794	.006
Institutional Factors	.016	.282	.005	.058	.954

a. Dependent variable: Causes of undergraduates' failure in GST

As seen in Table 2, the Beta (β) values were used in comparing the contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable by ignoring any negative sign out of the front (Pallant, 2011, p. 161). Parental factors had the highest Beta value of .239, which made the strongest contribution to undergraduates' failure in general studies, followed by teaching-learning factors (β=.188); peer groups (β= .105). While institutional factors had the least relative contribution (β= .005). Parental factors (β = .239, t= -2.794, p= <.05) and teaching-learning facilities (β = .188, t=2.290, p=<.05) made significant contribution to the prediction of the academic failure of undergraduates in general studies courses. The peer group factors (β = .105, t= -

1.319, p>.05) and institutional factors (β= .005, t= .058, p=>.05) does not significantly predict undergraduates' failure in GST.

$H_0$3 There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduates on the causes of failure in general studies courses from the faculty of law, education, arts, science, social and management sciences.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA on the perceptions of undergraduates from different faculties

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Remark					
Between Group	4125.720	4	1031.430	84.786	.000
Significant					
Within Group	2372.200	195	12.165		
Total	6497.920	199			

Table 3 shows that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of undergraduates on the cause of failure in general studies from the faculty of law, education, arts, science, social and management sciences ($F_{(4,195)}$ = 84.786, p<.05). This implies that students from the five faculties have different perceptions of undergraduates on the causes of failure in general studies courses.

Discussion of results

In hypothesis one, the results revealed that the combination of the peer groups, learning facilities, parental factors and institutional factors has a significant influence on undergraduates' failure in general studies (GST). The results corroborate the finding of Kapur (2018) that some social-environmental factors like school resources, classroom environment, role of parental social circle and attitude of the students are factors responsible for students' failure in general courses. Esiobu (2005) states that the environment in which children could succeed manifest itself further in the school environment. Obe (1996) also agreed that lack of infrastructure and poor learning environment are the major contributors to students' failure which is in agreement with

the results of this study. Hypothesis two compares the contribution of each of the social-environmental variables to undergraduates' failure in general studies courses. The Beta value of .239 which for parental factors showed that this variable had the strongest contribution to undergraduates' failure in general studies and significantly contributes to the prediction of undergraduates' failure in GST. The findings of Awopetu and Omoteso (2014) revealed that parents demonstrated high levels of parental autonomous-support to their children. This is an indication that parents contribute towards undergraduates' grades in tertiary institutions. The results also showed that teaching-learning factors significantly contribute to undergraduates' failure in general studies. Nega (2012) and Kapur (2018) agreed with the finding of this study that for teaching-learning to be effective, many infrastructural facilities must be available. Such as lack of learning materials, textbook, notebooks, technology, computers, library and laboratory facilities in any school setting leads to students' failure in any educational programme. The result from Analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveals that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of undergraduates failure from Faculties of Law, Science, Education, Arts, Social and Management Sciences on failure of general studies courses ($F_{(4,195)}$ = 84.786, $p<.05$). This implies that undergraduates from the five faculties have different perceptions of the causes of undergraduates' failure in general studies courses.

Conclusion

The researchers re-affirmed that peer groups, parental factor, institutional factor and teaching-learning facilities jointly influenced undergraduates' failure in general studies. Also, parental factors made the strongest relative contribution to undergraduates' failure in general studies, followed by teaching-learning facilities and peer group factors. While the institutional factors made the least relative contribution.

Recommendations

The parents are the first teachers that their children experience. They should provide supportive environment at home and encourage active learning. Parents of

undergraduates should provide a sense of security which is necessary for their academic success. The teaching of general studies should not be abstract; more precise attention should be given to teaching-learning facilities. Adequate and relevant teaching-learning facilities for general studies should be an essential factor to be considered in the implementation of the general studies curriculum. The government should make provision for teaching-learning facilities that would provide the undergraduates basic knowledge in general studies. The school library should be well equipped and stocked with relevant and adequate textbooks on general studies offered at different level. Well-equipped laboratories and workshops for entrepreneurship should be established and the teaching and learning of the course should be more practical oriented than theory.

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Female students' perception of affirmative action for female students at universities in sub-Saharan Africa: A Case of Eswatini University

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Abstract

This study sought to evaluate the understanding and acceptance of the affirmative action policy for female students at universities in sub-Saharan Africa using the University of Eswatini as case study. For data gathering, the study used both theoretical and empirical research methods. The study was a case study, based on WhatsApp group discussions of female students only final year students in the Department of Sociology. The study established that the majority of the female students were against affirmative action because it destroys meritocracy; stigmatises female students; reinforces stereotypes; leads to mismatches; kills innovation and hardworking; leads to complacency; re-emphasises that women are weaker than men; it is subject to abuse; fuels dysfunctional conflict between sexes; and does not produce the desired results. Those in favour of affirmative action argued that it corrects past wrongs; promotes diversity; tapes hidden knowledge and skills from the unfairly silenced; and makes sure everyone is educated and enlightened on contemporary developments. The study concluded that, in terms of the mind-set and practice, the situation in sub-Saharan Africa has not changed since the turn of the century.

Keywords: Affirmative action, perception, gender disparities, sub-Saharan Africa, female students.

Orientation

Existing literature and studies reveal that there is an imbalance, favouring males in terms of students' representation in university education in sub-Saharan Africa (Gaidzanwa, 2010; Bunyi 2003; Mlama, 2001; Chivaura, 2000). This study was twofold. It sought to measure whether the situation is still the same as at the beginning of this century. It also sought to evaluate the understanding and

acceptance of the affirmative action policy for female university students. This would help in informing the policy formulation and implementation processes in the region.

According to Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014), one of the several approaches to rectifying gender imbalances has been identified as affirmative action. They see affirmative action as the steps taken by the government of a country to create opportunities for the disadvantaged groups like blacks in colonial Africa or women throughout the world. These disadvantaged groups are provided with benefits in the educational system and job sector. Thus affirmative action consists of the provision of special advantages through laws and policies to address discrimination suffered by disadvantaged groups (Chabaya, 2011). It is done with the aim of creating a more equal society.

Thus, affirmative action comes as a direct result of oppression and segregation. Throughout history, oppression and segregation have been witnessed in a plethora of ways and variations: slavery, racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, caste systems, among many others. In most cases the oppressor suffers from a superiority complex as in the case of colonial regimes, an abnormal belief in white supremacy, Indian caste society, Australian communities, the Americas, among many others. Segregation also comes in form of male versus female or due to observable impairment and disability. This paper focuses on the male-female variation of oppression and segregation.

The concept of affirmative action is prevalent in many countries. In the United Kingdom, it is called positive discrimination, whereas in India, it manifests itself in the form of caste-based reservation (Chabaya, 2011). Every country has its own set of rules and regulations on formulating policies to uplift the neglected sections of the society.

The argument for affirmative action is that while there are instances where all citizens can and ought to be treated the same, there are equally instances where, in order to level the playing field, those who have been marginalised need to be treated differently. An overall gender neutral approach or equal treatment of persons in

unequal situations would result in continuing rather than removing injustices (Musingafi, Dumbu and Chabaya, 2013; Musingafi and Mafumbate, 2014).

Aim of the study

The study sought to evaluate understanding and acceptance of affirmative action among female students at universities in sub-Saharan Africa.

Study methodology

This was a qualitative study based on both literature and empirical study; case study; and twenty final year female students on a WhatsApp group in the Department of Sociology at the University of Eswatini. For ethical reasons, no names or phone numbers were provided so that even the researchers themselves did not know who the participants were other than the assistant who provided data from the group. The research assistant advised fellow members that she was doing research on her research project assignment on affirmative action policies and practice for female students at universities in sub-Saharan Africa. Were they saving their purpose? Students would then debate on their views and observations on the policies and practice thereof.

Theoretical framework

This study adopts a feminist theoretical framework. The study is couched in the discourses of gender and development, which located their roots in the universal concept of human rights. Feminism, according to Lewin, cited in Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005), is “a theory that calls for women’s attainment of social, political, and economic rights and opportunities equal to those possessed by men.” Feminism challenges the hegemony of patriarchy, which poses as the major impediment to the advancement of women.

Conceptualising affirmative action

Affirmative action policies have been in existence in the USA since 1941 when they were introduced to prohibit race discrimination (Gray, in Tanton, 1994). In 1964, affirmative action was extended to include sex discrimination (Tanton, 1994).

For Bodenhamer and Emly (1993), affirmative action refers to government policies that award jobs, admission to colleges or professional schools and other social goods to individuals on the basis of membership in designated protected groups. As such "affirmative action" refers to positive steps taken to increase the representation of women in areas of employment, education and business from which they have been historically excluded. Further, affirmative action policy is usually said to be in place when a company or an institution takes reasonable action to remedy any discriminatory behaviour that has occurred in the past (McElroy, 2004). Davis (1993) states that affirmative action policies refer to any measure beyond non-discrimination, meant to remedy or compensate for past or present discrimination. Thus, affirmative action gives preferential treatment to members of the traditionally disadvantaged group.

To demonstrate his support for the affirmative action concept, the then president of the USA, Lynden B. Johnson in 1965 observed:

> You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still believe that you are being fair. It is not enough just to open gates of opportunity. All of our citizens must have the ability to walk through these gates, (Davis, 1993).

Affirmative action policy then is there to assist the disadvantaged groups to reach levels where they would be in a position to compete on equal terms with groups which have been advantaged for a long time. Wajcman (1998) noted that studies in the USA, Canada, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands and Norway revealed that 'the stated goals of labour market affirmative action programmes is to encourage women

into non-traditional jobs, that is jobs traditionally performed by men, and to increase their access to positions of higher pay and status'.

Critics of affirmative action policies cite "double standards and inherent unfairness of the set programmes as well as the regressive usage of affirmative action policy in hiring, promotions, contracts and grants" (Jackson, 1996). In some studies carried out in the US, it was found that affirmative action policies moved employed blacks around in the labour pool, but did not lower black unemployment. Thus, it implies that affirmative action does not automatically eradicate problems of inequality.

Davidson and Burke (1994) believe that 'if women were seen as having special needs--- this may suggest that they have special needs and this was to label them different--- inferior to men". In other words, the argument of critics in this line of thinking is that if women are as competent as are men, there is no need to give them extra mileage in the competitive world. Similarly, Makamure (1995) argues that affirmative action as applied at the University of Zimbabwe in 1993, not only abused male students, but also stigmatized female intellectual ability in assuming that women may be seen to be intellectually inferior. Affirmative action is thus taken to detrimentally affect the status and image of women in suggesting that they, as a group, are not capable of doing what men do unless they are given special assistance.

Affirmative action programmes are also accused of running counter to the principle of equal treatment under the law and give rise to reverse discrimination (Claassen, 1993). While the disadvantaged person is being promoted, another person experiences reverse discrimination. For example, where one with lesser experience is promoted, another with more experience and greater claim to promotion is left out. It is argued that where affirmative action policies are implemented, negative responses from non-preferred groups have always been forthcoming (Claassen, 1993).

Affirmative action programmes have been put in place in many countries, but they have not achieved the intended levels of change for various reasons. Not everyone involved understands the meaning and intentions of affirmative action policies.

Greyvenstein (2000) pointed out that interpretation and implementation of affirmative action policies are difficult to monitor. Laws and policies may have more of an impact on women's aspirations than on actual institutional change. Furthermore, policies requiring changes in attitude seek to alter the value systems in individuals and institutions and these are known to resist change (Mathipa and Tsoka, 2000). Deeply entrenched attitudes are difficult to change. Furthermore, equity-related policies are highly complex because they cannot operate in isolation (Greyvenstein, 2000). As a result, some researchers have advocated for a holistic approach involving both men and women. Shakeshaft (1989) suggested that research into gender and development should progress through six stages, the last of which is 'focus on understanding women's and men's experiences together.' Such a situation, it is hoped, would assist in developing strategies acceptable to both men and women and in providing lasting solutions.

Affirmative action in the USA

According to Graham (1990), during the first two centuries of higher education in the USA, women were excluded from higher education institutions. For blacks it was even worse since it was official policy to 'keep blacks illiterate and thus prisoners of the caste system where they would be consigned to the bottom of American society' (Flanders, 1994). Prior to affirmative action in the USA, university positions were often filled by acquaintances of the dean or department chairperson. Rarely were women or other minorities given the encouragement or job opportunities available to their white male counterparts. In view of this, many promising female and minority students lacked both role models and the encouragement to continue their studies (Flanders, 1994).

Since 1961 several laws to encourage equal rights in the academic community for women and the minorities have been passed. In an attempt to eliminate some of the inequities in institutions of higher learning preference was given to women and minorities to obtain higher and specialised education. Many graduate departments offered increased access to training programmes, pre- and postdoctoral fellowship opportunities, teaching assistantships and financial aid to women and minorities in fields in which they were under-represented. Still, the policy of affirmative action in

the USA has not yet reached the desired destination mainly because of weaknesses in the implementation processes. Since the 1970s critics have been voicing their concerns. Some argue that affirmative action policies are a threat to academic standards as vast numbers of unqualified women and minorities are hired in order to comply with government regulations. Thus, a major cause of the lack of vast improvement in the status of women and minorities in employment in higher education institutions has been the reactions and resistance to affirmative action as corrective strategy in employment and education. The issues around which most of the controversy revolves are preferential treatment, merit, reverse discrimination, loss of institutional autonomy and quotas.

According to Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014), the major weakness of the American affirmative action policy is that it benefited mainly the Black middle class as it was designed to help members of minority groups who met minimal job qualifications. While contributing to the enlargement of the Black middle class, affirmative action remained meaningless for the poorest sections of Black Americans. The policy was instrumental in narrowing the gap between groups in American society but it also contributed to an increasing gap within groups. Greater equality was only achieved in the sense that various racial groups were fairly represented in the privileged classes. Thus, affirmative action shifted the emphasis from racial inequality to class inequalities. It was merely concerned with making institutions more representatives in their ethnic composition but it did not challenge institutional cultures, let alone become an instrument of redistribution.

Affirmative action in African institutions of higher and tertiary education

Bunyi (2003) identifies the immediate constraint to increased enrolments for females in tertiary institutions in Africa as the poor quality of girls' secondary school education. She argues that in most countries female candidates perform poorly in the matriculation examinations. Consequently, few females attain high enough marks to compete on an equal footing with their male counterparts for the limited places in colleges and universities. In response to this problem, many African countries have instituted different forms of affirmative action policies. Lower admission cut off points

and remedial classes for females are two of the more commonly used forms of affirmative action.

Lower admission cut-off points for females

To increase the number of women who enroll in tertiary institutions, some countries like Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have articulated and implemented affirmative action policies allowing female candidates who have attained the minimum required marks to enter public universities at between 1 and 2 points below males (Chivaura, 2000; Mlama, 2001; Joint Admissions Board, 2002). According to Bunyi (2003), lowering cut off admission points for females has increased their enrolments in these countries. Through this policy, a total of 462 females entered the six public universities in Kenya in the 2003/2004 academic year. In Ghana, female enrolments increased from 21% to 27% between 1990 and 1999. In Uganda, female participation in Makerere University increased from 27% to 34% between 1990 and 1999 and in the UDSM in Tanzania, the increase was from 19.5% to 27% between 1997/98 and 2000/2001 academic years (Bunyi, 2003).

However, as in the USA case discussed above, while lowering cut off points affirmative action intervention has increased women's enrolments, it faces the problem of acceptance. At Makerere University, lowering cut off points for female candidates has been resisted by both students and staff (male and female) (Mlama, 2001). Critics argue that the university or other tertiary institution is a meritocratic institution and therefore allowing women to enter at lower cut off points than their male counterparts dilutes standards. They further argue that giving these concessions to women endorses the notion of women as the intellectually weaker gender (Bunyi, 2003). Those who support the intervention on the other hand argue that the girls who enter the universities through this route first and foremost qualify to enter before they are considered under the scheme and that it is only due to the shortage of places that they would be otherwise locked out. Nammudu (1995) strongly argues for affirmative action pointing out further that affirmative action is not a gender activists' creation in post-independence Africa since through Africanisation policies many men have got scholarships and or high status jobs through similar

policies. She posits that many such men have gone on to succeed and observes that there is no reason why women would not.

Remedial courses

According to Bunyi (2003), in some countries, instead of or even as well as allowing women to enter tertiary institutions at lower cut off points, remedial courses are offered for particular tertiary programmes or subjects. For example, in Eritrea, to increase the number of women teachers as a strategy for increasing access and retention of girls in primary schools, a bridging course for female teacher trainees has been implemented. Within this initiative, women who are interested in joining teaching but who lack the required academic grades for admission into teachers' training programmes enroll for the bridging course at the end of which they are examined. Those who attain the required grades are admitted in the teachers' college (UNICEF, 2002).

Bunyi (2003), however, observes that experience in Kenya and Tanzania has shown that owing to the very poor performance of female candidates in subjects such as mathematics and science, not even lowering cut off points will get them into the very competitive science related programmes in tertiary institutions. For example, in Kenya, in the 2002 / 2003 academic year, the Science and Technology Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology did not admit any of the 462 females who entered public universities through the lower cut off points policy. None of them entered the highly competitive courses such as medicine, surgery, dental surgery, pharmacy, engineering and computer science in the other universities (Joint Admissions Board, 2002). In Tanzania, Masanja (2001) reports that in 2000 / 2001 admissions, very few females qualified for admission into the engineering and science programmes even after the lowering of cut off points.

Consequently, to increase females‟ enrolments in the highly competitive science related programmes, in some countries; remedial courses in these subjects are offered. The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) offers a six weeks remedial course in science and mathematics for borderline female candidates. Those who pass an examination given at the end of the course are admitted to the university. Remedial

courses have increased the number of women enrolled in tertiary institutions. In the case of UDSM, for example, between 1997 and 2000, 214 female students entered highly competitive science related programmes such as engineering, medicine and architecture through this route (Masanja, 2001). Masanja further reports that these females were performing well in their chosen degree programmes. She indicates that in a performance assessment administered to the 1999 / 2000 3rd year Bachelor of Science programme cohort of students (among whom were the first batch of the remedial programme entrants), some of the remedial programme entrants were among the top 20 students in the chemistry or biology subject combinations. In fact, overall, they were found to be performing better than their direct entry male and female peers. Masanja (2001) reports further that faculties such as Physical Education Sports and Culture, Arts, Law and Nursing have easily attained gender parity in admission through affirmative action policies – lowering of cut off points and remedial courses.

Remedial courses as a form of affirmative action do not seem to attract as much controversy as the lowering of cut off entry points. They may also be more beneficial to the women candidates in that they could enable them fill in whatever knowledge gaps they may have in the relevant subjects. However, high user fee is a serious problem associated with the remedial courses intervention. When offered in private institutions and in the fee-paying programmes of public universities, remedial courses tend to be expensive and therefore inaccessible to the majority of would be beneficiaries. To overcome this problem, some tertiary institutions have found ways of offering them without charging any user fees. In UDSM, the intervention was initially implemented in 1997 with a two-year Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).

Experiences in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean women and girls of African origin experienced double discrimination in education based on their race and gender in the pre-independence era. In 1980, when Zimbabwe became independent, gender gaps in literacy and all levels of the education system were therefore very wide. However, within a decade, the situation had changed dramatically with the gender gaps almost closing. According to

Gaidzanwa, Chung and Chung (2010), Zimbabwe achieved parity in the net enrolment ratio of boys and girls in primary schooling in 2004. At this time the average national enrolment ratio was 93%. They, however, observe that dropout rates were high with only 69% of females and 68% of males completing primary level in 2006.

Gaidzanwa *et al.* (2010) further observe that the net enrolment ratio for secondary school had close parity in terms of gender, but showed a low transition rate from primary school enrolment, in line with the pass rate at Grade 7. For example, in 2003 the ratio for boys was 50% and for girls was 48%. By 2006, this had reduced to 47% for boys and 45% for girls. The completion rate at O" level shows the gap widen between boys and girls, with 93% of boys completing in 2006, compared to 83% of girls. The pass rate at O" level is extremely low – in 2000 it stood at 22.71%. The majority of students can no longer pass 5 O levels, with those from low-density suburbs achieving the highest grades. Girls clearly become more disadvantaged as secondary school progresses (Gaidzanwa *et al.*, 2010).

According to Gaidzanwa *et al.* (2010), the transition rate for girls into Form 6 was 6.99% and for boys was 8.18%. By Form 5, girls comprised only 35% of the total, disadvantaging girls in the labour market and in society in general. Most secondary school graduates cannot secure jobs or training and become unemployed between the ages of 16 and 18. For girls, the process is faster as some drop out due to early pregnancies, lack of fees and unsatisfactory school experiences (Gaidzanwa *et al.*, 2010).

Findings

The study established that all the students understood what affirmative is all about. Following are sample definitions of affirmative action from participants:

- Affirmative action refers to government interventions like policies and legislation that put formerly or currently disadvantaged groups, like women or former colonial subjects, ahead of all other community members in accessing educational and employment opportunities. For example, in education, they would say where they require at least 10

credit points at A Level or O Level for normal entry to undergraduate university degrees, women would be allowed to enter the programmes with at least 6 credit points. The intention is to correct past wrongs.

- These are positive steps taken to increase the representation of disadvantaged groups in employment, education business and decision making to rectify past discrimination.
- Any measure meant to remedy or compensate for past or present discrimination.
- Affirmative action involves giving preferential treatment to members of the traditionally disadvantaged group.

Thus, the above sample definitions are in agreement with those given by Bodenhamer and Emly (1993); Davis (1993); McElroy (2004); Chabaya, (2011); Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014); and many others as discussed in. sections 1, 5 and 7 of this paper above. All participants understood what they were talking about very well. The fact that they understood the concept of affirmative action as demonstrated in their definitions of the concept gives more credibility to the findings of this study.

Secondly, the study established that the majority of the female students were against affirmative action. They believed that affirmative action destroys meritocracy; stigmatises female students; reinforces stereotypes; leads to mismatches; kills innovation and hardworking; leads to complacency; re-emphasises that women are weaker than men; it is subject to abuse; fuels dysfunctional conflict between sexes; and does not produce the desired results. Most of what they said concurs with the findings of earlier scholars from the international community as discussed above (Gaidzanwa, 2010; Bunyi 2003; Mlama, 2001; Chivaura, 2000). One of the students said:

> I think affirmative action policies should not be enacted because they defeat the whole idea of meritocracy. Allowing girls and women to enter university with less points than their male counterparts makes them lazy exposing the university to poor performance and incompetence when

> measured relative to other universities and acceptable university standards.

This is the same argument advanced by female students at Makerere University at the turn of the century when they argued that lowering cut off points for prospective female students is not acceptable because the university or any other tertiary institution is a meritocratic institution as already discussed on the African experience above. They argued that allowing women to enter university at lower cut off points than their male counterparts dilutes standards at the university.

Participants also argued that so far affirmative action policies have reinforced societal negative impression of women in form of stigmatization, stereotyping and the belief that women are intellectually weaker than men. One of the participants said:

> I think affirmative action does more harm than good to women. It reinforces stigmatization and stereotyping. By accepting women with lower points at university, are we not reinforcing the myth that women are intellectually weaker than men? If someone is accepted in university on the ticket of affirmative action, then their achievements are viewed as a result of policy not personal skill and talent. This means that women must work extremely hard to attain the same level of respect as men.

Thus, affirmative action is believed to further weaken the position of women as it reinforces the myth that women's brain is inferior to men's. This is the very same argument raised by Davidson and Burke (1994) when they say 'if women were seen as having special needs--- this may suggest that they have special needs and this was to label them different--- inferior to men". Thus, if women are as competent as are men, there is no need to give them extra mileage in the competitive world. Makamure (1995), who believes affirmative action not only abuse male students, but also stigmatize female intellectual ability, raised the same views as discussed in previous sections of this paper. Affirmative action, thus taints both status and image of women. It implies that women as a group are not capable of doing what men do unless they are given special assistance.

Participants further observed that affirmative action may result in mismatch. They argued that attaining less points than required for university entry implies that one is gifted for something else other than studying at university. Forcing them to study at university would be waste of resources as they are not likely to excel. The best thing to do is to find what they are good at and place them there so that both the individuals concerned and the community at large reap their best. One of the participants argued:

> Every human being has his / her area of excellence. This was God's design to make life interesting. Had He given us the same talents the world would be boring and everyone would wish they die quickly. Today no one wants to die because we are different and enjoyable. University education may not be suitable for some of us. Why should we be denied our democratic right? Perhaps we are good in technical and practical aspects of life like reproduction, mending clothes, and so on. What is needed is changing our mind set so that we acknowledge the contribution of everyone to the running of our communities.

Some participants argued that affirmative action creates unnecessary conflict between men and women as the more qualifying men are left with disgruntlement. They feel unfairly discriminated against. 'Why should they suffer for the sins they did not commit?' asked one of the participants. This line of thinking reaffirms the findings in the studies done in the USA as already discussed in the sections above (Claassen, 1993; Davidson and Burke. 1994; Flanders, 1994; Jackson, 1996; McElroy, 2004).

There was also a strong voice on the issue of abuse. Some felt the students who enter the university through affirmative action have no firm ground to stand on and thus vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous lecturers. They may be asked to pay for this favour with their thighs. One of the participants said:

> Once subject of pity, you not only remain subject of pity, no. They will go further to ask you to allow them to explore your thighs and your exams are marked on those thighs. In the end you leave the university measured on

> the basis of your thighs not your brains. Women thus remain a laughing stock even at work because they have been trained to think with their thighs not their brains. *For me, affirmative action no. I want to stand by my feet firmly on the ground*.

Some felt affirmative action policies translate into complacence and incompetence. They argued that when such people fail to perform at work, law further protects them and as a result, productivity suffers.

However, there were also voices (though few) that supported affirmative action policies. They raised the traditional arguments that affirmative action corrects past wrongs; promotes diversity; tapes hidden knowledge and skills from the unfairly silenced; and makes sure everyone is educated and enlightened on contemporary developments. One of the participants argued:

> Affirmative is not asking the unqualified woman to enter university. It's only saying those with minimum points and closed out because of competition should be given access considering historical facts and their workload back home. The fact that they managed to get qualifying points under their circumstances means that they can perform even better if the workload is reduced. So it's a myth that we are taking the unqualified woman to the university. We are only trying to level the playing ground which has always been skewed in favour of men.

Conclusion

As shown in both the USA and African cases discussed earlier in this paper, affirmative action, especially the lowering of cut off points variant for prospective female university students, faces the problem of acceptance. The female students themselves are rejecting it because they feel that it makes their fight for equality weaker. This paper thus concludes that most female students at the University of Eswatini are against affirmative action policies that give them preference in entering university education. Thus, by implication, the paper concludes that female students at universities in southern Africa are against affirmative action because they feel that

it demeans and labels them. They want to enter university education using their intellect. It should be noted, however, that although these findings conform with earlier findings in other universities across the globe, they are not exhaustive as they are based on one department at one university. Further studies have to be conducted across other universities in the region for sound generalizability. This study was largely a qualitative case study that may not be suitable for generalization. Without any other contemporary studies at a wider scale, however, this study may be indicative of what the situation is like in the region.

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TEACHERS' USE OF THE PERSONAL RESPONSE APPROACH FOR TEACHING THE SWAZILAND GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION SISWATI POETRY

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Abstract

This study sought to analyse teachers' use of the personal – response approach for teaching the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education siSwati Poetry. The objectives were; to identify the level of teachers' knowledge on the personal - response approach to teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry, to determine the extent to which teachers use the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry and to identify the factors that determine the use of the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry. The study utilised the mixed method Embedded research design. An eight (8) item open – ended questionnaire, an eight (8) item face to face interview guide and a focus group discussion guide with seven (7) items designed by the researchers were used for data collection. Twelve (12) schools in the Shiselweni region of the Kingdom of ESwatini were sampled using critical case sampling method with thirty six (36) teachers being participants. Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed descriptively using frequency tables and percentages while qualitative data were analysed as interpretations of statements made and summarised. The study found that teachers understand the personal – response approach and its activities, but view personal responses on the basis of the individual learner not in collaboration with peers. Usage of the personal - response approach is determined by the properties of the poem that are to be taught integratively rather than in isolation. It was concluded that teachers understand the personal - response approach and mostly used activities in this approach are teacher – centred like explaining the poem to the learners and learners expressing their feelings on the poem. It was therefore recommended that teachers must plan

activities that are learner – centred and include not only what the learners are capable of doing on their own but what they can learn with the help of others.

Key words: Development, personal growth, personal – response based approach.

Introduction

Development is a major concern in education. There is a growing tendency for Africa to view development from the economic perspective which is Western and ignore the wider and more satisfactory concept of national development that sees it as total human development; which is development of the whole person with emphasis on full realisation of the human potential and a maximum utilisation of the nations 'resources for the benefit of the individual, society and the country at large (Magwa & Mutasa, 2007). Magwa and Mutasa (2007) argued that national development comprises of four elements namely; economic, politico – judicial development and intellectual development. In these, they claim that the role of language is crucial. Development whether socio – cultural, intellectual or educational, need to have its roots in the language of the community (Magwa & Mutasa, 2007).

Harrison (1980, p.41) holds the view that development is a total, multifaceted, concrete and empowering process with the purpose of developing " Man" not "Things". Education is a life-long empowerment process which should help citizens in their intra and inter personal understanding and achieving personal goals. Nyerere in his Education for self-reliance refers to development as self - realisation and self – actualisation which leads to sustainability. According to Magwa and Mutasa (2007) language is at the heart of the development process. Development means the gradual and continuous progress of the mind and body. Therefore, it has to be holistic in order for the learners to acquire knowledge of the environment, necessary motor skills, knowledge of the individual and others as well as linguistic abilities. The use of literature in the language classroom is recommended for its ability to enable the learners' to grow personally, socially and culturally (Carter & Long, 1991). There is a need to fully utilise the potentialities of literature in the SGCSE siSwati language classroom. There is life in literature, language in literature and vice versa (Zach, 1991). The teaching of literature therefore, bridges the gap between the school and

home because literary texts have the ability to develop language skills in real contexts (Brumfit & Carter, 1987).

Education is a matter of experience and learning is primarily experimental. According to Brady (2011) learning is an active multi-sensory engagement between an individual and the world, a mutual contact which empowers the learners and reveals the rich meaningfulness of the world. Experience is dynamic and ever-growing. Therefore, collaboration within the learners' themselves help them grow in all aspects of life. The goal of education is to nurture natural, healthy growth through experience and not to present a limited, fragmented, pre-digested curriculum as the path to knowledge and wisdom (Carr, 2013).

There is a need for integration of new skills and approaches into the classroom as well as developing an evaluation system that draws on meaningful observations, input from the teachers, peers and as well as a sophisticated assessment that measures individual student growth, creativity and critical thinking (Pushpa & Savaed ,2014). Teaching approaches used for literature are responsible for the less substantial output and value of literature.

To ensure that literature is a valuable and an authentic material that develops personal involvement and contribute to the readers' language and cultural enrichment, Collie and Slater (2001) argue for the use of relevant and appealing material to the learners as well as activities that promote involvement, reader response and a solid integration between language and literature. Basically, there are three genres of literature; poetry, drama and prose. According to Hanauer (2010) poetry are literary texts that present the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the writer through a self – referential use of language that creates for the reader and poet a new understanding of the experience, thoughts and feelings expressed in the poem.

In 2006 Swaziland moved from the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCE O' Level) to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which was later localised to become the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (SGCSE) in 2008. The SGCSE siSwati

curriculum is a 21st century curriculum that emphasises on the importance of social interaction which encourages collaboration and peer instruction between the learners. That is why teaching methods used in the SGCSE siSwati curriculum are socially interactive and the assessment practices are learner – centred. Teaching methods recommended for the SGCSE curriculum are; the project, debate, group discussion, role playing and value clarification and etc (IGCSE Consultative Document, 2005). The methods encourage the teacher to collaborate with learners, help them construct meaning and try to encourage externalisation. Vygotsky (2011) stated that; *"The teacher working with the school child on a given question; explains, informs, inquires, corrects and forces the child himself to explain"* (Vygotsky, 2011, p. 199). The teaching methods used in poetry should use tools developed from culture in order to mediate the social environment. These tools help the learners communicate their needs and later develop higher order thinking skills. The learning outcomes of SGCSE siSwati poetry are the expected skills, experiences, attitudes and language that learners need to gain.

There is a growing tendency for teachers to ignore the critical approach to teaching poetry that aim to elicit curiosity, interest, participation, enjoyment, creativity and involvement and teach poetry just for examination purposes (Pushpa & Savaed, 2014). This means persistent use of traditional approaches where students are drilled and there is a lot of memorisation and demonstrations coming from the teacher. According to Hanauer (2010) to make teaching and learning of poetry a gateway to language enrichment, cultural enrichment, literary enjoyment and personal involvement, learners should be given opportunities for class discussions and reflections on the ideas they gathered along with proper guidance to make individual presentations. Pushpa (2014) commented that many teachers treat student talk as unnecessary during the teaching and learning process and they view it as an enemy of a productive and efficient classroom. But the truth is that few strategies engage learners as deeply and positively impact memory and retention as a good conversation. Student talk in the poetry classroom builds and deepens content, and knowledge, enhances skills development and engages students in the life of the classroom. More so, the social interaction between the learners themselves and the teacher ignite the learners' thinking and give room for exchange

of ideas. The teacher's role is to guide students to learn and respond spontaneously as opposed to be passive listeners (Khansir, 2012).

Use of learner – centred approaches in poetry promote interactive and collaborative attitudes to teaching poetry which emphasises on vocabulary expansion, writing portfolios, diaries, parodies and reading aloud (Collie & Slater, 1987). In this way, the learning situation demands participation, stimulates and elicits responses from the learners. This enhances language learning, vocabulary, cultural expansion and creativity with the students. Khansir (2012) contend that learner – centred approaches to teaching poetry enable students to experience, feel, think, create and share what they understand from poetry.

Carter and Long (1991) propose three models to be used in the teaching and learning of literature for improving the learners' personal development: the cultural model, language model and the personal growth model. These models are the roots to literature teaching approaches. Aydin (2013) mentions that these models correlate with each other as a value and resource for literature study purpose, personal response development as well as exposure to language skills. Poetry being a sub-category of literature; teaching and learning of the SGCSE siSwati poetry adopts the approaches to teaching literature suggested by Carter and Long (1991). Carter and Long (1991) identified the information – based, language – based, personal – response, paraphrastic, stylistics and the moral – philosophical as approaches to be used in the classroom teaching of literature.

The personal - response based approach to teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry

The personal – response is associated with the personal growth model proposed by Carter and Long (1991) as it aims to elicit personal responses and foster learner's personal development. Rashid, Vetamani and Rahman (2010) argue that this approach focuses on learner's response to the author's text. It promotes the learners to associate the subject matters of reading poems with personal life experiences. The learners would respond to what they think are the poet's intentions and the meanings that could be derived from the poem. Aydin (2013) further argues that, although learners are encouraged to explore various textual meanings, their

interpretations must be in tandem with the poem. Rashid et al., (2010) claim that this approach motivates and encourages learners to read by making connections between the themes of the poem studied and their personal life experiences.

Another aspect of this approach is that it helps learners develop knowledge of ideas and language content and formal schemata through different themes and topics. This function relates to the theories of reading expressed by Goodman (1970) which emphasise the interaction of readers with poems. According to Cadorath and Harris (1998, p. 188), "the text itself has no meaning, it only provides direction for the reader to construct meaning from the reader's own experience". Thus, learning is said to take place when readers are able to interpret the poem and construct meaning on the basis of their own experience. Poems in this approach are considered as a stimulus for personal growth activities. Activities used in this approach are questions and discussions which are interpretative in nature, generating views and opinions on the poem, brainstorming, guided fantasy, small group discussions and revealing learners' reactions in a short paragraph or journal writing (Mohamad & Che, 2012). This approach to teaching literature is influenced by both the cultural and the language model where the focus is on the particular use of language in a text in a specific cultural context.

The personal - response based approach stresses the importance of the reader's role in interpreting poems by paving ways for personal creation as well as re – creation of textual (or text – personal meanings). Ermet (2015) asserts that it is phrased as the "allow me to name it approach" because it directs the learners' attention towards the things left unsaid and unwritten in the poem. Such activities of gap filling stimulate learners' creative responses more than the written word accomplishes. The approach promotes self-expression, oral proficiency and gives learners the register for expressing opinions. Subramanyan (2012) concurs with Ermet (2015) by pointing to the far more active involvement of learners in this approach as learners respond aesthetically, personalise themes, moods and atmospheres of the poem. Thus, more weight is placed on the moral of the poem. Throughout the process of reading the poems, learners are provided with the chance to associate ideas, characters and incidents to their personal lives engaging the

knowledge , emotions and experiences they had prior to their reading of the poem. The personal - response approach ponders upon the poem as the sole source of meaning. Mustakin and Lebar (2012) argue that in this approach poetry is scrutinised and judged as a final product that exists apart from the poet or the social, political or ideological context from which it has been extracted. According to Mustakin and Lebar (2012) any consideration of the poet's intentions, motives or background leads to one delusional fallacy. Effective fallacies of reader – text interrelation are completely thwarted too; neither may have any influence upon the other, each exists in itself as a separate entity of meaning.

According to Subramanyan (2012), this approach is contrary to the "new critics" approach that generates less interest towards shaping the meaning as it may solely be exposed through the language of the poem. Individual readers or a community of interpretive readers are the ones to create the meaning of the poem regardless of what its structure or poet may be implying. Critics of this approach argue that it cannot significantly improve the learners' motivation to learn poetry as through this approach the learners or readers of poetry could have extra however, subconscious encounters with passages, containing some of the vocabulary items in the poem (Subramanyan, 2012)**.** Literary critics believe in the existence of no one right reading for a poem but what we must take into account are the multiple readings that various interpretive communities have arrived at. The readers' personal, cultural and historical background makes a certain poem comprehensible to him or her. Sarala and Subramanyan (2012) argue that it may seem that the poem is presented as secondary components in the act of reading, as much as this is true but it remains as a source of interpretation not universal as the new critics to poetry would like it to be but very personal. The personal - response approach give new meaning to the term close reading. In conclusion, learners taught through the personal - response approach relate and connect it to their most personal experiences and world views and attach emotions to their interpretations of the poem. The readers still have quite acceptable understanding of the poem.

Statement of the problem

Poetry is a compulsory section of the siSwati syllabus at SGCSE, examined as a major component of the literature and culture paper. Learners are assessed on the ability to critically analyse both modern and traditional poems. “Schools are experiencing serious problems on the poetic genre” (Examinations Council of ESwatini Marking Report for SGCSE SiSwati as a first language, 2014, p. 6). Most learners are unable to critically analyse poems and this affects the overall performance in the SiSwati subject (ECESWA Marking Report for SGCSE SiSwati as a First Language, 2015). The learner’s performance in poetry is unsatisfactory, yet SiSwati is a first language, it should place the learners at an advantage because they are only dealing with the content and skill, language is not an issue. Sadly, most of the learners do not know how to appreciate even the culture in the poem. They only see the poem as a reading text and do not really discover the underlying principle of learning poetry. Hence, the need to try out new methods that could improve learners’ performance.

Theoretical framework

Theoretically the study was drawn from Vygotsky (1978) theory of Social Constructivism that emphasise on the collaborative nature of learning. Social constructivism is based on the belief that learning is a cognitive function that originates first on the social level (inter-psychological) and later on the individual or inside the child (intra-pyschological). Vygotsky (1987) thought that children actively construct knowledge. Vygotsky emphasised on the importance of culture and language. Vygotsky (2011) thought there were three stages of language development; the egocentric, social and inner speech. Based on the notion, the process of learning is a knowledge community with three key players important in the process of teaching and learning of SGCSE siSwati poetry; the learner, the peers and the teacher. All players are to express their feelings on the poem and relate the poem to their experiences so as to enrich the learners ’personal growth. The teacher is a scaffold providing guidance to be removed as soon as the learners reach the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The peers enable room for social interaction. Learning a poem is not simply about assimilation and accommodation of

new knowledge but a process in which learners are integrated into the knowledge community.

The theoretical significance of the study is that it puts emphasis to the power of social interaction in the teaching and learning of SGCSE siSwati poetry in the 21st century classrooms. Vygotsky (2011), the proponent of social constructivism expanded the notion of social interaction by mentioning that learning should adhere to the social, egocentric and inner speech. The theory of social constructivism challenges traditional goals of education and proposes restricted innovative teaching approaches in which learners construct knowledge themselves rather than simply receiving it from knowledgeable teachers. Such social interaction in the teaching and learning environment promotes self – learning and help learners develop critical thinking skills and retain knowledge that leads to self – actualisation aimed for the development of the individual and society at large. Social interaction is regarded as a powerful approach to teaching and learning due to its ability to equip the learners with skills, knowledge and competencies required in the twenty first century.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to analyse teachers' use of the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. to identify teachers 'knowledge of the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry;
2. to determine the extent at which teachers use the personal – response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry; and
3. to identify the factors that determine the use of the personal -response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered by the study:

1. What are the teacher's understandings of the personal - response approach?

2. To what extent do teachers use the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry?
3. What are the factors that determine the use of the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry?

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) embedded research design approach. Critical case sampling method was used to select three (3) schools per cluster and three (3) teachers per school out of the four (4) clusters that exists in the Shiselweni region of ESwatini; making a total of twelve (12) schools and thirty six (36) teachers. Data was obtained through the open – ended questionnaire as the primary source, -face to face interviews and focus group discussions as secondary sources. The instruments had a reliability value of -0.864. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires and conducted face to face interviews and focus group discussions with teachers teaching SGCSE SiSwati in all the four chosen clusters of the Shiselweni region on agreed dates of appointments. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed descriptively using frequency tables and percentages in relation to the problem and questions. Qualitative data given from the interviews and obtained from the focus group discussions were analysed as interpretations of statements that were made and summarised as opinions and suggestions where applicable.

Findings of the study

Research question 1. What are teachers' understandings of the personal - response based approach?

Teachers gave almost the same responses on their definitions of the personal - response based approach. From their responses, it can be deduced that all teachers' definitions of the personal - response based approach allude to the fact that it is an approach that get each learner deeply engaged with the poem. One respondent justified her definition of this approach by writing that *"Learners in this approach relate and connect the poem to their personal life experiences as well as attach*

emotions to their interpretation of the poem". Some respondents' definitions read "*each learner attach meaning to the poem as an individual regardless of the language used in the poem".*

Teachers teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry also responded to the same question through the focus group discussion. Teachers' responses from the focus group led to the realisation that teachers with a combination of siSwati and English are at an advantage when it comes to understanding the personal – response approach for teaching poetry as opposed to those who majored in siSwati and Religious Education, siSwati and History and siSwati and Geography. This is based on their response to the question *"how do you use the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry?*" Most of those with a major in siSwati and English said *"we use emphatic tasks"*. Then respondents with the other combinations outside English were stacked until the others with a major in English explained that these are tasks in which the learners are expected to get into the shoes of the poet and then write their feelings. One respondent was quoted saying *"I have two goals to achieve in this task: Learners accumulate facts about the meaning of the poem and construct meaning on their own"*. Teachers with teaching majors that are outside English and siSwati said that in this approach they give learners activities in which they do class presentations on their different views and feelings towards the poem. One respondent mentioned that there is pleasure in using the personal - response approach for teaching lyrics (poems expressing inner feelings of the poet). The respondent mentioned an example of the poem "*Ngetama Kufinyelela kumuntfu*" a poem which is loosely translated as "Dedication to the one I love most". The teachers noticed that learners easily relate their feelings to lyrics.

Research question 2: To what extent do teachers use the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry?

Teachers teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry filled the questionnaire which had indicators representing the different activities that teachers engage on under the personal - response approach to teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry and the extent at which they use each of the indicators. An interview guide was also used to find out

which activities do teachers use under the personal – response based approach to teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry and the extent at which they were used.

Table 1 presents responses from the questionnaire on activities teachers used under the personal – response approach.

Table 1: Activities used under the personal – response based approach and the extent at which they are used by teachers (N=38)

Teaching Activities	NE	LE	ME	GE	Total
Learners expressing their feelings and opinions on the poem	0% (0)	7.9% (3)	28.9% (11)	63.2% (24)	100% (38)
Relating themes to personal experience	0% (0)	15.8% (6)	28.9% (11)	55.3% (21)	100% (38)
Explain the poem to the learners	0% (0)	13.2% (5)	18.4% (7)	68.4% (26)	100% (38)
Generate language practice using the poem	5.3% (2)	21.1% (8)	44.7% (17)	28.9% (11)	100% (38)

KEY: NE – No Extent; LE – Little Extent; ME – Moderate Extent; GE - Greater Extent

NB: Number in parenthesis represent frequency

Table 1 above indicates that teachers do use the personal - response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry. From the table the findings revealed that activities in which teachers explain the poem to the learners were used at a greater extent by 68.4% of the teachers (n= 26). The same thing applies to activities in which learners express their feelings and opinions on the poem were used at a greater extent by 63.2% of the teachers (n= 24). Activities in which learners relate the themes of the poem to their own personal experiences were used at a greater extent also. The findings revealed that (n= 21, 55.3%) of the teachers engaged on such activities. Activities in which learners are to generate language practice using the poem were used at a lesser extent (n= 11, 28.9%) of the teachers.

Respondents were probed deeper on the activities they use under the personal – response approach and the extent at which they use them. The findings from the

interview data concur with findings from quantitative data as it revealed that activities in which learners actively construct knowledge on their own were used at a very low extent. According to the respondents, tasks in which teachers explain the poem to the learners were used greatly by 68.4% of the teachers (n=26). Tasks in which learners express their feelings and opinions on the poem were used at a greater extent (n=24, 63.2%) of the teachers. When probed on the high response rate on the use of such activities; respondents said there is a slight difference between activities used in teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry and those used for teaching SGCSE English poetry. Respondents said *"we are used to this approach from teaching English poetry and it is the best"*. Respondents explained that as learners express their feelings and opinions on the poem they grasp the content and sharpen their intellectual thinking capabilities. Teachers also said that activities in which learners relate the theme of the poem to personal experience was used by 55.3% of the teachers (n=21). From the teachers responses it could be revealed that when teaching poetry teachers do help learners relate new information to already existing information. One respondent justified the use of relating themes to personal experiences by saying *"Pedagogy compels us to move our learners from the known to the unknown".* Teachers complained that the only way in which learners can discuss the theme of the poem is through attaching the theme to reality. Teachers said that they used activities in which learners generate language practice using the poem at (n=11, 28.9 %.) of the teachers. Teachers thought, language always form part of the poem and that is why language activities are used sparingly. The findings from the teachers' responses revealed that teaching and learning of the poem under the personal - response approach call for the teacher and the learner to meet each other half way. The teacher brings 50% explanation of the poem to the learner and the learner contributes 50% too by relating the poem their own personal experiences.

Research question 3: What are the factors that determine the use of the personal - response based approach

Teachers teaching SGCSE siSwati were asked on the factors that determine the use of the personal - response based approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry. The findings from the teachers revealed that the personal - response approach is a holistic approach to teaching poetry that calls for the consideration of both the linguistic, biographical, historical, philosophical, intellectual, cultural and aesthetic properties of the poem.

A teacher was quoted stressing the importance of integrating the properties of the poem when using this approach "The *joy, content, expressions and values raised in the poem can never be taught in isolation"*. According to the teacher, the design of the poem on its own demand integration of the properties for effective teaching and learning of the poem.

On the content of the poem one teacher said "the *different make – ups of the poems call for the use of activities that will lead into the learners researching about the poets' background and intentions"* .The teacher felt the content of the poem should be linked to the poet's background. The teachers said tasks in which learners express their feelings and opinions about the poem can get the learners critically analysing the poet's intentions against theirs. Another teacher complained of the activities in which the teacher explains the poem to the learners "*The meaning of a poem is subject to a debate, thus the more we explain the poems the more we close up for the learner different interpretations*". Teachers felt therefore, individual readers and a community of interpretive readers are the ones to create the meaning of the poem regardless of what its structure or the poet may be implying.

On the aesthetic properties of the poem teachers from the group discussion felt the words used in the poem fit into a unique pattern which may be of sounds, lexical associations and the syntactic form created by the poem. One teacher was quoted saying " *the approach should make the learner show clearly the relationship between the poet's sound and meaning clear".* Some teachers felt aesthetic appreciation of the poem differ according to the poet's taste thus, they suggested that activities in

which the learners relate the theme to their personal experiences are enough to get the learners deeper with the beauty of the language *"Mere understanding of both the literal and figurative meaning of the poem promotes the learners' growth"* said a teacher from the interview.

The language of the poem was viewed by most teachers as the key feature of the poem because it promotes self – expressions, oral proficiency and gives the learners the register for expressing their opinions. A teacher was quoted from the group saying *"In the process of the learner responding to the poets 'intentions, language is developed".* Teachers said there are always things left unsaid and unwritten in the poem thus, the personal - response approach allow room for the teacher, the learner and other learners to say and write those things. Therefore, they see no need to give learners tasks which directly venture into generating language.

Discussions

The findings revealed that teachers understand the personal – response approach as an approach to teaching poetry for promotion of the learners' personal growth through activities that help learners connect their personal experiences, and attach their emotions to the poem. Teachers' understanding of the personal - response approach align very well with Carter and Long (1991) who argue that this approach elicit personal responses and foster learners' personal development. The findings concur with Mohamad and Che (2012) who explained that poems in this approach are a stimulus for personal growth. Subramanyan (2012) in contradiction of this idea of solely judging personal growth strictly on the learners' individual analysis of the poem, alludes to the fact that in teaching poetry using the personal - response approach the individual reader, the teacher and a community of interpretative readers are the ones' to create the meaning of the poem regardless of what its structure or the poet may be implying. Vygotsky (1978)'s notion of social interaction that emphasise on the collaborative nature of learning supports the argument by Subramanyan (2012).

The study established that teachers used the personal - response approach greatly however, the mostly used activities under this approach are those that embrace

traditional teaching and learning and teacher – led classrooms. Evidence is to the fact that activities in which teachers explain the poem to the learners were used at a greater extent by 68.4% of the teachers. The findings allude to Pushpa (2014) cited in literature who complained that teachers view student talk as an enemy of a productive and efficient classroom and teach poetry just for examination purposes. Use of teacher - centred approaches for teaching poetry is also criticised by Khansir (2012) who argued that the teachers' role in poetry is to guide students to learn and respond spontaneously as opposed to being passive receivers of facts and opinions on the poem. Reserving learners as passive recipients of readily made information deprive them from experiencing, feeling, thinking, creating and sharing what they understood from the poem (Khansir, 2012). Thus, depriving them the necessary language, cultural and personal growth the poetry syllabus aims to enrich.

Activities in in which the learners express their feelings and opinions about the poem were the second mostly used by 63.2 % of the teachers which is appreciated, followed by relating the themes to personal experiences at 55.3%. Rashid et al., (2010) in support of the findings assert that the personal – response approach promote the learners to associate the subject matters (themes) of reading poems with personal life experiences and respond to what they think are the poet's intentions and meanings as derived from the poems. Aydin (2013) moves further to advise that the teacher should not worry much about learners exploring various textual meanings because their interpretations will always be in tandem with the poem as the personal - response based approach ponders upon the poem as the sole source of meaning. Therefore, the teacher must plan activities that include not only what learners are capable of doing on their own but what they can learn with the help of others.

The findings revealed that the least used activities are those in which learners are to generate language practice using the poem. Such activities were used by 28.9% of the teachers. As much as most teachers felt there is no need of giving activities that venture into language directly, as they believe that in the process of the learners' relating themes to their experiences and developing feelings and opinions on the poem; language is developed and generated. Emert (2015) complained that in order

for the poem to promote self – expression, oral proficiency and give the learners the register for expressing opinions, there should be far more active involvement of the learners in language exercises. Collie and slater (2001) concur with Emert (2015) that activities used in teaching literature should promote a solid integration between the language and the literature syllabus. According to Pushpa and Savaed (2014) persistent use of traditional approaches to teaching poetry is noticed by the growing tendency for teachers to ignore the critical approach to teaching poetry that aim to elicit curiosity, interest, participation, enjoyment, creativity and involvement. Yet during the response to poetry, learners are forced to use their existing skills; reading, listening, speaking and writing to develop other skills and competencies.

The findings also revealed that the linguistic, biographical, historical, philosophical, intellectual, cultural and aesthetic properties of the poem are factors that together determine teachers' use of the personal response approach for teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry. The findings are contrary to Subramanyan (2012) who argue that it is the readers' personal, cultural and historical background that makes a poem comprehensible to him or her. Subramanyan (2012)'s notion presents the poem as a secondary component in the act of reading yet, the poem should always remain the primary source of interpretation.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the study were that teachers understood the personal – response approach and were able to describe the activities that are used under this approach. It was concluded that though teachers used the personal - response approach greatly, the mostly used activities in this approach are those that are teacher centred as tasks in which teachers explain the poem to the learners were leading. In teaching SGCSE siSwati poetry for personal growth, not only the teachers' or learners' responses or interpretations of the poem is crucial rather responses from collaboration between the teacher and learner as an individual, the teacher and the learners as a group and the peers as well, thus the other name for the personal - response approach "the allow me to name it approach". The linguistic, biographical, historical, philosophical, intellectual, cultural and aesthetic properties of

the poem are factors which determine the use of the personal – response based approach.

Recommendations

The study recommended that teaching and learning of SGCSE siSwati poetry for personal growth call for the teacher to understand that the personal - response approach consists of teacher – centred and learner – centred activities; therefore teaching for personal growth demand greater use of the learner – centred activities in which the teacher will provide minimal guidance so to enrich the learner personally, socially and culturally. Also, teaching of SGCSE siSwati poetry for personal growth requires social interaction between the teacher and the learners, the learner and the poem as well as within the learners themselves as a class. The properties of the poem; linguistic, biographical, historical, philosophical, intellectual, cultural and aesthetic are factors to be integrated simultaneously during the teaching and learning of SGCSE siSwati poetry. Research may further look into how the assessment for SGCSE siSwati poetry can embrace the use of the project/research tasks so to promote learners' personal growth outside the four walls of the classroom and put to practice the poetic skill acquired during the teaching and learning process.

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The transition of the Examination Council of Eswatini to *e*-registration platform for assessment.

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Abstract

This study examined in-service teachers' use of *e*-platforms for registering students' profiles at the Examination Council of Eswatini. The main objective of the study was to establish if the use of *e*-registration platforms by teachers for registering students' profiles was prevalent and a function of two categorical variables: gender and location. There were 101 participants in the study; they completed a questionnaire, which was later analyzed using non-parametric statistics, mainly Chi-Square Goodness of Fit. The findings of this study revealed that *e*-registration of students' profiles at the Examination Council of Eswatini was prevalent and was not a function of gender X^2 (1, N =101) =1.19, p>.05 but of location X^2 (2, N =101) =27.5, p<.05. These findings have implications for further engagement by the Examination Council of Eswatini in realizing its obligation to strengthen the use of *e*-platforms for registration of students' profiles for assessment.

Keywords: *e*-registration, *e*-marking, *e*-release, assessment, ICT.

Introduction

Over the past decades, large-scale assessment of educational outcomes using technology applications has been considered for use, evoking deeper understanding of the usefulness of technology in development, administration, scoring of tests, as well as reporting results. Innovative technology applications provide rich authentic task that challenge integrated knowledge, critical thinking, and problem solving skills,

encased in our ability to adopt and use technology for specific tasks (Quellmaiz & Pallegrino, 2009). Such tasks can be used in both "large scale and classroom-based assessment" (p. 75). Within large scale assessment around the globe, summative assessment systems across curricula are continuously developed and benchmarked to launch a new era of integrated learning assessment methods annexed in technology systems, which permeates many subjects, including other forms of academic assessment.

Many occupational, professional, as well as postsecondary technology-inclined assessments have developed to the level of international standards. Examples include reputable assessment trademark companies such as Graduate Record Examinations® General Test (GRE®), Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®), National Council of State Boards of Nursing NCLEX® Examination, Test of English as a Foreign Language® (TOEFL®), and Medical Licensing Examination™ (USMLE™) (Wainer & Eignor, 2000). These assessment institutes have ushered a new perception regarding real-time assessment using technology. Technology based assessment allows tasks to be offered on a computer, administered in a secure terminal at an approved testing center. Many institutions of higher learning, mainly overseas universities benchmark minimal level scores from these tests for students' presumptive admissions in colleges and universities. As a result, this new generation of technology-enabled summative assessment offers a *"seamless"* potential for graduate admission.

ICT assessment in Eswatini

The use of ICT for assessment in Eswatini has largely been spearheaded by the Examination Council of Eswatini (ECESWA). Benefits of incorporating ICT by ECESWA have been realized through the collection of students' information around schools for assessment purposes. Initially, ECESWA used spreadsheets for students' data collection. Collected data included the name of the school, center number, and subject options. After the spreadsheet era, ECESWA used lozenges, which were later scanned to extract necessary information. Amidst both methods of data collection (spreadsheet and lozenges), there were challenges bordering on information accuracy. Lots of errors were not only evident but costly to rectify, since

correct information had to be recollected from the students and/or schools. Most often than not, students would select wrong subject options, and at times both information about the school and student would be inaccurate or missing. The prevalence of information inaccuracies necessitated enormous attention during data cleaning; hence, the need by ECESWA to shift to a less-laden method of data collection.

E-registration

To escape the pitfalls of using spreadsheet and lozenges for collecting data from students and/or schools, *e*-registration was introduced by ECESWA in 2013. About twelve (12) primary and high schools were used for piloting this project, with results leaning towards *e*-registration platforms. Subsequently, the year 2014 marked the beginning of *e*-registration at ECESWA. Few schools that had shown interest in *e*-registration were given a go-ahead to use *e*-registration platforms. In 2015 all schools examined by ECESWA were introduced to *e*-registration, marking a steady transition from the old system of registration to the new one. Schools that did not have information technology (IT) infrastructure were assisted by setting up make-shift regional examination offices in which the examination temporal staff assisted the schools in many ways, including, but not limited to *e*-registration. The ECESWA staff helped the schools to begin the process of *e*-registration on a much lighter note. On the other hand, the regional centres were also used for capacity building on IT issues. In 2015 twelve (12) regional centres were used for *e*-registration workshops for teachers at all school levels; primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary; and each school sent at least one participant to the workshop. Below is a table showing participants in all twelve (12) centres.

Table 1: *E-registration workshops*

Centre Number	Training Centres	Teacher Attendance	Date
1	Siphofaneni High School	85	16/02/2015
2	Mkhuzweni Primary	67	16/02/2015
3	Gobolodlo Hall Pigg's Peak	69	17/02/2015
4	Mbabane Central High School	137	17/02/2015
5	Florence Christian Academy	64	18/02/2015
6	Evelyn Baring High School	147	18/02/2015
7	Christ the King Primary	73	19/02/2015
8	Lusoti High School	13	19/02/2015
9	Mankayane Teachers' Centre	70	20/02/2015
10	Kwaluseni Primary School	70	20/02/2015
11	Manzini Central High School	282	23/02/2015
12	Siteki Nazarene High School	137	23/02/2015

The number of participants shown in Table 1 precisely shows a good representation of schools in the workshops, and a promise for adopting ICT platforms and privileges for *e*-registration of students' profiles for assessment. At the end of the workshops, were given options through which to submit their completed *e*-registration files. Such options included submitting completed files through regional centers, emails, USB, and Memory Cards.

Challenges of *e*-registration

Like any other new innovation coming into force, the adoption and use of *e*-registration platforms had its bulk of challenges. Though majority of schools submitted their files electronically, this did not suggest in any way that there were no problems associated with *e*-registration. These problems included not indicating school code numbers, skipping lines when entering students details, duplication of students, removal of excel spreadsheet protection, failure to use emails, delay in delivery of emails, sending converted PDF files instead of spreadsheets, lack of pin numbers, wrong email addresses, absence of center numbers, lack of email

attachments and/or wrong files attached. Also, some emails were blocked by Firewalls, some duplicated, while some had corrupted attachments. However, ECESWA would resolve these problems, understanding that as teachers get used to the new system the challenges will be minimal, if not eradicated completely.

Diffusion of innovations

The adoption of technology has been an issue of discussion in the education sector. Accompanying theories guiding research on the adoption of technology have pitched to explain perspectives regarding its adoption and use. The diffusion of innovation is one of the theories explaining adoption and use of technology in many settings, including education. The diffusion of innovations focuses on the process by which innovation is adopted and accepted by individuals or members of a community (Rogers, 2003). This theory represents a number of sub-theories such as the systems and change theory (Fullan, 2001). Within the diffusion of innovation theory is the technology acceptance model (TAM), which enjoys an excellent reputation with regard to its robustness, parsimony, and explanatory power.

TAM is rooted in the social psychology theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). TAM adopts the belief-attitude-intention behavior relationship, which stresses that the user's acceptance of technology is a function of two beliefs; perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use is "the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would be free of effort, while perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (p. 2). Therefore, technology assessment systems can either be perceived useful or not, depending on many variables such as ease of use.

Related literature

Ever since the introduction and advancement of technology in education, technology has been an issue of massive debates. Most of the research suggests that, because of the impact of technology in almost all spheres of life, there has been a growing concern among educators and the general public that technology should play a more

integral part in supporting students' education (Culp, Honey, & Mandinach, 2003; Fouts, 2000; Thornton & Houser, 2005). Research in this area has also prioritized the integration of technology with language instruction to benefit language learners (Ogata & Yano, 2004; Petersen & Divitini, 2005; Levy & Kennedy, 2005).

The concern to implement technology within instruction stems from the assertion that technology accommodates individual learners' needs at various levels of learning (Jobe & Peck, 2008; Sole, Calic, & Neijmann, 2010) and different technology tools can be used to support the curriculum (Johnson, 2000). Although these studies underscore the importance of integrating technology with instruction, there seems to be no single method for integrating technology into the curriculum. As a result, the question of what technology to adopt, when to adopt it, and how to use it within specific subject areas remains the prerogative of each teacher, school, or administration.

The perceived need to adopt technology to the classrooms has been increasing. Researchers such as Sivin-Kachala and Bialo (2000) and Valdez (2004) observe that technology in the classrooms serves different educational functions depending on the subject area. In language arts, for instance, the use of technology has been associated with the development of vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling (Warschauer, 2003; Stockwell, 2007; Mthethwa, 2018) while in Math and Science, technology has benefited students in simulations and problem solving tasks. The benefits of using technology have also been documented in Social studies (Sivin-Kachala & Bialo, 2000; Valdez, 2000). Research shows that technology in education is more effective when used to access information, and when that information is used to communicate findings using graphs, illustrations, and animations (Sivin-Kachala & Bialo, 2000). Therefore, the effectiveness of technology in education is congruent with the notion of students' success at different educational levels.

Also, studies supporting the integration of technology with education such as Bebell (2000), Blake (2008), Garrett (1991), and Ruschoff (1993) acknowledge that technology and learning are not just two distinct educational dichotomies, but are integrated. Their integration provides students with an array of strategies embedded

within a broad spectrum of tools supporting students' learning experiences. Therefore, integrating technology with instruction provides students with a wider choice on what they want to learn and how they want to learn it; all that students need to do, is to select various technology repertoires matching their learning needs and styles. The advantages of adopting technology in the classrooms are endless. Some scholars such as Gahala (2001) and Waddoups (2004) note that the integration of technology with instruction does not only advance students' use of technology within the classroom, but it also provides students with opportunities to acquire skills they need later in their future employment such as critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, collaborative skills, and communication skills (Becta, 2004; Liu, Wang, Liang, Chan, Ko, & Yang, 2003; Zurita & Nussbaum, 2004). Therefore, technology is essential in preparing students for future employment.

On the other hand, Ahmad (2011); Meenakumari and Krishnaveni (2010) posit that using ICT in educational management assist in providing power to administrators for efficient management in terms of pay-roll, financial accounting, administration of student data, inventory management, personnel records maintenance and library systems. In their study, Ahmed (2015), Asaibaka (2010) investigated the implementation of ICT in schools and concluded that school principals have positive attitudes regarding the use of ICT for administration. The study further notes that while a significant number of schools had policies on the use ICT for administration and record keeping, very few schools followed these policies; the majority of principals used print technology for administrative purposes.

Maki (2008) further states that ICT is needed for institutional administrators to function efficiently, and the institution to effectively pursue its academic excellence (Oyinje & Opara 2013). Clarke-okah et al (2009) highlight the use of ICT in University administration and concluded that it processes voluminous records quickly, meticulously, impeccably, and generates reliable and consistent records. Records and data are searchable and quickly retrievable. Digital data saves space and human effort. On the other hand, Bhardwaj and Signh (2011) in their study of Automated Integrated University Examination System reveal that the meaning of

computerization is limited to just typing or surfing the web; full potential of ICT has not been explored by many universities or academic institutes.

Furthermore, Singh et al (2016) assert that manual systems of registration are very laborious and time consuming, while using ICT is less time-consuming, and one accesses information whenever required. Data is also easily edited, and printed whenever required. Data-base access is also authorized and cannot be viewed by strangers. Overall, it can be concluded that the use if ICT and its privileges enhances productivity, transparency, reliability, and efficiency in both data management and assessment.

Present study

This study examined in-service teachers' use of *e*-platforms for capturing students' data for assessment purposes. First, the study sought to examine in-service teachers' use of *e*-platforms for registering students' profiles. Second, the study sought to establish if the use of *e*-registration platforms was a function of gender and location.

Methodology

The study fell under survey design. Choices about research paradigm, designs, research questions, topics, participants, site for data collection, conceptual framework, and the role of the researcher affect the data we collect; and the "researcher's expectations when analyzing data are preceded by what the researcher expects to find" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 307). As stated at the beginning of this paper, the Examination Council trained 1,105 teachers in both primary and secondary schools on how to use ICT for students' registration, and ever since this exercise emerged it has not been empirically established how teachers variably use the *e*-platforms.

Population and sample

Participants in this study were solicited from a countrywide teachers' workshop hosted by ECESWA at Mfanyana Hall in the Manzini region. The purpose of the workshop was to review the previous year's examination results. Since this was a

national workshop, teachers who attended the workshop came from all over Eswatini. A total of 160 teachers participated in the workshop and a representative sample of 101 teachers volunteered to participate in the study. Ethical procedures were followed when carrying this study.

Table 2: *Participants' demographic information*

Gender	Number	Rural	Semi-urban	Urban
Males	56	48	12	9
Females	45	19	6	7
Totals	**101**	**67**	**18**	**16**

Table 2 shows the number of teachers who participated in the workshop and their location. From the table, it is noted that males were leading in number in all the categories i.e., location.

Instrument

A binary questionnaire developed on the basis of the objectives of the study, posed as data collecting instruments, which participants filled choosing from two scales of measurement (yes or no). The first 6 items on the questionnaire dealt with the teachers' personal use of ICT. These binary items were basically intended to establish how teachers use ICT for personal gains. The second part of the questionnaire solicited information regarding the knowledge and use of ICT in executing their duties. These types of questions were intended to establish if their knowledge of ICT for personal gains can be transferred to work-related activities, such as *e*-registration, which ECESWA was introducing. All the items in the instrument were collecting nominal data.

Data collection and analysis

As mentioned earlier, data were collected from 101 participants who voluntarily completed the questionnaire after the end of the workshop. All the 101 copies of the questionnaire were properly completed. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For frequencies, percentages, means, and standard

deviations descriptive statistics was used, while for the test-of-significance Chi-Square Goodness of Fit was used.

Table 3: *Frequency of responses per each item (n=101)*

No	Factor	Yes %	No %
1	I have background knowledge using ICT	78	23
2	I have an email address	68	33
3	I can download attached documents from my emails	70	31
4	I can send email with attachments	67	34
5	I can use spreadsheet	63	38
6	I can help my colleague on ICT issues	48	53
7	Teachers &students use computers at my school	75	26
8	My school has access to internet	45	56
9	I have knowledge about e-registration	78	23
10	I use e-registration	91	10
11	I prefer using e-registration	90	11
12	I know about e-release	43	58
13	I know about e-marking	22	79
14	ECESWA should introduce e-marking	86	15

Rating Scale: *Yes or No*

Table 3 shows the frequency of the *Yes* and *No* responses which were mutually exclusive. From Table 3, it can be noted that the number of teachers who can use technology for various activities is quite higher than those who cannot. This is sustained by the high number of the positive versus negative responses.

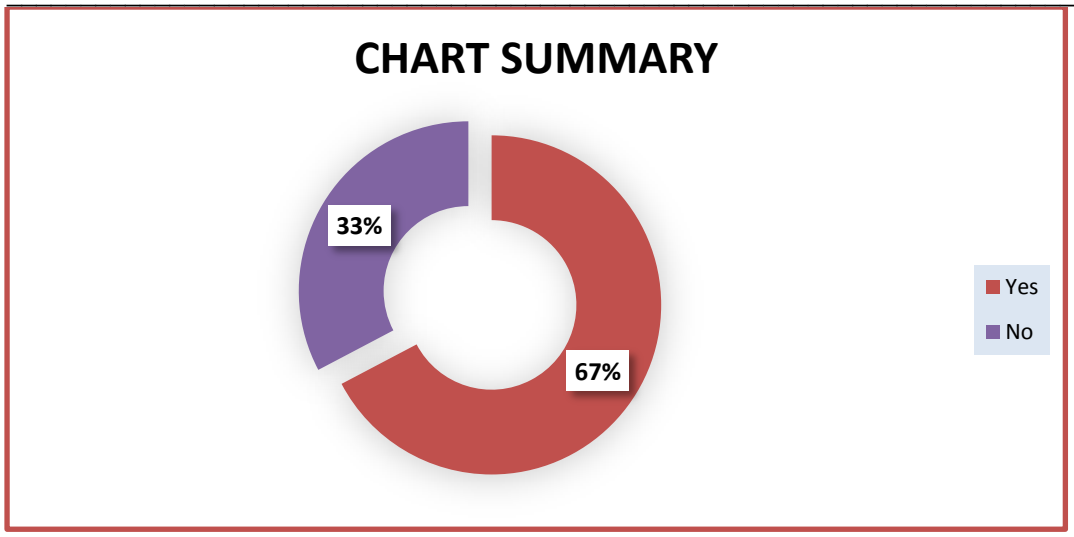

Figure 1: Yes/No

From Figure 1, it can be concluded that overall about 67% of the teachers could use technology for personal and other uses, while 33% could use it more limitedly than the other group.

Table 4: *Descriptive statistics for each item (n=101)*

No	Factor	N	Mean	Std Dev.
1	I have background knowledge using ICT	101	1.28	.450
2	I have an email address	101	1.26	.445
3	I can download documents from my emails	101	1.29	.455
4	I can send email with attachments	101	1.27	.445
5	I can use spreadsheet	101	1.39	.489
6	I can help my colleague on ICT issues	101	1.52	.501
7	Teachers & students use computers at my school	101	1.30	.459
8	My school has access to internet	101	1.48	.501
9	I have knowledge about e-registration	101	1.27	.445
10	I use *e*-registration	101	1.67	.376
11	I prefer using *e*-registration	101	1.19	.393
12	I know about *e*-release	101	1.51	.502
13	I know about *e*-marking	101	1.69	.464
14	ECESWA should introduce *e*-marking	101	1.24	.428
	Domain Mean		**1.49**	**.489**

Findings and discussion

As mentioned earlier, one major objective for ECESWA in introducing *e*-registration is to enable teachers to use the *e*-platforms to register students' profiles, mainly for examination and assessment. Table 5 presents a summary of the modes through which teachers submitted students' data profiles after the workshops. The summary is organized according to primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools.

Table 5: *Submission frequency*

Levels	Regional Centers	Emails	USB	M.Card
Primary	225	335	128	97
Junior Secondary	51	183	38	13
Senior Secondary	46	179	35	11
Totals	**322**	**697**	**201**	**121**

NB: Some schools submitted their files through USB directly to ECESWA

From Table 5, it can be observed that primary schools submitted 335 students' data profiles by emails. About 128 files were submitted through USB and only 97 were submitted using Memory Cards. At junior secondary, 183 files were submitted using emails, 38 were submitted using USB and 13 were submitted using Memory Cards. For senior secondary schools, 179 used emails, 35 used USB and 11 used Memory Cards.

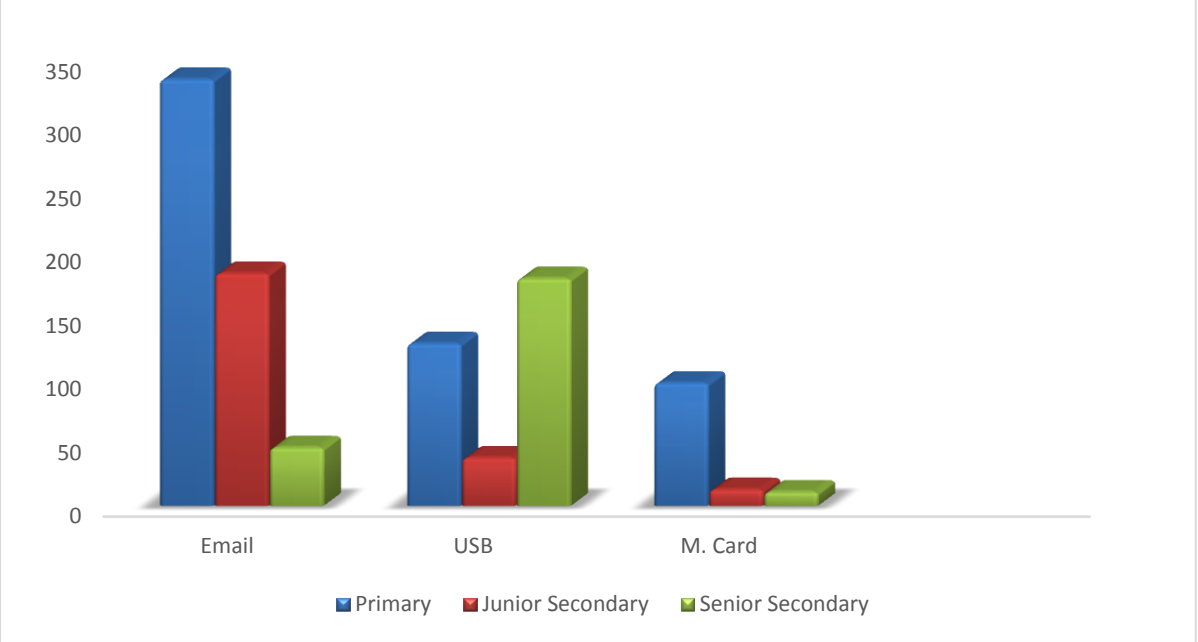

Figure 2: Submission modes.

Figure 2 shows the dominance of primary schools in using emails more than USB and Memory Cards to register students' profiles. Also, most junior secondary schools used emails compared to USB and Memory Cards. Senior secondary schools used the USB more than emails and Memory Cards. Overall, the use of emails dominated the other modes, with Memory Cards being a less preferred mode of submission.

The second research question in this study sought to establish if the use of *e*-registration of students' profiles was a function of gender and location. For this research question Chi-Square Goodness of Fit was used to analyze data. The findings revealed that *e*-registration of students' profiles was not a function of gender X^2 (1, N =101) =1.19, p >.05 but was a function of location X^2 (2, N =101) =27.5, p <.05. Ultimately, these findings show that gender was not an effective variable with regards to *e*-registration of students' profiles. Precisely, it did not matter whether the teacher was male or female; they all used *e*-registration for students' profiles. Any observed difference was not significant. However, the location or where the teachers were stationed did count. That is, teachers who taught in rural schools were found not to be using *e*-registration platforms like teachers teaching in urban or semi-urban

schools. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that not all places have access to internet facilities in Eswatini to allow the use of *e*-registration everywhere and anytime. Certain places like towns and cities, where internet access is prevalent, have advantages as opposed to remote or rural areas. Thus, the variability of access to internet facilities has a bearing on the use of *e*-registration of students' profiles.

Conclusion

The study concludes that after the training workshops conducted in all the regions of Eswatini teachers embraced the use of *e*-registration platforms, as evidenced by the findings of the study. Furthermore, it can be concluded that sending students' profiles using emails was the most common mode of dispatch, followed by the use of USB and lastly Memory Cards. The primary schools led in all forms of submission modes e.g. emails, USB, and Memory Cards, while junior secondary schools were second and senior secondary schools last. However, it is important to note that primary schools are many, while junior secondary and high schools are fewer. So these results may have been influenced by disproportion. However, this variable does not supersede the unveiling of the teachers' efficacy in using technology for both personal and work-related activities. The disproportion does not thwart the magnitude of actual engagement of technology by teachers for both their personal and professional gains. It can also be concluded that gender did not factor in the use of *e*-registration while location did.

Overall, there is need to improve access to internet facilities especially in rural areas of Eswatini in order for *e*-registration by ECESWA to be effective and embracive.

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PERSONALITY TYPES AS CORRELATES OF CAREER COMMITMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Lack of career commitment among Nigerian secondary school teachers has been reported by educational psychologists. The current poor academic performance of many secondary school students in Nigeria has been attributed to lack of career commitment among teachers. Only few studies had looked into the relationship between personality types and career commitment in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study, therefore, examined the contributions of personality types to career commitment of secondary school teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria. A survey type quantitative descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting two hundred and fifty secondary schools teachers for the study. Two standardized instruments namely: Big Five Inventory (BFI) and Career Commitment Scale (CCS) were adopted for the study. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed through Multiple Regression Analysis to investigate the predicting capacity of personality types on career commitment of secondary school teachers. The results showed that the variables when taken as a whole significantly predicted career commitment among secondary school teachers. The relative contribution of each personality type revealed that extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness significantly predicted career commitment among secondary school teachers in Nigeria while openness to experience did not. However, neuroticism had a significant negative relationship with career commitment. Based on the result of this study, it was concluded that extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness were

significant factors influencing career commitment of secondary school teachers. It was recommended that candidates who possess extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness personality types should be given priority when recruiting teachers for the school system.

Key Words: Agreeableness, career commitment, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism.

Introduction

In Nigeria, education is viewed as a major instrument for national development and integration. Most nations of the world may have developed through the transformative process of education. The importance and contribution of education to socio-economic and political development cannot be over-emphasized. A nation is identified and rated by the quality of education given to her citizens. For any society to achieve drastic development, education of its residents is essential because it possesses transformative power (Yacek, 2017). Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world (Strauss, 2013). Education is the key to eliminating gender inequality, reducing poverty, creating sustainable planet, preventing needless death and illnesses, and fostering peace (Duncan, 2013). In the knowledge of economy, education is the new currency by which nations maintain economic competitiveness and global prosperity (Duncan, 2013). Therefore, the provision of quality education has been of great concern to education stake holders in Nigeria and the success of any educational system largely depends on the quality of teaching at all levels, be it primary, secondary or tertiary.

In Nigeria, secondary education prepares students for higher education and the world of work. No wonder the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) articulates the broad aim of secondary education to include preparation of students for useful living in society, and preparation for higher education. However, quality education and the goals of secondary school education in Nigeria cannot be successfully achieved without having adequate teachers that are highly committed to the teaching profession. This could be responsible for the attention recently given to teachers'

commitment by the public, educators, school administrators and other stakeholders in Ondo State, Nigeria. High level of commitment among teachers usually results in better job performance. Teachers are the hubs of every educational system and the success of any educational programme rests upon them (Akpan, 2015).

Career commitment among teachers is very crucial in the teaching sector. If teachers are not highly committed to their jobs, the goals of schools and organizational settings may not be achieved. Alsiewi and Agil (2014) viewed teachers' career commitment as the willingness of teachers to invest their personal resources into the teaching task and thus remain in the teaching profession. They added that teachers' job commitment is a strong belief in and the acceptance of the school goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the school, and a strong desire to maintain one's membership within the school. Committed teachers see schools or students as theirs. They have high level of motivation to do everything within their power or even above what they are normally expected to do in order to enhance the quality of schools and students (Park, 2005; Mart, 2013). Gaziel (2004) submitted that teachers who express a high level of commitment to the school come to work daily. Teachers' lack of commitment would result in low teachers' turnout, absenteeism, and achievement of educational goals in any school may not be achieved. As defined by Varidenberg and Scarpelo (1994), career commitment is a person's belief in and acceptance of the value of his or her chosen occupation or line of work and a willingness to maintain membership in that occupation. In this article, career commitment refers to occupational commitment.

When teachers are highly committed to their jobs, they will be willing to put in their best and this would reflect in the way their students are handled. The progress and success of the teaching profession could depend on the performance of teachers and other supporting staff. Salami (2008) emphasized that any organization in the world needs workers that are sincerely committed to the system in order to face the world economic competition. Gbadamosi (2003) posited that commitment of workers improves performance and good performance in turn leads to organizational effectiveness.

One major problem facing the education sector in Nigeria, especially the public sector is how to satisfy the needs of workers and enhance teachers' effectiveness and productivity. Over the years, the education sector in Nigeria seems to be battling with ineffectiveness, inefficiency, low productivity and poor quality in the teaching and learning process. This may be due to poor job satisfaction among teachers' in secondary schools; insufficient pay, delayed promotion and other related factors (Bello, Ogundipe & Eze, 2017).

Considering governments' huge investment in public education, its output in terms of quality of students has been observed to be unequal with government expenditure. The high failure of students in external examinations has been attributed to teachers' lack of commitment in secondary schools in Nigeria (Asikhia, 2010; Kola, Olanipekun, Ogundele, 2014). Ohizu and Okoiye (2014) noted that one of the greatest challenges facing organizations is engaging the services of committed staff that would support the attainment of organizational goals. Salami (2007) also remarked that despite efforts to recruit and retain qualified secondary school teachers by various governments, the teaching profession is replete with teachers who lack career commitment.

Many studies had been carried out on career commitment and other variables. Poor Salary, poor condition of service, low prospects and prestige were found as factors affecting career commitment among teachers (Salami, 2007). A careful look at the available literature revealed that poor career commitment among teachers is a worldwide problem which deserves the attention of all stakeholders. In additions there is paucity of research that examined the impact of psychological variables such as personality types on teachers' career commitment in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study, therefore, examined personality types as correlates of career commitment among teachers Ondo State, Nigeria.

According to Julie (2012), personality is enduring patterns of action or behaviour. Personality characteristics are tendencies of individuals to behave in similar ways across settings and situations. Furthermore, Ryckman (2004) suggested personality as a dynamic and organised set of characteristics possessed by an individual that uniquely influences his or her behaviour, cognitions and motivations in various

situations. For example, personality characteristics may influence job outcomes such as job performance and professional efficiency (Judge & Bono, 2001). Personality characteristics may increase the probability of an individual to succeed in his or her career, if the personality characteristics match with his or her chosen career (Naemah, 2007).

According to Arogundade and Alausa (2006), the concept of personality is multidimensional and as a result, theorists and researchers differ in their definitions. Arogundade and Alausa (2006) defined personality as the characteristic patterns of behaviour and modes of thinking that determine a person's adjustment to the environment. Allport (1961) defined personality as the dynamic organisation of those psychological systems that determine the characteristics, behaviours and thoughts of individuals. Thus personality is an organised, permanent and subjectively perceived entity, which makes one unique and different from others.

Personality consists of stable characteristics which explain why a person behaves in a particular way (Mullins, 2005). According to Hogan (2001), personality is a relatively stable precursor of behaviour; it underlies an enduring style of thinking, feeling and acting. Personality may be viewed as the dynamic organization of those traits and characteristic patterns of behaviour that are unique to the individual (Callahan, 2006). The undernoted are the five major personality traits which includes extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (Arogundade & Onabanjo, 2013).

Extraversion is characterised by positive emotions, dominance and the tendency to seek out stimulation and the company of others. The trait is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Individuals with extraversion personality have characteristics of being active, assertive, energetic, enthusiastic, outgoing, talkative, warmth, gregariousness, positive emotions and excitement seeking. Kim, Jörg and Klassen (2019) examined the influence of teacher personality on teacher effectiveness and burnout. Their findings revealed a significant positive association between extraversion and teacher effectiveness. However, Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) found that extraversion did not significantly predict organizational

commitment of teachers. Kumar and Bakhshi (2010) reported positive correlation between extraversion and organizational commitment of employees.

Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others (Emecheta, Hart, Ojiabo, 2016). Individuals with agreeableness personality are trustworthy and humble. They have the qualities of being appreciative, forgiving, generous, kind, sympathetic, trusting, friendly, helpful, considerate, honest and decent. Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) examined personality traits as predictors of affective commitment of teachers. The results showed that personality trait had a significant influence on the affective organizational commitment of teachers in vocational high schools. In addition, it was found that agreeableness (together with conscientiousness in the mentioned study) significantly predicted the affective commitment of vocational teachers. It means that teachers who have agreeableness and conscientiousness traits have emotional attachment, identification and full involvement with the organization. Osita-Ejikeme and Worlu (2017) examined personality traits and employees' commitment in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis showed a significant relationship between agreeableness personality trait and employee commitment (continuance and affective commitment). Ziapour, Khatony, Jafari and Kianipour (2017) examined the correlation between personality traits and organizational commitment in the staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2015. Agreeableness was found to significantly correlate with organizational commitment of the staff. Similarly, Idrus and Muknior (2016) found agreeableness as a factor influencing organizational commitment of lecturers in public universities. Kim, Jörg and Klassen (2019) did not found any significant relationship between agreeableness and teacher effectiveness.

Conscientiousness is the tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement against measures or outside expectations. It influences the way in which individuals control, regulate, and direct impulses. Conscientiousness personality is characterised with being efficient, organized, productive, painful, reliable, responsible, thorough, behave ethically, self-disciplined and dutiful. Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) found that conscientiousness significantly predicted the

affective commitment of vocational teachers. Also, Osita-Ejikeme and Worlu (2017) found a significant relationship between conscientiousness personality trait and employees' job commitment. Ziapour, Khatony, Jafari and Kianipour (2017) reported a significantly correlation between conscientiousness and organizational commitment in the staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2015. Idrus and Mukminin (2016) found that conscientiousness significantly correlated with organizational commitment of lecturers in the university.

Neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression and it is sometimes called emotional instability. Neuroticism is characterised with being anxious, self-pitying, tense, touchy, unstable, worrying, impulsiveness, hostile and depressed. Erdheim, Wang and Zickar (2006) reported negative relationship between neuroticism and affective commitment of employees.

Openness to experience is a general appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. People who are open to experience are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. Openness to experience would possess characteristics of being artistic, curious, imaginative, insightful, original, introspective, aesthetic (Arogundade & Onabanjo, 2013). The findings of Kim, Jörg and Klassen (2019) showed a significant positive association between openness to experience and teacher effectiveness. However, Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) found that Openness to experience did not significantly predict organizational commitment of teachers.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate how personality types (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) relate with career commitment of teachers in secondary schools. In addition, determining the correlation between personality types and career commitment of secondary school teachers would help to better serve career counseling services and guidance applications for secondary school teacher. Goldberg (1993) explicitly recommended in his study that researchers should concentrate on linking personality structure to career development and adjustment. Accordingly, the present study examined the relation of career commitment to personality traits.

Research Questions

Three research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of correlation between personality types and career commitment of secondary school teachers?
2. What is the joint effect of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience on career commitment of secondary school teachers?
3. What is the relative contributions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience to career commitment of secondary school teachers?

Methodology

This study adopted a survey type quantitative descriptive research design. This design gave the researcher opportunity to use questionnaires to collect data from a group of respondents that represented the population of this study for the purpose of analysis, interpretation and generalization. The population comprised all teachers in public secondary schools, including male and female, in Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample of this study consisted of 250 teachers (Male = 94 (37.6%), females = 156 (62.4%) randomly selected from twenty (20) out of two hundred and ninety nine (299) public secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The teachers' mean age was 38.03 years with standard deviation of 4.24 and an age range of 25-50 years. The experience of the teachers ranged from 3-18 years and the average years of teaching experience was 9.13 years with standard deviation of 3.117. Multistage sampling technique was used to choose the sample from the three senatorial districts in Ondo State.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John and Srivastava (1999) and Career Commitment Scale (CCS) developed by Blau (1985) were used for data collection. The Big Five Inventory developed by John and Srivastava (1999) is a 44 item inventory that assessed the Big Five personality domains of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. Participants responded by indicating their level of agreeableness to each of the 44 item

statements using a four point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 4 (strongly agree). The test retest reliability coefficient for Big Five Inventory (BFI) average was .80 (range .71 - .88). The alpha reliabilities average was .70 (range -.63-.84). The Career Commitment Scale (CCS) is a 24-item scale developed by Blau (1985). The measure was assessed on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 4 (strongly agree). The Scale has been widely used by researchers due to its impressive psychometric properties. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.76. The instruments were validated using secondary school teachers in Nigeria. The demographic and biographic information of the respondents involving age, sex, years of teaching experience were obtained as part of the career commitment scale.

The two instruments were administered to the secondary school teachers selected for this study by the researcher and three research assistants who were postgraduate students. The researcher sought the approval of the Ministry of Education in Ondo State, Nigeria to administer the instruments to teachers. The respondents were assured of anonymity, voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw in they feel uncomfortable to participate. Teachers and school principals' consents were obtained. The purpose of the study and the scales were carefully explained to the respondents' before administering the instruments. Three hundred copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the selected teacher but only 250 were properly filled and used in the analysis while 50 were incompletely filled and were discarded. Twenty working days were used for the administration of the instruments. Data collected were analyzed using inter-correlation matrix to determine the level of correlation between personality types and career commitment of secondary school teachers and multiple regression to establish the role of independent variable (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience) on dependent variable (career commitment).

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of correlation between personality types and career commitment of secondary school teachers?

Table 1: Inter-correlational matrix of Personality Types (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience) and Career Commitment (N = 250)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Extraversion	1					
2. Agreeableness	.0398*	1				
3. Conscientiousness	0.338*	0.601*	1			
4. Neuroticism	-0.151*	-0.492*	-0.376*	1		
5. Openness	0.122	0.252*	0.182*	-0.247*	1	
6. Career Commitment	0.355*	0.415*	0.528*	-0.223*	0.037	1
Mean	20.66	28.87	28.43	18.71	28.86	81.06
S.D.	2.743	4.110	3.554	3.477	3.257	6.388

* = P < 0.05 (Significant results)

The inter-correlations on Table 1 showed that career commitment had significant positive correlations with extraversion (r = 0.355, p < .05), agreeableness (r = 0.415, p < .05), and conscientiousness (r = 0.528, p < .05). However, a significant negative relationship was found between career commitment and neuroticism. Openness to experience did not have any significant relationship with career commitment.

Research Question 2: What is the joint effect of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience on career commitment of secondary school teachers?

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis on Career Commitment Data

R = 0.572

R^2 = 0.327

R^2 (Adjusted) = 0.313

Standard error of the estimate = 5.293

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P
Regression	3325.07	5	665.01	23.74	< 0.05
Residual	6835.03	244	28.01		
Total	10160.10	249			

* = P < 0.05 (Significant results)

Results of data analysis in Table 2 revealed that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience significantly predicted career commitment among teachers (R = 0.572, R^2 = 0.327, R^2 (Adjusted) = 0.313, $F_{(5, 244)}$ = 23.74, p<0.05). When combined, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience predicted about 32.7% of the variation in teachers' career commitment while 67.3% was due to chance. The implication of the findings is that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience significantly predicted secondary school teachers' career commitment.

Research Question 3: What is the relative contributions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience to career commitment of secondary school teachers?

Table 3: Relative Contributions of the Independent Variables to the Prediction of Career Commitment

Predicted Variables	B	Standard Error	β	t-ratio	P
Constant	51.54		5.588	9.22	< 0.05
Career					
Extraversion	.419	.135	.180	3.105	< 0.05
Agreeableness	.379	.118	.135	2.571	< 0.05
Conscientiousness	.740	.120	. 412	6.160	< 0.05
Neuroticism	-.012	.113	-.007	-.106	> 0.05
Openness to	-.177	.108	-090	-1.645	> 0.05
Experience					

* = P < 0.05 (Significant results)

Table 3 shows the contribution of each independent variable to career commitment of secondary school teachers. The highest contribution was observed to come from conscientiousness (β = .412, p < .05), followed by extraversion (β =.180, p < .05), agreeableness (β =.135, p < .05), neuroticism (β = -.007, p < .05) and openness to experience (β =.090, p < .05) respectively. Neuroticism and openness to experience made negative non-significant contribution to the dependent variable.

Discussion of Results

The results of the inter-correlation and regression analyses in the present study revealed that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience jointly and significantly predicted career commitment of secondary school teachers. A significant positive correlation was found between extroversion and career commitment among secondary school teachers. This result is consistent with a number of previous findings. For example, it is consistent with Kim, Jorg and Klassen (2019), Kurma et al. (2016) and Ziapour, Khatony, Jafari and Kianipour's (2017) findings which revealed a significant positive relationship between extraversion and career commitment of employees. It is possible that the capacity of teachers with extraversion personality to be energetic, enterprising, assertive, social,

friendly, optimistic, warm, active and self-expressive might have accounted for their commitment to teaching profession despite the challenges they face in their various schools.

The findings also revealed a positive and significant relationship between agreeableness and career commitment. This outcome of the study is not surprising since earlier studies have found agreeableness personality to be significantly and positively correlated with career or organizational commitment (Osita-Ejikeme & Worlu, 2017; Idris & Mukminior, 2016). The capacity of teachers with agreeable personality to get along with others could account for the positive and significant relationship between agreeableness and career commitment. The individuals with agreeableness personality are polite, reliable, merciful, well-nurtured, tolerant, benevolent, easy-going, self-sacrificing, loving, thoughtful, friendly and collaborative. They can easily adapt to changing conditions. These qualities could be responsible for the established positive and significant relationship between agreeableness and career commitment of secondary school teachers.

The results showed that there was a significant relationship between conscientiousness and career commitment of secondary school teachers. This result is consistent with Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) and Ziapour, Khatony, Jafari and Kianipour (2017) that reported significant correlation between conscientiousness and job commitment of staff. Individuals with conscientiousness personality are careful, meticulous, responsible, reliable, organized, diligent, hardworking, success-oriented and persevering. These qualities could be responsible for the significant relationship found between conscientiousness and career commitment.

The results revealed a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and career commitment of secondary school teachers. This finding agreed with Edhein et al. (2006) that reported negative relationship between neuroticism and affective commitment of employees. This finding is not surprising because individuals who get high scores from the neuroticism dimensions are affective, anxious, depressive, angry, nervous, unrestful, pessimistic, embarrassed, insecure, defensive and temperamental. These qualities could be responsible for the negative significant

relationship that was found between neuroticism and career commitment of secondary school teachers.

The results of the study showed that openness to experience did not significantly correlate with career commitment of teachers. This finding is in consonance with Izzati, Suhariadi and Hadi (2015) who reported that openness to experience did not significantly predict organizational commitment of teachers. Since openness to experience can be regarded as personal need for change, intricacy, freshness, and interior desire to experience (McCrae, 1996), the people who earn high scores in openness to experience reach high levels with respect to exploration, more willing to pursue the alternatives to their jobs (Edehim et al., 2006).

The results of the regression analysis revealed that, among the fivefold personality traits, conscientiousness has the maximum role of predicting career commitment of teachers followed by extraversion and agreeableness respectively.

Conclusion

The study concluded that extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness career commitment were positive and significant correlates of career commitment of secondary school teachers. However, neuroticism was a negative correlate of career commitment and openness to experience did not have any significant relationship with career commitment of the teachers. In addition, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience taken as a whole were good predictors of career commitment of secondary school teachers. Finally, among the fivefold personality traits, conscientiousness was the best predictor of career commitment of teachers followed by extraversion and agreeableness respectively.

Limitations of the Study

One major limitation of the study is the sample size and number of schools selected for the study. The study was delimited to twenty out of two hundred and ninety nine secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The inclusion of a small sample for this study due to financial constraint could have adverse effect on generalizability aspect of the study. The researcher would have investigated the relationship between personality types and career commitment using about 800 to 1000 secondary school

teachers but was constrained by financial problem and time factor. In addition, this study only examined one out of many psychosocial variables such as emotional intelligence, teacher efficacy, psychological wellbeing, school environment, gender and condition of service that could influence career commitment of teachers. If the study had incorporated these other psychosocial variables, the findings and discussion would have been more robust and comprehensive.

Implications for Future Research

Future research needs to further investigate career commitment of secondary school teachers by incorporating other psychological variables such as emotional intelligence, teacher efficacy, psychological wellbeing, school environment, gender and condition of service that could influence career commitment of teachers. In addition, this study could be replicated in other states in the Western part of Nigeria to further confirm the relationship that exist between personality type and career commitment of secondary school teachers. Further research should consider using larger sample size for the purpose of generalization. Recently developed instruments should be used to measure personality types and career commitment of teachers in future studies.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teaching service Commission responsible for teachers' appointment should carefully test the personality traits of applicants during selection and recruitment.
2. Personality traits of candidates shortlisted for recruitment should be analysed using standardised personality scales for the purpose of determining the personality trait of each candidate. Preference should be given to candidates with conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness personality traits when placing the successful candidates.
3. Earnest efforts should be made by counselling psychologists in helping teachers with neuroticism and openness traits to modify their personality characteristics.

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A narrative of student learning experience at the University of Eswatini

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Abstract

This paper argues that the introduction of a process of engaging students' perception on their learning experience at the University of Eswatini is a long overdue exercise that can benefit not only the students but the institutional growth, credibility of its programmes and shaping of the future in higher education. Engaging students also increases their understanding of how the world works. The paper is based on literature analysis and empirical study of students' views as expressed in the stories shared by former and current students of the university. The aim is to learn from their experiences and to create a knowledge base to develop interventions which will improve student satisfaction and transform the learning environment making it conducive to student learning experience. Literature and studies in higher education reveal that thoughts, views and opinions of students on their learning experience are becoming an integral part in ensuring learners receive an outstanding educational experience, confidently engage in opportunities to change curriculum and instruction and can foster in students a greater understanding of how they learn. The paper thus argues that institutions can use knowledge from student experience to review programmes, policies and practices.

Keywords: learning, experience, higher education, Eswatini, student, narrative

Background

Interaction with students for more than thirty years leaves one with increased curiosity on what informs the varying experiences in their knowledge and social interactions. There is also an increasing diversity of students entering the university in the past two decades, including a significant number of foreign students (students from other countries). University, to most students, is an imagined place that one aspires to, a social mobility and financial stability that their parents, who did not go to university, were not afforded (Jehangir, 2010).

In the academic realm teaching and learning methods have innovated over the years in an attempt to adapt to the changing academic and technological environments. Many lecturers in higher learning institutions are using interactive multimedia teaching material in their classes to assist students in gaining more knowledge, to motivate students to learn substantially by engaging them more in their learning process (Mayer and Moreno, 2002). Often overhead slides have replaced the hard copy notes that lecturers relied on over the years. In the late 1990s to the early 2000 students often joked about what was termed as the yellow notes some lecturers used in their teaching. The yellow represented how old the notes were having been recycled from the past five to ten years. Dey, Burn, and Gerdes (2009) lament that students arrive on campuses ready to engage information in new ways, only to find faculty who are reluctant to alter their traditional and entrenched teaching approaches.

The “millennium generation” (2000s) is more inclined to the use of new technologies for teaching and lecturers quickly switched to slides as teaching aid, student led presentations and discussions and recently on-line instruction is picking up and even sending podcast instructions to students. The digital content in education has been around for the past thirty years with the rapid advancement of Information Technology (IT) that transferred reading from paper to digitised screen display (Huang, Chen, and Ho 2014). The 21st century society makes great demands on its members because of rapidly developing and ever-changing political, cultural, social, economic and technology. Computers, cell phones, and social networks, all of which were once considered frivolous, have made such a huge impact on our culture that our daily lives will not be easy without them. Consequently, the society expects its members to keep pace with these changing situations, and adapt their skills and expertise in all aspects of life. University students have to keep abreast and adapt to these changing situations. The concept of 'lifelong learning' (OECD, 2007) and its role in building a 'knowledge society' (Stehr, 1994) are also high on the agenda.

Furthermore, the social life and interaction among students and significant others has also changed from the 1990s where students were more concerned with their academic life than improved lifestyle including dress code, technology and gargets

like latest cell phones and laptops. Changing lifestyle is challenging students to a competition for scarce resources and to go to any length to acquire the extravagant lifestyle, costing them in health and emotional readiness to endure a challenging academic escapade. Stories give an opportunity to reflect lived experiences of individuals; they are personal, intimate and touch on feelings. Mair (1988) suggested, stories are a way of making meaning of our world. This paper has recorded some of those stories.

This is a mixed methods study skewed towards a qualitative, descriptive narrative seeking to ascertain the situation of student learning experience and their learning environment at the University of Eswatini. This is a preliminary study motivated by what is becoming a trend in institutions of higher learning to encourage student voices and empower students to contribute to their educational experience.

Student learning experience has become an important issue in higher learning partly because of quality assurance discourse. Literature and studies in higher education in the UK, Australia and other countries reveal that thoughts, views and opinions of students on learning experience are integral in the leaner receiving an outstanding educational experience (Ertl, 2008). Learners are also able to confidently engage in opportunities to change curriculum and instruction, and it can foster a greater understanding of how students learn.

Learning experience refers to any interaction, course, programme, or other interaction in which learning takes place either formal or non-formal (Great Schools Partnerships, 2014). The growing use of the term *learning experiences* by educators and others reflects larger *pedagogical* and *technological* shifts that have occurred in the design and delivery of education to students (Great Schools Partnerships, 2014).

In an era of increased accountability and measured student outcomes, student voice represents a growing movement in education. Instead of a top down, teacher directed approach to learning, students play an active and equal role in planning, learning, and leading their classroom instruction as well as contributing to the development of school practices and policies. This significant philosophical shift requires all stakeholders to embrace the belief that there is something to learn from

every individual regardless of age, culture, socioeconomic status, or other qualifying factors (Kendel and Briel, 2017).

Kendel and Briel (2017:1) define student voice as twofold, "It refers to the expression of values, opinions, beliefs and perspectives of individuals and groups of students in a school. It also refers to instructional approaches and techniques that are based on student choices, interests, passions and ambitions". These definitions are very useful for the purposes of this paper however, the research was more inclined to the first definition where students expressed their opinion on the experience they had as students on the University of Eswatini. Listening and acting on student perspectives helps both the institution to grow and deliver its mandate and the students to be motivated in learning and worry about their achievement than with trying to make things work in a non-conducive learning environment.

Literature from the United Kingdom compiled by Ertl and others for the Higher Education Academy (2008) show that there is nothing that can be done for students without their involvement. There are some indications that the view that quality assurance in higher education should take the students' perspective into account has gained wide acceptance (Coates 2005 cited by Ertl et al, 2008), though there are also still signs of the persistence of older views (Ertl et al, 2008). Further, they reveal that in England, various initiatives from the mid-1990s onwards demonstrate that higher education quality is increasingly seen in connection with the experience of students in higher education (ibid).

The problem statement

Students at the University of Eswatini seldom participate in the formal voice through (leadership and governing bodies), informal (lecturers invite student ideas and opinion with no obligation to act on them), instructional (where students choose a format to complete their projects, presentations, assignments) and evaluative (where students complete an evaluative form about the instructional setting and lecturer's effectiveness). It is paramount for institutions to facilitate the deliberate participation of students in their learning to achieve better results. The most commonly used approach for student voice at the University of Eswatini is by instructors through the

classroom space accepting student feedback in form of questions, ideas, likes and improvements. This paper in turn advocates a focus on the student to "ensure that all higher education students benefit from a high-quality learning experience meeting their needs and the needs of society" (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), 2005).

Study objectives

Overall objective:

> To capture stories of learning experience from a student perspective at the University of Eswatini.

Specific objectives:

1. To understand how students at the University of Eswatini perceive their learning experience.
2. To recommend strategies to promote learning and quality assurance at the University of Eswatini.

Research question

How do students at the University of Eswatini perceive their learning experience?

Framework of the paper

The approach of this paper is qualitative relying on "narrative as a story" (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in their world (ibid:5) The methods include a secondary review of data sources using Google Scholar and Google search engines to access published research and conference papers on student learning experience. However, a dearth of research exists in this area in Eswatini, thus research from the United Kingdom and Australia created a base for secondary data. A Thematic Analysis (TA) of data emerging from the survey and case studies has been adopted. Themes were formulated for the interpretation of the data (Miles et al., 2014).

Study participants

Thirty-nine (39) participants, including ten (10) from Mbabane Campus, ten (10) from Luyengo Campus, fifteen (15) from Kwaluseni Campus and four (4) former students were surveyed adopting a non-probability convenience method across faculties at the University of Eswatini using a self-administered questionnaire interviewing method and a case study short account from former students. The aim is to influence university policies on decision-making and contribute to overall student satisfaction in their learning experience. Participants identifiers were replaced with **P** for current student participant and **FP** for former student participant.

Recruitment was through non-probability purposive convenient sampling informed by previous knowledge of current and former students. Current students in Mbabane and Luyengo campuses were recruited through contact with colleagues lecturing in those campuses. Current students were recruited from the classes taught by the researcher for easier and convenient access, also through snowball sampling through participants. The sample size was determined by the saturation of data which ended up with thirty-nine (39) participants. A stratified sampling approach was adopted to cater for the varied disciplines and departments of the university including all three campuses of the university.

Study methods, data collection and analysis

This is a qualitative exploratory study adopting a rigorous search for literature relevant for the study, conducted mainly through search engine www.google.com. Data was collected through email sent questionnaires and the initial contact was through colleagues in the campuses who informed students about the research and a consent form accompanied the recruitment of participants. The qualitative exploratory research design allowed for the exploration of student learning experience investigation. Exploratory studies are used when the topic or phenomenon to be studied is new and when data is problematic to collect (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative exploratory approach enables the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions (Berg, 1995) of students' valuable insights on their learning experience.

Data was generated through a semi-structured self-administered questionnaire using email. A questionnaire was used to collect data together with a case study method enabling participants to freely describe their learning experience at the university. Case studies are stories of real-life situations with complexities, dilemmas and issues that are more abstract than concrete... provides learners with opportunities to practice identifying the kinds of problems that are present, to suggest different treatment approaches, and most importantly, to consider new and different points of view (Carnegie Mellon, n.d.).

The analysis of data adopted a thematic procedure recommended by Braun and Clark (2006). Themes were generated from the data and voices were used in the descriptive analysis of the data. The descriptive approach will reconstruct reality from the student perspective (Morse and Field 1995).

Presentation and discussion of findings:

Student perceptions of the learning experience at the University of Eswatini: The study ascertained three (3) aspects of student experience namely; academic experience, university facilities and social life. A significant number of participants described their overall experience at the university positively, learner resources and facilities were rated as poor and student engagement was almost non-existent.

Theme 1: Academic experience

The response to academic experience carried mixed feelings from both current and former students. It was described as exceptionally good, easier, fair, satisfying, awesome and interesting. This is what first year participant said:

"My learning experience has been easier than I expected because the instructors give us summarised slide presentations together with the recommended books for that particular course making it easier for me as a student as to where I should do detailed reading" (P1).

"It is quite awesome since I meet more people like learning with over 100 people in the same class which is my first experience. Also, good because now I'm used to be in a class of both genders since I went to a girl's school since form 1" (P6).

"I find UNESWA as the right institution for me to enrol it offers a variety of resources that are essential for learning. It also offers accommodation that is up to standard for people staying inside the campus" (P8).

"It is quite interesting because I've met friendly people around which has made my life at the campus easier and I have adapted to the system of learning at the school which was a problem when I got here" (10).

To some particularly final year students and former students, it was challenging, disappointing, more theoretical, and instructor led. These are some of their voices:

"The spirit of academia is rather low. Students lack both self and external motivation. They also shy away from efforts that are made by some lecturers to engage them beyond the stipulated time period. It is good but could be better" (P2)

"Okay learning at UNESWA is more theoretical than practical. It is more of spoon feeding than being learner centred. We are taught to memorize and pass. The education system encourages less understanding of the concepts such that students easily forget what they learn from previous years yet a new course or concept should be a build up from previous knowledge so that the university can produce competent graduates" (P11).

"My university experience has been the most indelible experience I ever had in my life. I am a lady aged 25 years from Shiselweni region. I was accepted in 2013/2014 at Kwaluseni Campus to enrol my bachelor's degree under the faculty of Social Science. Being accepted at the university was one of the best days where hopes and dreams come true.

The University was so welcoming, we were oriented and that gave us the opportunity to adapt and make new friends from different educational and family backgrounds. The campus consists of government sponsored and private sponsored students and I was fortunate to be private sponsored.

My experience has been amazing even though it was a package of tears of joy and tears of sorrow. I have learnt and experienced so many things, some of them helped

me to grow in life and to discover new innovative ideas and all opportunities that the university offered me. Being at university have changed how I view the world, being independent and being able to solve problems on your own (FP18).

"I am a female former student of the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) from the Faculty of Social Sciences and I studied for 4 years (2013-2017).
My academic experience has not been a bitter one because I have never repeated a course since year 1 throughout but I have once supplemented a course and I always knew I would supplement it because I never did justice to it. Apart from knowing I would supplement that course you would find out that some lecturers would include something (in the examinations) we never learnt about even worse at times some stuff not even in the syllabus/course outline, and if that was the case then that section would carry a lot of marks. That was not fair because you could see that a majority of the students would fail, more especially those with less CA marks. Then we used to visit those lecturers after that exam paper to try persuade them to be lenient when marking, well, some lecturers would show some sympathy but some would fail those students who have gone to them and begged for some leniency. Some lecturers had some 'funny' culture when it came to the grading system; in some courses we knew that no student obtained an A or B grade, if it happened then that student was assumed to be the lecturer's friend, in the same course we knew that female students were to obtain 'D' grades and male students were given 'C' grades. Some students would miss a class (es) because they were only 1-5 minutes late for class since some lecturers wanted to be the last to enter the lecture rooms and these lecturers never observed the 'academic quarter period'" (FP30).

"6.00 in the morning

The rising times of university students are notoriously erratic and varied! From those crazy rowers who are up before dawn breaking the ice on the river ready to practice before breakfast, to the gym lovers who wake up before dawn to burn a few fats and to the enthusiasts who are up every day in time for their lecture to the English students who have nothing they need to get up for until the afternoon. The thing this really shows you is how much independence and control over your own schedule you will have at university. Unlike school where lessons are scheduled throughout

the day, at university you are more likely to have a few lectures, supervisions and tutorial sessions scattered through the week. What you do with the time in between is up to you. However, don't let this fool you into thinking it's all fun and games – you need to manage your time and use those extra hours for the much greater amount of personal study that will prosper you at university. (This includes reading, research and essay writing, all of which you will have to find the time for in between lectures)" (FP35).

"Morning Lectures

Lectures can be quite a novel experience when you first arrive at university – usually faculty-organised and attended by the whole year group of students in any given subject, are often held in old-fashioned amphitheatre-like halls. At UNESWA they are called lecture theatres. You will often find yourself sitting on a comfortable sofa-like chair peering down at a lecturer or professor standing behind a lectern. Some students report that every lecture was essential to their course others that they were more optional and worth attending only when relevant to your current area of study. What is key is: Take notes! It can be very easy to daydream your way through your first few lectures, but you will find yourself stuck at exam time when you realise you can't remember a thing! It is important not only to take notes, but also to keep a well organised filing system to keep them sorted by topic – trust me, you'll be glad you did when it comes to revision!(FP35).

There was no lunch time at the university. Even today, there is no lunch time prescribed in the almanac or teaching timetable at UNESWA. As a student, you'll have to squeeze lunchtime, all by yourself in-between lectures. University food, from my standpoint, was disgracefully a hit-and-miss, the refectory food was poorly cooked, sometimes it rebelled with my digestive system, hence I ended up not being fancied by any edible material from the refectory. I opted to go outside campus every day to satisfy my inner soul and flesh with a feast. This was also because of the exorbitant prices at the refectory, which hiked every now and then" (FP35).

"Afternoon lectures

Afternoon lectures were the most boring and exhaustive lectures I've had at UNESWA. Some would begin late at 4 p.m. They dipped into my last breath of the day. Professors preferred afternoon lectures and they usually came late, which got me furious every single day. And much to the expectation, they would deliver only a one-hour lecture, but well detailed, and leave you to deliberate on the issues in an intellectual and critical manner, in your own spare time" (FP35).

Participants viewed the teaching methods as bordering between traditional lecture and technology supported. *"It has been a challenging and well adaptive one as almost all the material needed for it to be successful is provided except for wifi with unlimited coverage in the campus. The lecturers are engaging and interactive, thus making the learning process to flow smoothly" (P13).*

"In year one and two, I used to enjoy all my classes because they were completely different from what I did at high school. Learning new language is challenging but it is very rewarding. I started exploring new ideas which became very interesting, however things changed when I was doing year two where I failed one course Dem 203. This was the arduous time I ever experienced in my life because it was my first time to fail a class. Coming from underprivileged background with both parents being unemployed demanded me to be open minded and come up with meaningful solutions on how to repeat and pay for the entire finances of that year since the sponsor pause to pay and resume following academic year. I realised that at varsity you don't pass by obtaining higher marks but by how the lecturer view you or passing is not by merit most of the time but it is by favour. Being a praying person I got a job while repeating. It was not easy to balance work and school but through prayer I proceeded to year 3.

Unlike in high school, at the university when a student faces a problem with her lecturer she is supposed to report him by following protocols and there are hierarchal offices to undergo. The procedures can take a week or month or even a year for a grievance to be addressed, for that reason I found myself repeating again because I didn't get help in time yet I reported my grievance. One of my lecturer's didn't mark

my test scripts which negatively impacted in my exams marks since the continuous assessment (CA) plays a major role in the final grade. Nevertheless, I repeated while working then I proceeded to final year.

My majors were very interesting and I enjoyed every single moment in class during my final year. I am one person who loves challenge, people used to say the project is very hard but I told myself that nothing is impossible in this planet. Being positive in life is the key, I promised myself that my final year will be the best and memorable year in my academic life and it happened just like that. The bad experiences from year two and year three pushed me to do best in everything. I had a great experience during my final year since the intense of work load is straining but it teaches you to manage your time effectively as time is valuable and key to every aspect of life". (FP18)

Teaching approaches most mentioned included lecture, practical, interactive, discussion, seminar, workbook, reading assignment, presentation, group work and internship. Newer approaches mentioned were using slides, videos, Moodle chatroom and the university E-Learning platform.

Theme 2: University learning facilities and resources

There was a general dissatisfaction with the learning facilities and resources. Participants noted that textbooks were largely not available from the university bookstore or were very highly priced to the detriment of both government-sponsored and self-sponsored students. Internet and Wi-Fi connection was either slow or the signal was poor making it difficult to use the facility efficiently and effectively. Institute of distance learning modules were of assistance even to some full-time students but mostly lacked updating. Computers in the labs were out-dated models and did not assist students with improved searches and software's relevant to their disciplines. A significant number were unhappy with lecture rooms and classrooms that resembled primary or high school classrooms with substandard furniture which in more cases was in short supply. They intimated that there is a need to update classrooms to modern standard with fitted technology to assist lectures and air conditioned. There is a good library but it has poor ventilation, also the books are out-dated. They said:

"Books from the library, internet connected desktops and Wi-Fi for personal computers (even though the signal is not strong enough for everyday access)" (P3)

"Shortage of books in the bookshop makes learning a bit difficult because sometimes it gets hard to visualise some things and to understand them at the same time so we need the books to refer to time and again" (P16) .

"The University facilities are no longer human friendly especially in the student hostels. The showers are broken, geysers are no longer working, toilets are dripping and the level of cleanliness is poor. In addition to that, the rooms have poor curtains, poor furniture even in classes. In classes, the furniture is broken and they are in shortage because student enrolment increased so much over the past 3 years" (P16)

Theme 3: Social life and educational challenges

First year students were excited to be counted as part of the university community for most this was an elevated status not only for themselves but their families and community of birth. For some there was both love and passion for the chosen specialisation like in Agriculture and Nursing, while for some it was still not clear which specialisation they will end up choosing at second year like in the social sciences. Some first-year students lamented the lack of mentorship to learn from the experience of senior students in their programme of study.

For fourth year students, life as a university student had its ups and downs. They had a journey that provoked mixed emotions. These were their stories:

"After being admitted, I didn't get scholarship, life was not easy. I couldn't afford beautiful clothes, groceries, and even books because I didn't qualify for government scholarship and my family does not afford anything. Life was not easy due to peer pressure wishing to be on the same line with my friends. lack of resources and peer pressure, make university life unpleasurable" (p16)

"I had no friend while at UNESWA, I have never attended almost all the activities that most students attended; entertainment activities like Mr/Miss UNESWA, the fresher's balls from all 3 campuses, and all the likes until I left the institution. I balanced my

time between my books and church. I spent all my 4 years at varsity serving as a praise and worship team leader and backer, attending revivals, half night prayers, attending daily evening services and lunch hour fellowship at the Students' Christian Movement (SCM). The chapel was the only place I used to go to when I experienced a casting down academically and otherwise and I also went to the chapel when I was so glad, to celebrate. We used to have prayer session even at 11 pm but I only joined these prayers when I had not much of school work, once in a while. I have never attended the outreach camps though; students used to go out to preach the gospel for a weekend in a certain community and camp in a chosen church". (FP18)

"As for extracurricular activities, I was part of the Uneswa culture group which left me with intriguing memories. I travelled to Botswana and Lesotho and I enjoyed every single moment of the intervarsity games. We got the opportunity to learn more about Tswana and Sotho's cultures and we made friends. The best part was when we exchange business ideas and how to become a young entrepreneur in your own country" (FP20).

"After 10 p.m: Staying in or Going out!

Much to my expectation, Matsapha is known to be a busy, notorious and crowded industrial town with a very youthful population. Hence, it is packed with nightspots, clubs and bars as well as the "easy night life". As a student, the night life is so entertaining yet exhaustive and dangerous. At first, I made a few friends to help me get along and around those places, however, later I decided to attend the on-campus night activities such as music shows, extravaganzas, and poetry nights, due to safety reasons" (FP35).

Some had failed and repeated courses and got delayed in completing their studies by a year or two, and that came with challenges of having to source funds to repeat or re-sit a course. There were feelings of bitterness among those who repeated courses mostly blaming it on the relations between learners and educators that was sometimes not cordial. There was also concern about bulky course content with limited time to go through the material. Some students had challenges with lack of facilities for practical sessions.

"I started on my first year and at the end of the year I had to repeat Public administration course. It has not been an easy journey until my final year which is now. I passed to second year and I had to repeat second year. Even on third year it happened again. Repeating the same course in public administration. It has been said Public Administration was a difficult course and the lecturers victimised us in relation to that the course is said to be difficult. Student victimization is a norm in the Faculty of Social Sciences because they believe you can't just pass the course" (p17).

"Bulky course content administered in a very limited space of time and unavailability of adequate material for practicing learned skills in the demonstration laboratory". (P5)

"Every registered student is entitled to accommodation inside the university. During my first year I was provided with a good room where I had to share with another student since from first year to third year students are supposed to share double rooms then final years occupy single rooms so that they can have serene time when doing their projects. Unfortunately, in my campus lately the was lack of transparency in allocation of the rooms. When I was doing my final year, I was forced to stay off-campus simple because the previous year I was repeating therefore I was told they prioritise students who have been living in the campus. What surprised me is that some students whom we were repeating with them were offered the rooms because they had connection. So fairness and transparency was lacking in the warden's office. This affected my studies because I had to stop studying at the library till late to ensure my safety since I had to walk at night.

Universities are known to be modern than high schools. When we are at high school we yearn to be at varsity so that we can have access to free Wi-Fi, learning using projectors and using air conditioned lecture theatres and access to state of the art libraries. Our library has out-dated books which are too old to be used as references. One of my lecturer's was against the use of library books, he would suggest that we only use internet than books. During summer, I used to fall asleep in class because we were packed and no air-conditioners in our lecture theatres. Our faculty classrooms need renovation because they are dilapidated" (FP18).

"Pressures of school work. God always encourages me and gives me strength to continue learning" Learning in the hall and auditorium is hard to hear what the lecturer is saying regardless of the use of a microphone because there is an echo and the slides are hard to see when you are sitting in the very last row". (P1)

The biggest and most significant challenge to all participants were class boycotts which were viewed as a necessary evil because this is the only language that authorities understand and pay attention to. On the other hand, there was concern when the disturbances turned violent and damage was incurred by people and property.

"Lagging behind in some courses because of class boycotts. There are also limited books in the university library" (p3).

"I used to read on papers about university class boycotts but it happened that I had to experience the strikes since I was a student. To student, boycotts is seen as a language in which government and the university easily understands that they have grievances that needs attention. Late allowances and poor service delivery is the major cause of most boycotts. Students consider class boycotts as their voice of united students pleading for a certain need which is crucial for their survival at the university. Most of the time boycotts impacted negatively on my school work because when we get expelled for two full weeks it becomes difficult to cover up the wasted time" (FP18).

"Staying on campus was not always good since during student strikes, the striking students from all three campuses would come to our dormitories and wake us up, not in a good manner. They would vandalize property and scare us telling us they would burn our clothes on the lines and burn us too if we never were interested in joining the strike. So we would wake up and join them and probably sleep late around 4am when the police officers have been called and handled the situation. On campus, some off campus and strangers would come and steal our clothes from the lines when we were in class. The issue of starving is the greatest because students are not allowed to cook on campus they are expected to buy food it was hard for others because even the allowances delayed, I would starve especially when I had

no money or when I came late from class only to find that the refectory had been closed or when I was so lazy to walk to Mahhala to get something to eat. I then ate cereals and/ or bread because they were readily available. I never suffered much about food because my home is around Ludzeludze not too far from UNESWA, so when the situation was unbearable then I would go home and come back in a day. When there was a strike and the university discovered that property was vandalized then we received a memo ordering us (on campus students) to vacate the dormitories, the warden's office and maintenance office would turn off electricity even plugs in our rooms when we returned on campus we found our food parcels spoiled and they would not pay us for the damage they cost". (FP20)

"When it comes to facilities, during my days at UNESWA , we would spend the whole week or even two still trying to sort the timetable then this would lead us into a situation where we found our class sharing the same venue with other students from a different course or department. Securing a lecture room was not the only challenge we faced, students even used broken desks and chairs. The issue of lacking enough facilities led to another issue of students having to sit so close to the lecture rooms so that they use the same room after the current lecture and also for the purpose of being the first to enter after the previous class so that they secure 'good sitting position' and not broken chair or desk. These students made the learning environment not conducive since it was so hard grasping some important information from the lecturer when this group of students were seated outside, making noise and disturbing on-going lessons. In some instances, some students would attend one course more than the other more especially in cases where the student's majors are not common so you would find that both majors are in the same slots in the timetable but the student was always excused from the other course when there was a test in the other course. It was not always easy to secure a lecture room with perfect size for the students who had registered for the course, so we were overcrowded in those lecture rooms and that was common in the 1st and 2nd years. Most lecture rooms had no air cons so we suffered during extreme temperatures more especially during the 2-3hr lectures and some lecturers never allowed us to fan ourselves when it was too hot" (FP30).

"I was staying on campus but I started staying there in my 2nd year of study and luckily I was given a single room. I never experience the hardships experienced by those staying in double rooms and common rooms. Staying on campus was not always good since during student strikes, the striking students from all three campuses would come to our dormitories and wake us up, not in a good manner. They would vandalize property and scare us telling us they would burn our clothes on the lines and burn us too if we never were interested in joining the strike. So we would wake up and join them and probably sleep late around 4am when the police officers have been called and handled the situation. On campus, some off campus and strangers would come and steal our clothes from the lines when we were in class. The issue of starving is the greatest because students are not allowed to cook on campus they are expected to buy food it was hard for others because even the allowances delayed, I would starve especially when I had no money or when I came late from class only to find that the refectory had been closed or when I was so lazy to walk to Mahhala to get something to eat. I then ate cereals and/ or bread because they were readily available. I never suffered much about food because my home is around Ludzeludze not too far from UNESWA, so when the situation was unbearable then I would go home and come back in a day. When there was a strike and the university discovered that property was vandalized then we received a memo ordering us (on campus students) to vacate the dormitories, the warden's office and maintenance office would turn off electricity even plugs in our rooms when we returned on campus we found our food parcels spoiled and they would not pay us for the damage they cost" (FP30).

Theme 4: Participation in decision making

Most first year students did not yet understand the decision-making structures of the university and to them they were still learning. The fourth-year students were split between those who participated and loved student politics and those who were silent spectators of all that happened.

Regarding participating in decision-making structures of the university, the general feeling was there are clear and effective modes of student involvement from department boards to faculty board and Senate and Council, however, even if their

views are shared in these structures, they are received but not addressed with urgency. In some cases, the grievances of students are suppressed. Participants felt students are part of the university and should be involved, they said most times they are instructed with no room to heir an opinion. In other cases, views of students are welcomed but no action taken.

"Well, students are represented by class representatives, and also the SRC. Students are involved in the decision making whenever there are changes in the school.
Students are represented on senate meetings by SRC Pertaining student affairs and academic changes. There is some organisation in the way students are represented in all stages at UNESWA"(P11).

"Most students are passive so they do not involve themselves in many decision making processes. There is not a clear and effective mode of communication which is probably why students are hardly ever heard" (P2).

"Students are allowed to suggest ways that can make learning effective to them as well as time of tests and due dates of assignments" (P1).

"Students' views are well received but they are not addressed with the agency they deserve such as the limited time of the library functioning"(P3).

"There isnt much involvement of students in any level. We are just pushed into the system"(P4)

"We are not satisfied with our involvement because sometimes our grievances are suppressed" (P5).

"We have to be involved since we are also part of the university and it should agree with some decisions from us as students" (P6).
"We are almost told everything there is not much room for opinions or discussions" (P7).

"Students' views and ideas are always allowed but in most cases request and suggestions they make are never attended"(P8).

"In most cases students do not have the autonomy to make decisions, whether it is at classroom level or otherwise. In most cases decisions are made on their behalf and there is nothing much they can do about it but to just obey"(P19).

Recommendations/ strategies

The students recommend changes as follows:

- Improve learning with more on-line engagement with students. They are happy that registration has started on-line, perhaps student results can also be shared on-line.
  Improve internet and Wi-Fi connectivity and make it available in the whole university and not selected areas.

- Improve lecture rooms to modern facility look and work on furniture availability.
- Update computer lab facilities by replacing obsolete computers. The size of Mbabane Campus library needs to be improved and update books in all libraries.
- There is need for an academic writing centre to assist students with assignments and projects.
- Availability of study guides would be an added advantage.

"The Wi-Fi for every hostel block on campus" (P6) "Wi-Fi in every house inside campus and affordable personal computers at the bookshop" There is adequate furniture to facilitate learning in lecture rooms, however dormitories do not have enough furniture such as chairs and desks to cater for academic work being done in in the rooms. There is also lack of powerful wifi signals around campus and limited number of computers in the computer laboratory. (P3).

"There is a lack of books at the library, sometimes we have to share books with lecturers. Secondly, the computers at the computer labs are slow or non-functional. Thirdly, the internet is very slow and frustrating." (P9)

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Factors influencing condom use among women (18-49 years) on HIV prevention in one of the communities in the Hhohho Region

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 years in one of the communities in the Hhohho region. A quantitative descriptive study was conducted in one of communities under Lobamba chiefdom with a random sample of 50 participants. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and correlation were utilized to analyse data. Consistent and correct condom use was low (30%, n = 15). Most (74%, n = 37) participants had negative perceptions on condom use. The overall knowledge on condom use for most participants was good (52%, n = 26). Most (78 %, n = 39) participants had access to condoms. There was an association between marital status and practices (r = -0.449, p = 0.001); type of marriage and religion (r = -0.369, p = 0.008); knowledge and perceptions (r = 0.378, p = 0.007); and between knowledge and economic status (r = 0.337, p = 0.017). Government should empower the girl-child education for her employment opportunities to be improved hence socio-economic will reduce dependence men. Women should be empowered through education on condom use to increase their knowledge on personal risk of HIV infection. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health need to strengthen government policies that focus on HIV prevention through campaigns that promote female condom use.

Key words: condom use, women, HIV, AIDS, prevention.

BACKGROUND

Condoms are rubber sheaths that act as a barrier during sexual intercourse. Condoms are differentiated into male and female type. The male condom is a latex sheath, closed at one end and open at the other, which is fitted over the erect penis

before having penetrative sexual intercourse (National Response Emergency Council [NERCHA], 2014). The female condom is a thin, loose fitting plastic tube that is closed at one end. It has two rings, one at each end of the tube. The smaller ring is inserted into the vagina and over the cervix by squeezing it while the larger outer ring remains on the outside above the vulva (NERCHA 2014).The female condom completely lines the vagina protecting the woman from contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including the Human deficiency Immune Virus (HIV).

Both male and female condoms have been scientifically proven to be effective in preventing and controlling the spread of HIV when used correctly and consistently (United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS [UNAIDS], 2015). Furthermore, UNAIDS (2014) revealed that condoms are an effective way of preventing the transmission of HIV which suggest that HIV rates should be lower among condom users.

Correct and consistent condom use has been promoted as a primary HIV prevention method along with abstinence and being faithful to partner (NERCHA, 2014). However, abstaining and being faithful have faced many challenges in Swaziland as most young people engage in sex early, at the age of 18 on average (NERCHA, 2014).The continued low levels of consistent condom use has been reported to be a driver of the HIV epidemic. In addition, NERCHA (2014) reported that condom use is lowest among married couples and partners who were in a long term relationship with only 12% of women reporting using the condom.

UNAIDS (2014) revealed that globally there were 36.9 million people living with HIV and AIDS of which 25.8 million were living in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, there were 1.2 million deaths in 2014 worldwide related to HIV. In addition, HIV infection has been reported to be the leading cause of death among women of the reproductive age (15-49 years). The Gap Report by UNAIDS (2014), revealed that women represent 50% of all adults living with HIV globally. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, 59% of people living with HIV are women.

Swaziland has the highest prevalence rate of HIV worldwide with an estimate of 27% (Ministry of Health, 2017). Women account for 32.5% compared with 20.4% men

infected with HIV among people aged 14-59 years (Ministry of Health, 2017). Swaziland has the highest estimated HIV incidence rate of 1.36%compared to other countries in the region (Ministry of Health, 2017). The key drivers of the HIV epidemic in Swaziland include: multiple concurrent partners, intergenerational sex, income inequality, mobility and migration, commercial sex, low level of circumcision, alcohol and drug abuse (UNAIDS, 2014). The main mode of HIV transmission in Swaziland is heterosexual sexual activity (NERCHA 2014). According to UNAIDS (2014), low condom use in Swaziland is another key driver of the HIV epidemic.

Factors influencing condom use globally

Knowledge of partner influences the degree to which people have taken up the use of condom (Andrade, Zaccara & Leite, 2015).This varied according to a number of factors which include, the degree to which people know that sexual activity carries an HIV transmission risk, whether they think that the partner is likely to have HIV, steady relationships, commercial sex, behaviour which may be of low self-esteem, depression or due to sexual abuse. Furthermore, Andrade, Zaccara and Leite (2015), reported that women experienced obstacles in using condoms by having difficulty in accessing and handling condoms. This is related to the inability to insist on condom use because of fear of abandonment or sexual coercion caused by strong persuasion. In addition, gender relations become a determining factor for women with low sexual negotiation power to condom use making them more vulnerable to HIV exposure (Andrade, Zaccara & Leite, 2015). Poverty also hinders women from negotiating for safer sex because they rely on their partners as income providers for the family (Andrade, Zaccara & Leite, 2015; Mathunjwa & Gary, 2006).

Factors influencing condom use in Africa

According to Amon *et.al* (2012), HIV remains a disease of great public health concern worldwide. In Africa, women are disproportionately infected with HIV. Women are reported to be less likely negotiate condom use. Confidence to negotiate for condom use is regarded as an important predictor of actual condom use in Africa. Although evidence shows that there has been an increase in condom use over the past decades, negative attitudes towards condom use exist mainly due to factors such as fertility desires and sexual conformity of women as a way to accomplish their

economic status (Amon *et. al*, 2012). In addition, some women believe that condom use reduces enjoyment and is uncomfortable to use. Abdulai (2012), states that other factors influencing condom use include individual, partner-related, provider-related and environmental factors.

Individual factors include the socio-demographic characteristics of women which may have an influence on the decision for condom use. Socio-demographic characteristics studied were age, education, occupation and self- assertiveness of the woman to use a condom (Abdulai, 2012).

Partner-related factors related to partner approval, gender and power imbalance, gender roles, expectations and perceived fears faced by women in negotiating for condom use. This demonstrates that condom use during sexual intercourse is not only an individual's decision but influenced by willingness and approval of the partner (Abdulai, 2012). Gender dynamics among couples exert influence on access to condom use. Women who still depend on partners for income have decreased assertiveness for safe sexual practices. Additionally, trust among partners influence the decision to use a condom during sexual intercourse. In some cases when a woman negotiates condom use it may be perceived as indicative of mistrust or loose morals. Policies and political environment regarding condom distribution influence its uptake (Abdulai, 2012).

Sub-Saharan Africa has the most serious HIV and AIDS epidemic in the world with an estimate of 2.4 million people affected by HIV, accounting for 71% in the global total population (NERCHA, 2014). The supply of condoms increases every year but it does not guarantee an increase in condom use. Factors such as poverty, relationship with parents, peers and partners, limited information and education, gender dynamics, beliefs and attitudes about HIV have been proven to work against use of condoms in sub-Saharan Africa (NERCHA, 2014).

Condom use in Swaziland

The second Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS, 2016-2017),a population-based HIV impact assessment discovered that annual HIV incidence among adults aged 15 years and older was 1.36% (Ministry of Health 2017). The

annual incidence among females aged15 years and older was 1.70% and 1.02% among males. There were 7000 new cases of HIV annually among adults aged 15 years and above. Furthermore, the survey discovered that the prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15 year and older was 27%. Women aged 15 years and older accounted for 32% of people infected with HIV compared to 20.4% males (Ministry of Health, 2017). The data reflects that women are disproportionately affected by HIV in Swaziland.

Overall condom use in Swaziland is considered low (UNAIDS, 2014). Factors influencing condom use include myths and misconceptions about condoms. Some people believe that condoms are permeable allowing the HIV virus to pass through and they believe that condoms break or slip off easily. The majority of women in Swaziland are not able to negotiate successfully for condom use which increases the risk of HIV transmission (UNAIDS, 2014)

Gender inequalities and sexual violence also hinders the use of condom among women. From a cultural perspective, men have a larger degree of control over women (Mathunjwa & Gary, 2006). According to Mathunjwa and Gary (2006), values and norms uphold men's privileges thus having constraint on woman's autonomy. Gender based violence is common practice in Swaziland with an estimated 5% of women forced to sexual intercourse prior 18 years. Coerced sexual intercourse between the age of 14 and 18 years among females was 9%.The overall reported women sexual violence was 48% (UNAIDS, 2014).

The challenges faced by Swaziland concerning condoms include low level of correct and inconsistence condom use, inadequate data to inform condom programming, inadequate procurement and supply chain management of condoms. Condom promotion and distribution strategies have not adequately targeted the vulnerable groups and key populations at higher risk for infection, including women and people at the age range 12-24 years (NERCHA, 2014).

According to NERCHA (2014), knowledge about female condoms is low in the country with only 46% of women and 28% of men knowing where to source it.

Moreover, there are critical gaps in condom distribution systems which emphasize on the need to get the commodity as close as to end users as possible.

Availability and distribution includes the supply and allotment of condoms Swaziland. The supply of male condoms increased from about 8 million in 2008 to 12 million in 2011(Ministry of Health, 2010). The female condom remained below 250 000 during the same period. The overall distribution of condoms declined from 10.6million in 2010 to 6.5 million in 2011. Furthermore Gwebu (2012) reported that female condom availability was increasing with over 25 million condoms provided as compared to 10.9 million in 2006.

The Ministry of Health is the main source of condoms for most users in Swaziland. Condoms are provided freely and aggressive efforts for condom promotion are applied because condom use is still low yet the country has high HIV prevalence. The Ministry of Health (2010) reported that health facilities and other public areas were used as the main outlets for free condoms. Furthermore, the strategy revealed that the Ministry of Health was responsible for community-based distribution of condoms however there was still need for an increased capacity in central business districts in distribution. In addition, the strategy reported that Swaziland had a weak supply chain management system and quality assurance was a challenge for both male and female condoms since the country is heavily dependent on donor support for the supply of condoms thus posing serious challenges for sustainability (UNAIDS, 2014). Condom distribution is facilitated by the health sector and socially marketed condoms are distributed by Population Services International (PSI). The strategy reported that condom management and distribution by the health sector still need strengthening. Furthermore, efforts regarding demand creation have been low and the human resource capacity and the structure for systematic condom programming is weak (Ministry of Health, 2010).

Condom distribution is measured on a quarterly basis with an average monthly consumption over 700 000 for male condoms and 18 000 for female condoms (National Condom Strategy, 2015).According to the Ministry of Health (2010), efforts to create demand for condoms and a number of interventions have been implemented. The challenge is that the interventions were consistent and lacked

national coverage. Besides, the government has put in place national and regional warehouses. Other partners and stakeholders have distributed condoms in retail outlets and some strategic points. Unfortunately, this has not been enough for every Swazi to access condoms. Likewise, there are vulnerable groups that have been denied access to condoms (UNAIDS, 2014).

Based on affordability of condoms in Swaziland, condom logistics are inadequate due to insufficient human resource for condom logistics and management. There is poor condom coverage particularly in rural areas. The Ministry of Health (2010) through the National Condom Strategy ensures adequate national supply and access of condoms. This strategy has improved access to quality condoms at affordable prices through an effective and responsive service delivery system.

Knowledge about condoms is associated with higher education level and wealth (UNAIDS 2015). Nearly 90% of people knew where to get male condoms but less than half of the women and only a third of men knew about female condom and where to obtain it. Unprotected sex increases the risk of conception, contracting and transmitting HIV. An HIV positive woman has an increased risk of morbidity and premature mortality. Morbidity reduces productivity and decreases the family income. This negatively affects the economy of the country. The purpose of the study was to describe factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 and 49 years in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.

Objectives of this study were to:

- identify socio-cultural factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 years on HIV prevention in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.
- assess economic factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 years on HIV prevention in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.
- examine relationship between socio-cultural and economic factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 years on HIV prevention in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the quantitative approach, descriptive cross sectional design was used to determine the factors influencing condom use among women. The study took place in one of the communities under Lobamba chiefdom in the Hhohho region. The study sample was selected using the simple random sampling method. Women of reproductive age formed the population in this study. Included were women aged between 18 to 49 years who consented to participate in the study.

The sample size was calculated based on Lipsey and Wilson (2013), with an effect size of 0.50, power of 80 and alpha ≤ 0.05, the sample size was 50.The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire which was developed from literature. The data collection tool was pretested before data was collected in the major study. This assisted in determining accuracy of the tool and if the purpose of the tool was met. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Correlations. To ascertain that the participants' rights were not violated, approval to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the National Health Research Review Board and the study participants.

RESULTS

There were 50 participants in the study who were aged between 18 and 49 years. The response rate was 100%.

Socio-demographic data

The minimum age was 19 and the maximum was 46 with a mean of 30 years and a standard deviation of 6years.

Most (80%, n = 40) participants reported that they had one (1) sexual partner and only 20% (n=10) reported that they had more than one sexual partner. The participants' socio-demographic data is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (N=50)

Variable	Frequency (n)/mean)	Percentages(%)/SD
Age(years)	30	6
marital status		
Single	22	44
Married	21	42
Cohabiting	6	12
Separated	1	2
Type of marriage		
Monogamous	17	34
Polygamous	5	10
Religion		
Christianity	47	94
Swazi traditional religion	2	4
Shembe	1	2
Level of education		
Secondary	17	34
High school	16	32
Primary	9	18
No formal education	5	10
Tertiary	3	6
Employment status		
Unemployed	24	48
self employed	14	28
Employed	12	24

Objective 1: To identify socio-cultural factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.

Culture and religion

A majority of the participants (96%, n=48) reported that they had sexual intercourse in the past three (3) months, and 88% (n = 44) reported that their culture accepted

condom use. However, only 52% (n = 26) reported that they could refuse to have sexual intercourse with partner if he did not want to use a condom. Findings from participants on culture and religion in relation to condom use are summarized in Figure 1.

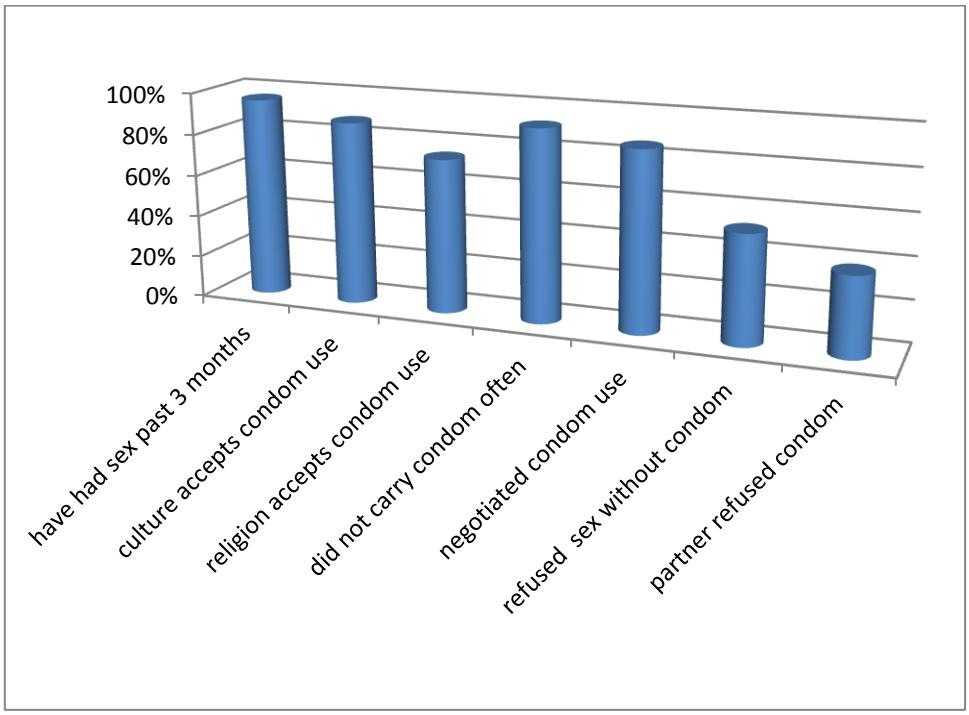

Figure 1: Participants culture and religion in relation to condom use (N = 50)

Practices related to condom use

With reference to Figure 2 below, a majority (70%, n=35) of participants reported that they did not use condoms correctly and consistently, whereas, 62% (n = 31) used condoms protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, 74%, n=37) used a condom to prevent pregnancy, and 70% (n=35) of the participants reported that they would use condoms even if they had to buy them. Conversely, 66% (n=33) reported that they did not carry condoms along with them when visiting the sexual partner.

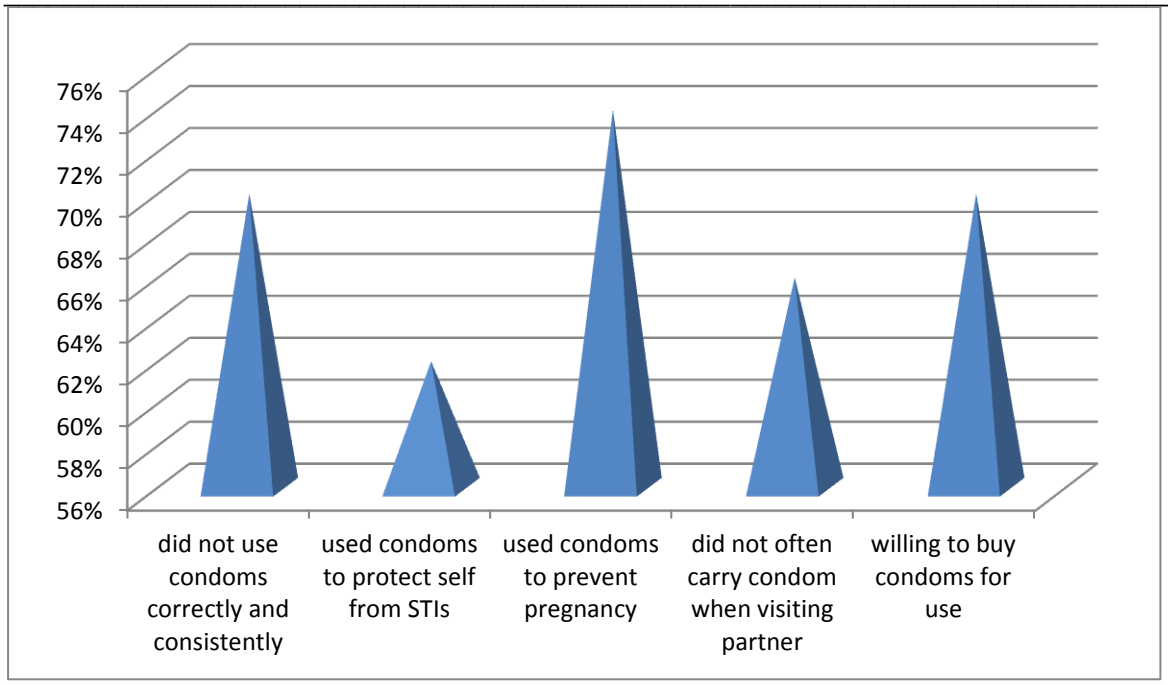

Figure 2: Participants practices related to condom use (N = 50)

Knowledge on condom use

Among the 50 participants, 92% (n=46) reported that they got information on condom use and 16% (n=8) reported that they have never received information on condom use.

A majority of participants (72%, n=36) reported that they attended a demonstration on condom use and 28% (n=14) reported that they have never attended a demonstration on condom use.

Findings from participants on knowledge about condom use are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Participants' knowledge on condom use (N = 50)

Question posed	Yes (n)	No (n)
Do you think vaseline is a good lubricant for condoms?	29 (58%)	6 (12%)
Do you know places where you can get condoms?	47 (94%)	3 (6%)
Does correct and consistent condom use prevent the spread of HIV?	45 (90%)	5 (10%)
Do partners infected with HIV need to use condoms consistently and correctly during sexual intercourse?	44 (88%)	3 (6%)
Can a female condom and male condom be used together at the same time during sexual intercourse?	33 (66%)	11 (22%)
Can male and female condoms be reused?	41 (82%)	3 (6%)

Perceptions about condom use

Half (50%, n = 25) of the participants thought that they might get cervical cancer if they used a condom consistently during a sexual activity and only 20% (n=10) reported that they might not get cervical cancer if they used a condom consistently.

Most (58%, n=29) participants reported that the partner would think badly of them if they carried condoms and 32% (n=16) reported that the partner would not think badly of them if they carried condoms in the pocket.

Most (46%, n = 23) participants reported that condoms broke frequently and only 26%(n=13) reported that condoms did not break frequently during sexual intercourse.

More than half (66%, n = 33) of the participants reported that condoms slipped off frequently yet 14% (n=7) reported that condoms did not slip off frequently during sexual intercourse.

Most (70%, n = 35) participants reported that engaging in sexual intercourse using a condom was equivalent to not having sexual intercourse at all and only 18%(n=9) reported that that engaging in sexual intercourse using a condom was not equivalent to not having sexual intercourse at all.

With reference to figure 3, most participants reported that condom use promoted prostitution (68%, n = 34), reduced sexual pleasure (58%, n = 29), led to mistrust by sexual partner (60%, n = 30), and that partner became violent when asked to use a condom (48%, n = 24).

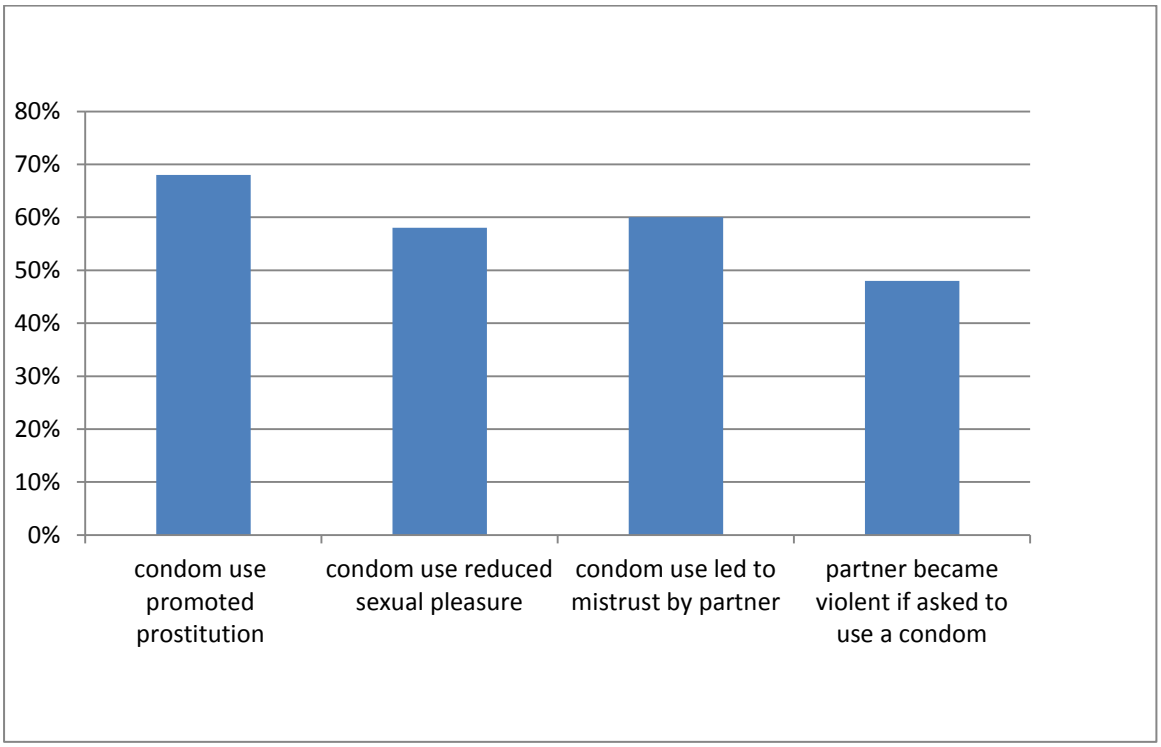

Figure 3: Participants' perceptions about condom use (N = 50)

Most (74%, n = 37) participants reported that female condoms were easier to use than male condoms and 18% (n=9) reported that female condoms were not easy to use compared to male condoms.

A majority (36%, n=18) reported that female condoms could not slip and be retained in the uterus yet 32 % (n=16) reported that female condoms could slip and be retained in the uterus.

Objective 2: To assess economic factors influencing condom use among women aged 18 to 49 years on HIV prevention in one of the communities in the Hhohho region.

A majority (78%, n = 39) of participants reported that the distance to the nearest condom supply point was reasonable and 20 % (n=10) reported that the distance to the nearest condom supply point was far.

A majority of the participants reported that condoms were affordable and accessible, as reflected in *Table* 3.

Table 3: Participants responses on economic factors influencing condom use among women (N = 50)

Question posed	Yes (n)	No (n)
Are condoms affordable?	31 (62%)	17) (34 %)
Are condoms available in your local shop/ supermarket?	44 (88%)	3 (6%)
Are condoms available in your local chemist?	36 (72%)	10 (20%)
Are condoms available in your local health center?	47 (94%)	2 (4%)

Objective 3: To examine relationship between socio-cultural and economic factors influencing condom use among women.

Data revealed a relationship (r=0.337, p=0.017) between knowledge and economic status. This means that with increasing economic status knowledge on condom use increased**.** There was an association (r=0.413, p=0.003) between practices and perceptions. With increasing positive perceptions condom use increased as well.
There was an association between knowledge and perceptions (r=0.378, p=0.007).This means that with increasing knowledge, favorable perceptions on condom use increased. Furthermore, data demonstrated a relationship between practices and socio-economic status (r=0.338, p=0.017).With better socio-economic status condom use increased. There was a relationship between marital status and practices (r=-0.449, p=0.001).Those who were single were less likely to use condoms. There was also an association between type of marriage and religion (r=-0.369, p=0.008).Participants who were in a polygamous marriage and were Christians were less likely to use condoms during sexual intercourse. The associations between the variables are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Association between variables

Variables	r	p-value
Practices and perceptions	0.413	0.003**
Practices and socioeconomic factors	0.338	0.017**
Knowledge and perceptions	0.378	0.007**
Marital status and practices	-0.449	0.001**
Type of marriage and religion	-0.369	0.008**
Knowledge and economic status	0.337	0.017**

DISCUSSION

Consistent with Iwara and Alonge (2014), Asadhi (2011) and Abdulai (2012), educated women with better economic status were likely to use condom consistently. This could be because they were able to qualify for higher paying employment and income earned served to afford and access health services. Good economic status and education has decreased the risk of HIV transmission among educated women because they can afford health services including purchasing condoms. In addition education attainment reduced the incidence of early sexual debut and people might engage in sexual activity when they are well matured to think of the consequences of engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse. Furthermore, educated women who have good socioeconomic status are less likely to engage in risky behaviours such as engaging in sexual intercourse in order to earn a living because they could maintain themselves.

Economic instability and poverty have been identified as a factor that enhanced the spread of HIV transmission. This is consistent with Mnguni (2016) who highlighted that socio-economic status had an impact on the health status of individuals because

men are seen as family providers. Many women knowingly exchange sex for material and financial survival where they believe that they rather contract diseases than getting their partners to seek sexual gratification from other women outside of the relationship who do not insist on condoms use. This has increased the HIV incidence in Swaziland because despite of all efforts made to curb the increased rates of HIV transmission, women still engage in risky behaviours.

Consistent with Asadhi (2012) condom use tends to be low among women of low economic status which increases their risk of exposure to HIV. Poverty has forced many women to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse in order to earn a living. This has limited their ability to negotiate for safe sex practices because they depend on men for survival. Lack of education also results in inability to have access to information about sexual and reproductive health issues. This has contributed to inability to insist on condom use. It is noted in the current study that most participants who had limited education were less likely to use condoms. This is because they had some negative perceptions on condom use which acted as a barrier to condom use. It has been discovered that people need to be taught in order to avoid misconceptions about the commodity. This statement is consistent with Andrade, Zaccara and Leite (2015) who revealed that lack of knowledge have negative impact because it leads to inadequate opinions thus leading to non-use of condoms. Poverty is a key driver of HIV epidemic. People are compelled to engage in risky sexual activities where they are not able to insist on condom use (Mathunjwa & Gary, 2006) thus increasing the risk of HIV infection. Most young women are at risk because they depend on their male partners for survival. The need for survival has an influence in negotiating for condom use.

Participants of low economic status are more likely to engage in transactional sex as a way of making a living thus increasing the risk of being infected, transmitting or re-infected with HIV. Non condom use among people of low economic status increase the risk of HIV related morbidity and mortality. People of low socio-economic status depend on the government for HIV treatment and management. The country focuses more in HIV treatment when more people are infected and divert the resources to HIV thus neglecting other important issues. HIV infection is a burden to the country

as well as families because it reduced the country's economy and family income since more resources are to be diverted to HIV. It is noted that individuals with lack of knowledge are less likely to adopt health seeking behaviours because of misconceptions.

The current study findings revealed that participants who were single were less likely to use condom consistently. Single women were at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV.Having sexual intercourse without a condom increases the risk of transmitting and contracting HIV. An HIV infected person is likely to transmit the infection to her partner or be re infected. HIV cannot be cured and it lowers the immune system thus making a person to succumb to diseases. This negatively affects reproduction due to increased morbidity and mortality. This finding was inconsistent with Andrade *et al* (2015), who reported that women of single marital status used condoms more often and regularly than married women. Abdulai (2012) also revealed that being in a stable relationship presented some potential hindrances to condom use such as mistrust and violence. The author revealed that women who were not married or in unstable relationships could use condoms consistently due to fear of any unwanted pregnancies and infections.

Conclusion

The study revealed that negative perceptions on condom use were common among participants as well as correct and consistent condom use was low. It also revealed that knowledge was correlated to economic status.

Recommendations

The government initiatives should empower the girl-child with education so that as she becomes a woman she has better employment opportunities and financially independent reducing the economic dependence on men.

The rate of low condom use is a public health concern because it may lead to increased exposure, HIV transmission and re-infection; therefore there is a need for

comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education targeting women of reproductive age.

Socio-economic and cultural factors influencing condom use should be considered when designing policies which focus in increasing condom use among women. This will ensure those women's concerns regarding condom use are addressed thus increasing likelihood of using the condom.

There is need for research to be conducted in other areas such as rural and urban areas with a large sample size to give a clearer picture of the problem. In addition a study should be conducted that will incorporate males because effective condom use sometimes depend on partner approval.

Limitations of the study

The study focused on women only yet condom use also depends on agreement between partners. In addition, the researcher did not discuss partner related factors on condom use.The sample size was relatively small and it was limited to one health facility a semi-urban area. Findings could be inferred to the entire Swazi population with caution.

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Investigating the phenomenon of 'semester marriages' among students at state universities in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the phenomenon of semester marriages among students at two universities in Zimbabwe. Semester marriages are different forms of short term sexual relations that are engaged in by university students. The study unravels the mysteries that exist within this practice which is barely explored in academic texts and literature. To achieve this, the study adopted a qualitative approach, guided by a phenomenological design. Data was collected using focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and postal essays. The data was grouped into themes, analysed and presented in response to the aim and objectives of the study. Because the issue under study is a sensitive one, all respondents were told about the sensitivity beforehand and they provided consent before participating. The findings of the study show that semester marriages are common among students at universities and there are people who thrive from their existence as pimps. In addition, the relationships are fuelled by peer pressure and desire to fit into the university community but they are very risky. The paper concludes that semester marriages increase students' vulnerabilities to multiple problems such as Sexually Transmitted illnesses and unwanted pregnancies that may force some to drop out of school. The recommendations are that interventions should be crafted by universities together with other institutions to educate students on semester marriages.

Key Words: Sexuality, tertiary students, extra dyadic relationships.

Introduction and background

The sexual lifestyles of university students have been given little attention in African research, particularly on issues relating to emerging romantic relationships associated with this youthful group. Few studies into the sexual life of university

students have been important in revealing the motives and dynamics of relationships entered by female students, especially with older sugar daddies while at institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe (Masvawure 2010; Bhatasara 2006; Gukurume 2011). The study by Masvawure (2010) looked into why female university students choose to have romantic relationships with older men who are not university students. Another article by Bhatasara (2006) worried about how poverty forces young females in universities to accept sexual overtures from older men as a strategy to make ends meet. Similarly, Gukurume (2011) describes the reasons for female students getting into transactional relationships as mainly motivated by the desire to earn money and get other material benefits. All these articles worried about the female student's sexual relationships that are motivated by money and poverty, neglecting the male student and also neglecting the physiological motivators of these relationships.

Many of the previous studies deciphers how student's relationships come in many forms; multiple or concurrent sexual relationships in which one may have several sexual partners at the same time, either in the sense of sex work or being involved in more than one sexual relationship at the same time (Gukurume, 2011). In some instances, they come as serial sexual relationships whereby a person gets into sexual relationships that do not last long, and immediately after each relationship, the person gets into another one (Preston-Whyte, 2003).

These relationships are characterised by many features. One of them being that they are usually shrouded in secrecy as telling other people about the relationship would mean losing the trust of a partner (Morris and Mirjam, 1997; Maharaj & Cleland, 2006; Gukurume, 2011). A second key feature of the sexual relations engaged in by university students are inter-generational relationships, with students engaging in sexual relations with men or women who are old enough to be their parents as a way of showing their virility (Maswaure 2010). The third key feature of university students' sexual relations is cohabiting, whereby students tend to move in and live with a person whom one is not married to as husband and wife (Nshindano & Maharaj, 2008). This is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe's context as it started in colonial times when married men used to go in search for jobs in towns and in South Africa,

leaving their wives in rural areas, then finding girlfriends to live with in the towns (Hunter, 2002). While this may not be strange in the western world, and may be now common as a result of westernization, this phenomenon is still considered taboo and embarrassing especially for the unmarried woman, since pre-marital sexual relations are still considered in negative light in Zimbabwe. These unions have come to be known as Mapoto unions as Muzvidziwa (2002) quotes Chavhunduka who first used the term in academia in 1979.

A fourth key feature that was introduced by Masvawure (2011 p. 166) is the idea of pimping which she defines as "pimp mediated transactional sex". She goes on to quote Holsopple (1999, p. 47) who states that a pimp is "any man or woman who induces, promotes and profits from the prostitution of women or children" (Masvawure, 2011, p. 167). The above definition shows that some sexual encounters in universities are facilitated by a third party who brings sexual partners together and sometimes even maintains the relationship for them. In identifying potential female students that can be hired for sugar daddies, the pimps pointed out that they use sophisticated hunting skills. After identifying the girls, the boy pimp acts as a mediator whenever the sugar daddies or the girls want to meet so that the sugar daddies' wives do not find out. This is therefore another feature of university students' sexualities.

Important as these studies have become in revealing student's sexual lives, they fall short of explaining an emerging phenomenon of 'semester marriages' in which both male and female students effectively participate in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions. Semester marriages are sexual relationships that female and male students enter into in order to satisfy their immediate needs during a learning season or term. These relationships are limited to time and space, being only relevant during the university's learning session and quickly disappear when they close for the holiday or when students leave university.

Most of these pre-marital relationships entered into by students at university are usually rushed, shrouded in secrecy and they occur during times when they may be in other relationships elsewhere. This increases the risk of contracting STIs including HIV and it also increases dangers of violence within unions including marital unions

that can be disrupted as a result of such relationships (Morris and Mirjam, 1997; Maharaj & Cleland, 2006). In a majority of cases, older men believe that there is no need to use condoms because they assume that the girls are too young to have HIV (Gukurume, 2011). While on the other hand, the girls may feel that it is culturally immoral for them to demand condom use or to carry condoms with them (Maharaj & Cleland, 2006).

Indeed, HIV prevalence rate among adult Zimbabweans over 15 years was reported to be just under 15% in 2016 (GOZ, 2016). What is also worrying is the impact that pre-marital sexual relations have had on the HIV prevalence rates among the never married. The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) (2015) report brought out that 13.9% of women and 6.0% of men aged 20-24 are HIV positive. This group makes up the majority of the men and women who are in universities in Zimbabwe, and the high HIV prevalence is a worrying sign that makes it necessary to carry out a research on the nature, causes and consequences of the semester marriage phenomenon amongst university students. A study of this nature feeds into existing literature on sexual relationships in institutions of higher learning with a view to device sustainable responses and prevention mechanisms to the health and psychological vulnerabilities it causes to students and the wider society.

This study was aimed at answering the following research questions: how does the phenomenon of semester marriages operate in Zimbabwean universities?, what factors motivate students in Zimbabwean universities to enter into semester marriages?, what are the effects of semester marriages on students' health and social lives?

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943), with a particular focus on physiological needs in which sex is captured. The theory believes that people have needs that, if satisfied, can serve to motivate people to do better. This therefore, means that sex is one such need which humans require during their social experiences. Some scholars have questioned that sexual intercourse is a physiological need, yet most agree that it forms an important part of human

existence. It is with this backdrop that this study seeks to utilise Maslow's theory to unravel the existence and practice of sexual relations that are referred to as 'semester marriages' in a university in Zimbabwe. This is particularly important considering that studying at university can become stressful for students at times, hence the need to explore semester marriages among students.

Maslow`s theory claims that human motives develop in sequence according to five levels of need arranged in a hierarchy of importance. Maslow`s basic proportion is that people want beings, they always want they have already. The hierarchy begins with the lowest level being physiological needs which including basic needs like food, water, sleep and shelter. This is followed by security or safety needs which include safety of the environment, health, protection from harm, freedom of danger, the need for predictability and orderliness (Cherry, 2014). The next level is on social needs which include the need for love, affection, belonging and friendship. The fourth level then includes esteem needs, divided into self-esteem needs (such as self-respect, competence, confidence and freedom) external esteem needs (such as status, attention, influence and fame). The final stage is when individuals seek to achieve self-actualization which entails the ability to reach one's full potential. However, self-actualization needs are hard to realize because individuals continue to set more targets after they achieve other targets. Maslow's needs are ranked from high order needs in stage one to lower order needs in stage five, so higher order needs are essential to survival, but the lower order needs are essential for those who have achieved lower order needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used to analyse how students use semester marriages to satisfy multiple needs within the hierarchy, including even the basic needs such as food.

Maslow's theory will be supported by the Social exchange theory by Susan Sprecher (1998), which points out that sex is a resource that is given in exchange for something. While social exchange theory was used in various fields before, Sprecher (1998) analysed its uses in the study of sexuality arguing that sexual exchange theory is suitable for analysing five areas of sexuality namely a. how partners are selected; b. when sexual activity begins; c. dynamics of sexual satisfaction; d. issues of getting introduced to sexual activity; and e. nature and causes of extradyadic

relationships. Therefore, the sexual exchange theory is used to explain not only the process of partner selection in 'semester marriages', but also the reasons why people enter into illicit sexual affairs when they are in a university setting.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research approach as informed by interpretive phenomenological design to gain a deeper understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of semester marriages in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions. The study found this method and design to be suitable for exploring a fairly emerging phenomenon of semester marriages (Bless, et al., 2013). In the lenses of constructivist and phenomenology design, researchers sought to bring out new developments in sexuality which is known as 'semester marriages' that have been formed by university students in their individual capacities but have also come to be accepted as a norm.

The study was made up of twenty five sampled students at two state universities in Zimbabwe. Of these twenty, eight students from the two universities who lived the phenomenon of semester marriages were snow-balled for in-depth interviews. Twelve students were conveniently sampled to participate in two focus group discussions, six students each per university, while the remaining five preferred to write brief essays to respond to the study's interview questions. While researchers wanted to have a gender balanced participants, they ended up having sixteen female and nine male students. This was because more females accepted the invitation to participate in the study than men and the researchers did not pursue male respondents beyond the nine who accepted to participate. The respondents' ages ranged between 21 and 36. Among all twenty five respondents, five were married (two men and three women), ten highlighted that they were in serious relationships (four men and six women), four highlighted that their relationship status was complicated at the time of the data collection and the remaining six stated that they were not in any serious relationship.

In the collection of data, three tools were employed, namely in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and essay guide. The first to be used was the focus group

discussion schedule which was conducted at the two universities. The focus group discussions were conducted by the lead author as the moderator with the assistance of a rapporteur and they both lasted just over one hour and forty minutes.

Face to face, unstructured phenomenological interviews were done with participants at the identified institutions. At first, thirty-six potential respondents were identified, and requested to participate in the study using WhatsApp messages, and sixteen responded saying they were willing, after which only eight were conveniently met at campuses and in locations. Guided by prepared questions, researchers were supported with follow-up questions that were asked to the respondents until they could not introduce any new knowledge as is recommended by Groenewald (2004). These follow-up questions used themes and ideas brought out in the focus group discussions which had opened provided the researcher with information on the issues that are of highest concern to students.

The essay guide was a self-administered tool which contained the same guiding questions that were used in conducting in-depth interviews. However, the essay questions were developed after the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, hence they were structured in a way that allows students to be able to comprehend what they are being asked. In the essays, respondents were guided by a statement at the beginning of the tool to encourage them to give all the details they want and ensure that they do not write their names on the essay guide. The focus group discussion was guided by the lead questions used in the in-depth interviews and the essays. The use of the three data collection techniques was done to achieve triangulation of methods so that findings may be verified by comparing the results from different respondents and methods.

Data were analysed in accordance with themes as derived from the objectives of the study. With the thematic content analysis approach, the study managed to rigorously explore and construct meaning from participants' subjective experiences and social cognitions of semester marriages. After the themes where identified, only quotations that covered the essential issues were brought into the write up. In addition, literature was sought to compare results with other studies carried out elsewhere.

The study mainstreamed various ethical issues including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and respect of participants. The researchers assured all respondents that their participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were also assured of maximum protection of their identity and protection from any form of harm for participating in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following findings arose with regards to the nature, causes and consequences of semester marriages to students at institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. This section starts by outlining the causes and typologies of semester marriages before explaining the consequences on students' social relations.

Typologies of semester marriages

All respondents in the study agreed that semester marriages are a common phenomenon which comes in various forms in institutions of higher learning. The motivating factors ranging from an individual simply continuing with a sexual behaviour which they have always possessed, to genuine mistakes being made. The typologies and causes are defined in table 1.

Typologies of semester marriages

Table 1: Typologies of semester marriages

Name given	Description	Duration
One night stand	This is a sexual encounter that only happens once, usually at night when people have gone for a party or night club and after taking alcohol.	One day/ night
Friends with benefits	This is a sexual relationship which is often disguised as a friendly union, though the people involved often engage in sexual relations when need arises.	Unlimited
Off-campus affairs	This is a relationship that is restricted away from campus, especially in the residences at night.	Only when people still see each other

Call-up	This is a sexual relationship which only happens when one calls the other over the phone to come and visit.	Usually one or two semesters
Live-in relationship	This is a sexual relationship in which students cohabit with each other when they are at school, away from home.	Only when at school

One night stand

Many participants mentioned one night stands as a very common practice among outgoing students, and those with a busy night life. Two students defined a one night stand in the following quotes:

> *Random sex just because you are drunk which you usually regret of the day after* (Shinhai, University A).

> *This is a 'hit and run' in which you accidentally meet a girl and have sex once, without proposing love and then go* (Bizozo, University B).

While one night stands are believed to be common only among students that are out-going, three other respondents pointed out that such sexual encounters also happen even when one is not out-going and they are just studying in their rooms with a classmate. This type of sexual relationship is also mentioned in the study by Nshindano & Maharaj (2008) who highlight the presence of unplanned sexual encounters among young people in their study in Zambia. A one night stand is not possible to plan for and therefore it catches both parties unawares. This was explained in the quotes below:

> *When I had a one night stand, I could not believe it… At first I thought I was dreaming and I only got back to my senses after we had finished. Even the girl told me that she was not happy about it afterwards because we had not talked about it* (Tatekhile, University A).

> *It happened that I went to see a classmate to give her some notes. I found her putting on a drying towel and gave her a hug and we started caressing each*

> *other until we had unplanned sex. We both regretted after the incident, and she pleaded with me not to tell fellow classmates* (Philoman, University A).

As a result of them being caused by 'mistakes', one night stands are specifically what their name suggests, and they only last for that one night. After that the people may move away from the incident and continue with their relationships and lives as if nothing ever happened. One night stands are also a product of what Masvawure (2011) named pimping, whereby another individual facilitates the process for two people to meet. One of the male respondents highlighted that the culture of pimping is common especially when there are big functions at local night spots;

> *Pimping is very common, both men and women can assist their friends or even strangers that they just know from around town to hook up with classmates and other people from campus… Some of these people can spend lots of fuel going to different places with a pimp to find a person to sleep with just for that night* (Bhimpo, University B).

During these functions, both boys and girls are recruited by pimps (who may be male or female) to meet one night stand partners for sexual relations.

Friends with benefits

The typology of friends with benefits is one that seems to occur even in the greater society whereby sexual relationships are disguised as friendships. A number of participants highlighted that this type of semester marriage is difficult to handle because of the emotional costs that might occur if you start developing feelings of love for the friend with benefits. This is because the main reason that was given for getting into a friendship with benefits was that one of the two people would be having a serious relationship with another person. However, some friends with benefits may both be married people who simply engage in sexual activities when they are on campus to satisfy their physiological needs. One respondent highlighted that this is mostly common among mature students in their late twenties and early thirties who maintain friendships with potential sex partners in case the need for sex arises, especially when the pressure of school work becomes unbearable.

The use of sexual relations as a strategy to relieve stress is highlighted by Maslow in his 1930s study on the relationship between self-esteem and sexual behaviour between college students (Cullen & Gotell, 2002). Maslow analysed how women in college sought to balance their education by trying to stay in non-serious relationships that satisfy their physiological need for sex (Cullen and Gotell 2002). Similarly, another participant from university A explained that:

> *I had a serious crush on the guy, and he told me that he had a crush on me too, but he is in a serious relationship. So I agreed to act as if we are friends when we are in public, but secretly having a sexual affair… I hoped that he would leave the other woman after seeing that I am a nice person* (Alice, University A)

This is similar to what was mentioned by Hunter (2002) who narrated how one of his female respondents in KwaZulu Natal's umjondolos (informal dwellings) got into relationships with men hoping that they would leave their partners in future.

Off campus affairs

Off campus affairs are a classic form of semester marriages which are restricted in boundaries as a means of ensuring that the sexual lives of students remain a secret. Off campus affairs therefore occur often as a way to hide the relationship from the knowledge of people on campus, and even those at home. The quotes below explain this:

> *Some girls are like that, they have men out there (taxi drivers, sugar daddies and others) who they have sex with, but once they come here, they act as if they are not in any relationship* (Tamuka, University B).

> *Pimps are usually not students, DJs at night clubs, friends from home or combi drivers who be-friend students… I have seen girls getting picked up by drivers of pirate taxis and being taken to meet sugar daddies, they don't say it, but people see them* (Chamu, University A).

Off campus relationships also include those that are facilitated by pimps or other third parties. Individuals that may facilitate off campus affairs can be fellow students

or friends that do not study at the same university as Chamu wrote in his essay which is quoted above. These individuals facilitate sexual relationships between students and non-students in a different way. While Masvaure (2011) provided examples of male students as pimps, the above respondent showed that people who facilitate relationships between students and 'sugar daddy or sugar mummies[1] are sometimes outsiders. These pimps thrive on students' desire to maintain secretive sexual lives off campus.

Preston-Whyte (2003) points out how secrecy is commonly practiced when individuals' sexual activities are with multiple individuals. This quotation from Tamuka below is in line with Masvaure (2010)'s findings in her study that some women have two different men that they are involved with sexually at a time, one who provides for their material needs and another who is being groomed to become a future husband. Such types of relationships that are aimed at looking flashy among school mates meet needs such as getting trendy clothes, cosmetics and electronic gadgets including mobile cell phones and watches (Masvaure, 2010). Gukurume (2011) highlights that the need to get someone to buy food is also a reason why some female students in tertiary institutions get involved in semester marriages. While on the other had Clowes, et al. (2009) highlight that peer pressure and the desire to look trendy among other students forces female students to get into transactional marriages while they are on a South African university campus.

Call-up affairs

A call-up is a relationship whose sole purpose is to provide one another with sexual services as and when one requests for it. These take two different forms, one may be tied around financial benefits for one of the two sexual partners, and another type may simply be a secret sexual affair. Participants involved in call-up relationships explained that:

> *My call-up partner is a woman who is older than me… she has one child, and does not want people to know about our relationship. So she calls whenever she wants me, and if I am around, I go and see her* (Terence, University B).

[1] The term sugar daddy is used to explain a grown-up man who has sexual relations with young women.

> *Usually it's our male friends at the university that go with girls to parties where we hook up with rich dudes in town. It's on Fridays and Saturdays and when the dudes wants to see us, the boys help the dudes to reach us* (Shamiso, School B)

The call up affairs can also be sophisticated and be facilitated by mediators in the form of pimps who are either students or people who are not students when there are gigs and other interactive functions. This confirms Masvaure (2011 p. 168)'s study which provides a case of a female student at a university in Zimbabwe who trusted her friends not knowing that they were pimping her and earning from her affair with a sugar daddy. The meetings are setup with people that do not know each other, and female students go there in groups ranging between two to five. In some instances, female students go for clubbing with female and male friends for some drinks and end up being tricked to get into semester marriages. This suggests that in some cases individuals can even be tricked into getting involved in semester marriages while the trickster benefits. Resultantly, many of the innocent girls end up entering into these relationships in a bid to please their friends not knowing that they are being sold out to sugar daddies or sugar mummies (Masvawure, 2011). Such call up affairs are unique transactional relationships that are based on the ability of the sugar daddies or sugar mummies' to finance the students' entertainment as is also noted by Daly (2017) and Clowes et al (2009) among students in Canadian universities and in South Africa, respectively. Indeed, this kind of relationship is also typical of the secrecy that is mentioned in the article by Preston-Whyte (2003) in which sexual activity occurs in a clandestine manner. This is also typical of transactional sexual relationships that are highlighted by social exchange theories as is also highlighted by Gukurume (2011) in his study of transactional sexual relations.

Live in relationships

Live in relationships are arrangements that people enter into after feeling that they love each other and decide to move in together during the time that they will be at school. These unions resemble what Muzvidziwa (2002) referred to as *mapoto*, resembling informal unions which may sometimes not last beyond an individual's university years. *Mapoto* unions are a means that may be used by urban women as

a survival strategy during harsh economic times. This situation was aptly described by female respondents who provided essay responses explaining about the nature of Live in relationships;

> *They stay together as married people do… some claim that they do it so that they can afford to buy food and other necessities which will be difficult without their partners, but mmmm I think one of them would just be using the other for sex* (Cherise, University A).

> *Girls who get into live in relationships usually do that with men who are much older as a way to get someone who takes care of them during their time at university. At home people don't even know that they are wives to men who are the age of their parents* (Shamiso, University B).

As shown above, live in relationships are also practiced together with much older lovers as a means of making university life more manageable. This is particularly interesting as it supports the narrative shared by Muzvidziwa (2002) that women who enter into *mapoto* unions are secretive and do not disclose their relationships to their family and friends. Shamiso also explained that the only way to know whether a person is involved with a live-in boyfriend is to secretly follow them where they stay, because such people do not even want people to visit them.

Regarding the motives, the students' involvement in semester marriages is sometimes evidence of the desire to satisfy their sexual needs highlighted in Maslow's studies. As Cliff explains below about why he is involved in a live in relationship, the objective is often to get stability and happiness during their stay at campus. This is in line with the views of Muzvidziwa (2002) who pointed out that people who get into Mapoto unions do it so that they can get stability and be able to work in the hustle and bustle of town life. As Maslow argues, sex being a basic need enables individuals to actualize and focus on other life challenges with a more stable mind-set (Cullen & Gotell, 2002).

Consequences of semester marriages

The consequences of semester marriages are difficult to ignore and possibly they extend to other factors that are beyond the scope of this present study. Some individuals claimed that they realise some positive benefits from semester marriages including being able to make it through studies they would otherwise not afford; having someone to share intimate moments with; and being able to get satisfaction that they cannot get from their other partners. However, a majority of participants in this study highlighted that individuals who enter into semester marriages face several challenges including exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, failure to complete studies, family disintegration and being disowned by financiers.

One of the main effects which respondents claim to get from semester marriages is the intended desire to find someone who helps them to make it through their university studies. Some respondents confidently outlined these benefits from their relationship in the quotes below;

> *Without my girl I would not be able to be focused on my school work, she comforts me and encourages me. I no longer care about petty issues and now I know my goals… of course other people would not understand this* (Cliff, University A).
>
> *Its sometimes beneficiary as the two share everything, put together the little food stuffs from home, and above all save themselves from paying rentals as they will be staying together sharing a room for $60 per month* (Shamiso, University B).
>
> *Dating an older person is sometimes helpful when he is responsible to finance you in terms of school fees, clothing and food stuffs. In my case, I accompany him for shopping in South Africa and he spoils me with all my 'goodies' and needs, something which makes me focus on my studies* (Terence, University B).

This perspective shows that some individuals get into semester marriages with the intention to get assistance to settle and focus on their studies, and not only to have fun out of it. This is in line with Maslow's views that sexual gratification assists people to be more motivated to perform in their other duties (Cullen & Gotell, 2002). Chivimbiso explained some girls enter into sexual relationships with sugar daddies for "*a good living*". This view was shared by one of the respondents in the study by Clowes, et al. (2009) who pointed out that female students get into some relationships so that they can compare with others at university because their parents cannot provide them with luxurious things. Therefore, semester marriages are used to provide benefits that help individuals to increase their self-esteem as is also suggested by one of the respondents in Masvaure (2010 p. 861)'s study who pointed out that "*I just need to be flashy on campus*".

The desire to have someone to have intimate relations with is also a driver of engaging in semester marriages. This is particularly among individuals who claim that they are not managing to have such experiences in their 'main' relationships, and then they seek to make amends by getting involved with someone whose company they enjoy. One of the female respondents who wrote an essay and is in her early 30s highlighted that some men are not able to provide the intimacy that other men can provide. She stated that especially in marriages sometimes there is no more romance and finding a male university student to have a good time with whenever one is away from home removes a lot of stress and allows her to focus on school work.

While those positive effects of semester marriages may be noted by some students, excerpts from a majority of respondents present semester marriages as disastrous both in the short and long-term. The quotes below explain the challenges;

> *My classmate who has now left school got involved with a big businessman from town. The man would just call her and provide her with money and goodies… but he made her pregnant and started forcing her to get rid of the pregnancy… she ended up getting very sick when the pregnancy was removed by an old woman in the townships* (Bernedict, University B).

> *Some act as if what they are doing is normal, but it destroys them and eats them inside… some graduate when they already have HIV, others drop out of school due to unwanted pregnancies and other male students have been beaten by husbands of the women they fool around with.* (Tom, University A).
>
> *It's useless to get into a semester marriage, being used like a rug and then someone just leaves you… Especially for us women, men use you and go around telling everyone what they did with you* (Cherise, University A).
>
> *It's a risky venture. Some have even been recorded as they were drunk, having sex, and the videos spread all over haaaa its bad* (Shamiso, University B).

The above quotations show that semester marriages often have negative effects for students, especially female students who abort and develop health complications that may lead to death in the process. This is particularly because the relationships are not intended to survive beyond the university and are often only aimed at satisfying immediate needs whilst ruining their future, and risking losing their lives and being barren. However, even male students also face illness from STIs and violence as a direct result of semester marriages.

The evidence provided by Shamiso also raises fears of abuse that some students may encounter during semester marriages. These are also shared by Clowes, et al. (2009) who highlight the risk for abuse and gender based violence within a university in South Africa. The article by Clowes and colleagues shows that one girl was murdered by her boyfriend in her room as a result of jealousy within a semester marriage. This raises worries about students who get involved in such sexual relationships as one night stands and call ups because there will be no love and concern for them from the people that they get involved with. As highlighted by Shamiso, some of these students end up having sexual videos of them being spread through social media which can damage their future. With the advent of revenge porn, the risk for having sexual photos and videos leaking is very high. When this happens, the least that the victim does is to drop out of school, endure insults and stress, with the worst being an attempt or committing suicide. Therefore, some forms

of semester marriages increase the risk of being abused among those who get involved in them.

Conclusion

This study has shown that semester marriages are common phenomenon in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. The motivating factors are diverse, ranging from an individual simply continuing with a sexual behaviour which they have always possessed, to genuine mistakes being made. None of the other studies talk about genuine sexual desire among students, nor do they mention that male students may also be involved with older women while they are at school. Semester marriages have become an opportunity for some learners to earn the status that they could otherwise not earn as a result of their backgrounds as they get gifts from their partners. Others have been able to raise some money from facilitating relationships between their school mates and sugar daddies or sugar mommies. On the other hand, some students claim that being involved in a semester marriage allows them to focus on their education with a stable mind-set because they will be getting sexual satisfaction from their partners.

Regardless of the circumstances, the semester marriages phenomenon remains a practice that exposes students to STIs and sexual abuse. In particular, such sexual engagements as one night stands are dangerous as they include sexual relations with an individual that a student may have never met before. Of both sexes, women are affected more by these secretive relationships, as they may end up getting pregnant and with higher chances of dropping out of school, and even risk dying as they try to abort unplanned pregnancies. In light of the above, the following recommendations are made for policy makers, the university and health centres that make contact with tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe;

- All university students must compulsorily be taught about sexuality within the tertiary institutions using real case examples that have happened to sensitize them of the dangers of semester marriages.

- Universities must create firm networks with organisations that deal with young people's sexual relationships to ensure that they provide extensive education and support to those who need it.
- Tertiary institutions should continue to provide learners with contraceptives freely and using many methods to ensure that they may reduce the risk of unprotected sexual encounters.

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Inclusive Education for Sustainability and Social transformation

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Abstract

By fully embracing and celebrating all learners within the context of general education, the paper has shown how proponents of this highly popularized inclusive mantra, maintain that Inclusive Education gives a renewed push towards the quest for: social justice, social transformation, sustainability, accountability and equity in education. From the issues raised in this paper, it was discovered that never before has there been such a strong push towards a kind of an education innovation than the present time Inclusive Education. The capacity of Inclusive Education to address the mandate of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in this 21st Century, was also assessed. While there are seventeen (17) of these SDGs, the paper focused on only two (2) of the goals, which may be recast as: i) To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and, ii) To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. For sustainability and inclusive social development, the paper has shown that Inclusive Education has a knack for meeting contemporary needs, at the same time, without compromising the needs of future generations. Underpinning the measures to sustainability was Elkington's (1994) accounting framework called Triple Bottom Line (TBL) pillars of: Social (people), Economic (financial/profits) and Environmental (ecological/planet) dimensions. Since Inclusive Education has been a highly popularized curriculum innovation in education, this paper, therefore, examined and illuminated how Inclusive Education is taken as a tool for Sustainability and Social Transformation, in this 21st Century.

Keywords: Equity, Exceptional learners, Inclusive education, Social Transformation, Sustainability

Introduction

From the medical model perspective, we learn of *institutional wisdom*, a highly controversial and contestable belief that persons with disabilities, and/or different forms of exceptionalities, can only be educated and seen as thriving in specially segregated placements or institutions like Special Schools. Protracted debates have since tabled this highly contestable idea of institutionalisation, criticizing it as a separatist placement strategy. Public condemnation of institutionalisation has resulted in the emergence of the present time Inclusive Education (IE), as an offshoot of *institutional wisdom*. Informed and aligning itself with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) & the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994), IE is perceived as the most telling present time innovation in the education curriculum. As predominantly informed by the social model perspective, Inclusive Education is also perceived as an alternative approach, geared to socially transform all separatist tendencies, by discouraging any form of human segregation. If anything, IE is aimed at making all children and youths, in their diversity, become accepted as functional members in their immediate communities, with their presence unreservedly embraced by all. As an alternative 21st Century curriculum innovation, IE is also bent on making better the education and general welfare for persons with special educational needs. Arguably, Inclusive Education wields a normalization mandate for social transformation and sustainability, as shall be illuminated in this paper.

Traditional society's knowledge, beliefs, ways of life, values and attitudes

Trends in recorded human history have shown that some earliest primitive societies perceived children with disabilities as demons, and hence a curse in mainstream communities. It was strongly believed that an occurrence of a disability was caused by an evil spirit that would have taken a perfect human baby and replaced it with a deformed one, hence the term *changeling* (Chakuchichi and Kaputa, 2002:3). As a way of removing the purported curse, the community had to totally abandon such children, by any means, including killing. Such a viewpoint was based on society's considered kinds of knowledge, attitudes, ways of life and values which were

considered important to be transmitted and perpetuate to the next generation. The fore-going suffices to give some society's historical impressions about disability issues. However, it would appear that some of those traditional views and practices still form part of the 21st Century people's perceptions and attitudes towards people with different forms of exceptionalities. It is significantly true that some modern day societies still perceive these people's problems in terms of superstition, using their condition(s) as reason enough to exclude them from mainstream participation. It is, therefore, from such a stereotypical mind-set that there was a need to identify a solution to change those people's undesirable perceptions and trite notions which portrayed those with disabilities as cursed and hence uneducable. Yes, a chord was to be struck that encourages those stereotypically exclusionary societies to shift from their uncouth mythical beliefs, and adopt more sustainable 21st Century inclusionary attitudes towards special needs persons. Since education is concerned with the transmission of values, what is today needed is a type of a curriculum innovation that aims at inculcating a new thinking, by totally shifting away from those undesirable and hackneyed exclusionary practices, towards an inclusionary advocacy. Contemporary views believe that the emergence of Inclusive Education was considered as providing legitimately acclaimed answers to address those tired past societal ills. As a curriculum innovation, Inclusive Education has been taken as a necessary tool for collective social consciousness towards true social reforms, in every sphere of life. Instead of conveying persons with disabilities as uneducable and in downright despise, like those unfounded mythical judgements of the exclusionary *bone-weary* past, Inclusive Education has been celebrated as a tool that provides a set of contemporary shared ideas, beliefs and moral attitudes, which operate as a unifying force within society. It is for this reason that today we talk of Inclusive Education as an integral part for sustainability and social transformation, a philosophy that is only feasible if inclusion is in true practice.

Inclusive Education as a normalisation philosophy

Wielding a normalisation mandate, Inclusive Education carves out a niche on rights to equity, equality and quality, which happen to be fundamental principles on which any education system should be based. As a normalisation philosophy, Inclusive

Education is highly celebrated for allowing exceptional learners into regular spaces of education within their communities, as explicitly stated in the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and Framework for Action of 1994. Being a contemporary reform movement in education, proponents of Inclusive Education, the likes of Hallahan and Kauffman (1997), say that it is designed to break all forms of barriers by legislatively restructuring general education, in order to better meet and accommodate all learners' needs within their age-appropriate community schools. As a highly popularized normalization cog in the education system, Inclusive Education, is considered as a tool for sustainability and social transformation, as highlighted in some of the United Nations General Assembly initiated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20 Earth Summit, of 20-22 June 2012 came up with seventeen (17) UN SDGs goals (https:// sustainabledevelopment.un.Org/rio20.html)(as accessed in June, 2019), this presentation delimited itself to only two (2) of the seventeen (17) SDGs of 2012, which may be recast as:

1. to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and
2. to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Conceptualisation of inclusion underpinning Inclusive Education

The fundamental argument for inclusion is on all citizens' entitlement to be equitably included in all sectors of human life, like: health, politics, industry, employment, etc. In an effort to access such services, inclusion reinforces that those differences found in people must be respected and celebrated, irrespective of one's condition. This suggests equity and participation, by changing all most restrictive environments into most facilitative ones, a process that can only take place if there be total elimination of all handicapping conditions, most of which are socially constructed.

Growing out of the normalization movements of the 1970s and 1990s, we now hear of people, not only talking about Inclusive Education, but other inclusive arrangements like: Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Health Care, Inclusive Transport, etc. Of late, we have also heard about Inclusive Governments, which are formed through coalition of antagonistic political parties, especially after highly contested election results. The examples of all the highlighted inclusive mandates bring to the fore the pervasiveness of inclusion in almost all sectors of human life. This is why it is strongly believed that as an issue in contemporary education, Inclusive Education *carved out a niche for itself,* especially by embracing and celebrating children with all forms of exceptionalities in mainstream communities and/or spaces.

The Salamanca Conference (7-10 June 1994)

Ever since its first authoritative pronouncement in the 1994 Salamanca Conference, as contained in the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practices in Special Needs Education (SSPPPSNE), proponents of Inclusive Education have advanced important educational discussions about how best to respond to learners who experienced difficulties in schools. By definition, Inclusive Education is understood as a reform movement designed to restructure schools and general education, so that every learner is better accommodated (Hallahan and Kauffman 1997 and Engelbrecht, el al, 1999). To augment, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1994) says:

> … Inclusive Education is a process which brings about a broad vision of Education for All, it takes into account a greater diversity of learners, starting from those with mental disabilities and all those with other forms of disabilities, those from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, those from different linguistic backgrounds, those who experience exclusionary pressure, those who are socially disadvantaged ... socially isolated, those suffering from diseases to those who are oppressed …

As an international phenomenon with a UNESCO mandate, Inclusive Education is thought as a dynamic approach of responding positively to learner diversity with

respect. As a basic human right, and foundation for a more just society, Inclusive Education sees individual differences not as a problem, but as opportunities for social cohesion, which for sustainability aims at restructuring general education in line with the United Nation Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006). From the SSPPPSNE, it may be noted that exceptional children are not limited to those traditionally labelled as disabled, but called attention for much larger group of children who, for various reasons, have difficulty in learning at school and often drop out as *wastage in education*, because their educational needs are not easily identified and responded to. After the Salamanca Conference of 1994, from which SSPPPSNE draws its mandate, a number of governments and non-governmental organisations took *upstream* initiatives to subscribe and align themselves with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Standard Rules on Equalization (SRE) (1993) as adopted by UNESCO in June 1994. In line with the SRE (1993), member states ensured that societies should not act to discriminate against individuals or groups, by adopting education driven laws and policies that have a thrust on eliminating forms of barriers which militate against inclusive participation. For sustainability, Inclusive Education, therefore, mandates that all education learning centres be overhauled into places that offer curricular programmes appropriate to the physical, sensory, emotional and social needs of all learners (Brown, Packer & Passmore, 2011). In the name of social justice, Inclusive Education policies have to, therefore, uphold the pronouncements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which mandates: “To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” (The United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Since some primitive societies would not allow anyone with a disability to live beyond infancy stage, it goes without say, therefore, that Inclusive Education brings with it a change of the mind-set that is needed as a basis for social transformation. Before we even think of celebrating the establishment of spaces like inclusive schools and classrooms, the inclusive movement has to first and foremost fulfil its commissioned task of tap-rooting into the communities, for the transformation of societal mind-set towards persons with disabilities, thus we talk of inclusive societies. Tap-rooting into the communities, as Law (2004) assures, Inclusive Education goes a long way to

confirm the honest belief that building inclusive communities first, is the fundamental principle on which to vouch for social transformation. In essence, as Law (2004) further states, the starting point is to make education an important vehicle for promoting equity, equality, fairness and social justice in society at large, and to help schools to be caring and inclusive learning places in which students see and experience equity in their daily life. Once social transformation has been achieved through the inclusive mantra, it will stand as a demonstrable step, dove-tailed into the other SDG goal, whose effort is: "To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, at all levels", as established in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly.

Inclusive education for social transformation and sustainability (equality vs equity)

Research and personal experience show that school placement history and education, for persons with disabilities, has seen quite some shifts from the most condemned Institutionalisation to the present time most decorated Inclusive Education. As a contemporary curriculum issue, Inclusive Education sets a stage for educational provision that rejects exclusion, by welcoming and embracing all children in regular community learning centres. For social transformation, this curriculum innovation seeks to minimise or remove all forms limitations which may stand as barriers to learner participation in core and expanded core curriculum activities. As a foundation for a more just society, Inclusive Education aims at creating facilitative and inclusive environments, be they physical, social, infrastructural or curriculum related, as an important vehicle for promoting equity, equality and fairness for social justice. As it aims at transforming society's stereotypical mindset, IE focuses more on equity in education, an entity that craves more on embracing and celebrating human diversity than the traditionally acclaimed equality in education. While equity and equality are two strategies that are used to promoting fairness, equality is seen as treating everyone the same, with everyone starting from the same place, also receiving the same help. Conversely, the Inclusive Education mandated equity does

not dwell on sameness, but sees fairness as giving everyone what they need, in order to succeed or achieve a desired result.

In order to help schools to be seen as inclusively caring, all children have to enjoy unquestioned entitlement through access (equity) as opposed to sameness (equality), within their communities, irrespective of their physiological, emotional or sensory condition. By so doing, we talk of building and sustaining inclusive communities. Such entitlement is seen as possible since by nature, Inclusive Education has the capacity to overhaul all existing social arrangements, in terms of policies, structures and procedures. The momentous shift in placement and education curriculum that Inclusive Education wields has suggested a vigorous impact and effect on society, as directly reminiscent of one curriculum guru, Denis Lawton's definition of what education curriculum entails. Addressing these two (2) important questions: Whose Curriculum?, and 'Whose Culture?, Lawton (1975) insists that *school curriculum is essentially a selection from the culture of a society* (https://sjtylr.net/2012/06/22/whose-culture-whose-curriculum/).Impressions emerging from the two questions above seem to acknowledge the impact and power that an education curriculum has on society's way of life. If the above curriculum definition is anything to go by, then through this Inclusive Education innovation, drastic changes can be evident in society's defined attributes, beginning with its attitude, a virtue that characterises Social Transformation. For this to be realised, first and foremost, Inclusive Education laws and policies should never relent, but press on in order to dramatically change the mind-set of the whole society. Secondly, by it being grounded in society's way of life, the present time, Inclusive Education is, therefore set to transmit those acceptable societal values to the next generation, not only for Social Transformation, but for Sustainability as well, by so doing, our 21st Century Education will definitely transform the society at a more macro-level.

Inclusive education for sustainability and social transformation (Community Based Rehabilitation programmes)

While there still exists some remnant voices that argue for separate services within the same community, Inclusive Education has always been arguing towards building of inclusive communities or societies, for productive life, social transformation and

community stability. Contemporary debates believe that building and embracing productive communities always begin by having persons with disabilities engaged in alternative programmes that give them confidence and a very high sense of self-concept. Due to limitations placed upon them, by loss of something valued, persons with disabilities are naturally perceived as helpless, thereby stifling their chances of being embraced. Mutasa and Tafangombe (2010) understands that Inclusive Education has been used as a tool to inculcate the notion of life skills in persons with disabilities. Without life skills with a vocational slant, as Mutasa and Tafangombe (2010) observe, people with disabilities will forever remain dependent on the typical community. One way in which Inclusive Education has pushed for independence in exceptional persons is through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes. From https://www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/en/, it is learnt that the World Health Organisation initiated *Community*-B*ased Rehabilitation (CBR)* seeks to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families. In other words, CBR aims at enhancing independence and quality of life for all community members, through social cooperativeness. Following the Declaration of Alma-Ata in 1978, there is a strong view that vocational activities, which come through CBR programmes, should also be introduced through combined efforts of people with disabilities, their families, organizations and communities, relevant government and non-government organisations, health, education, vocational, social and other services (Ojwang and Hartley, 2010). Since the targeted beneficiaries of CBR are mainstreamed atypical persons, especially women, people with severe and multiple disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and other medical conditions, the programme helps these people by establishing community-based medical integration, Physical therapy (Physiotherapy) rehabilitation programmes and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (Thomas and Thomas, 2013). Since the goal of CBR is to have people with disabilities have access to rehabilitation services which contribute to their overall well-being, inclusion and participation, through Inclusive Education, continued efforts are being made to ensure that all individuals with disabilities, irrespective of age, sex, type of disabilities and socio-economic status, exercise the same rights and opportunities as other citizens in an inclusive society. Such emphasis made in the Joint Position Paper of 2004, which describes and supports the concept of CBR

programmes as bordering around human rights and its call for action against all barriers which affect persons with disabilities. The CBR programmes, therefore, fly in the face of the traditional public indoctrinations which believed that vocational skills are valuable and reliable only if they are the result of formal schooling (www.jsanofranchini.com› 2015/04/23›illich-deschooling-society-1971). For sustainability, of the CBR programmes, it therefore, goes without say that social and environmental barriers to participation, and all forms of handicapping conditions for special needs persons, have to be minimised or totally eliminated, which is what Inclusive Education always wished to achieve. With all people functioning together, with each basic individual needs met, which is the spirit of inclusive society, everyone in the community end up inclusively benefitting and transforming. Well planned and designed programmes and services are, therefore meant to benefit all people in the community, not just those with disabilities. For true and meaningful social transformation, it is essential that disability-related programmes are carefully planned and implemented through full involvement and participation persons with disabilities and their representatives, lack of which, there will be no social stability to talk about.

Inclusive education as a tool for employability - Expanded Core-Curriculum

Independence for persons with disabilities can come through employment and other productive life engagements. The term employment, as Mutasa and Tafangombe (2010) understand it, is a productive human activity that creates something of value, which can either be a service given or goods produced. While money-earning jobs are not the only engagements towards improved quality of life (QoL) in society, it is important to note that at least someone needs some skill or an occupation that comes with money or other rewards. This helps to sustain one in terms of: food, clothing, paying for health care, shelter or such universal human needs (Dhemba, 2015). One way to enhance QoL is by having equitable productive life engagements, as mandated in Rule Number (vii:80) of The World Disability Report: Disability 99. Concurring with the said report is Gwitimah and Kaputa (2007) who say that states should recognize the principles that persons with disabilities must be empowered to also exercise their human rights in the field of employment.

Statistically, one billion people (15% of the world population) lives/experience some form of disability. It's sad to realise that the unemployment rate for special needs people remains significantly higher than those without disabilities. In 2018 for example, the employment-population in the USA was a paltry 19.1 percent among those with a disability, compared to those without a disability that was 65.9 percent (Disability 99: The World Disability Report). Since unemployment rates for people with disabilities are significantly higher than those for people without disabilities, as Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFORD) (2004) & Gwitimah and Kaputa (2007) observe, there must also be equal opportunities for gainful employment in the labour market. In support of the above, Malhotra & Segars (2001) and the World Bank Group (https://www.worldbank.org›topic›disability) report that PWDs largely remain outside the workforce, with only 29% of their working age reportedly employed in comparison to 80% of able bodied adults of ages 18 to 64 years. In essence, unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 8.0 percent in 2018, more than twice the rate of those with no disability (SAFORD, 2004). A recent study carried out in Uganda by Disability Policy Watch Africa, as commissioned by Light for the World and the National Union for Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) also reports that only 9,122 (1.3%) of employees in formal employment are persons with disabilities (http://wecanwork.ug/inclusive-employment-of-persons-with-disabilities/. It is such formidable statistical imbalances which inclusion strives to fight, beginning by offering learners with disabilities inclusive educational programmes which help them to acquire and/or develop appropriate self-help life skills for employability and other survival engagements. While sighted children receive many of these life skills through visuals and incidental learning, as Hallahan and Kauffman (1997) observe, those with visual impairment, for example, require some additional instructions, which come through Expanded Core-Curriculum (ECC), a type of adapted curriculum that has some technical and/or vocational inclination towards acquisition of survival skills for independent adult responsibilities. The need to attend mainstream vocational training institutions comes on the understanding that 91% of exceptional persons have never attended any vocational training, where they ordinarily would acquire skills, as noted by the Southern Africa Federation of Disabled (SAFORD) (2004).

Whether it be convectional schools or rehabilitation programmes, Inclusive Education strives to transform the socially ascribed status society attaches to children with disabilities, by exposing them to ECC areas of: *Compensatory or functional academic skills (including communication modes), Orientation and mobility, Social interaction skills, Independent living skills, Recreation and leisure skills, Career education, Use of assistive technology, Sensory efficiency skills, and skills for Self-determination*. For sustainability of QoL, life engagements for exceptional children have to be provided through vocational inclined Expanded Core-Curriculum (ECC) components, as mandated by Inclusive Education. In essence, these ECC beneficiaries have to align themselves to career life, by wielding demonstrable capabilities in adhering to the most important employability skills, through acquisition of human competences, which Mutasa et al (2010) say are in the areas of: exercising punctuality; not to miss work, being calculative not to make careless mistakes, being cautious, showing high moral standards, upholding good communication and other interpersonal habits and skills; reliability and dependability; meeting agreed deadlines; turning up and meeting appointments; including developing skills which relate to technical engagements such as competence in accountancy, computer programming and other related job competencies which allow for gradual movement from dependency to independence levels.

Apart from high abilities and intelligence, work environments also require assets which come embedded in virtues like: personal appearance, motivation, manners and general acceptable personal qualities. Persons with disabilities have been known to be generally nurtured under hostile social environments, which may make their relational interaction a very difficult process. In the majority of cases, such people *may* portray a character that generally does not have so good interpersonal relationships. Because of the hostile social environments, they grow in, most of these persons show a somewhat detestable relational interaction. Through ECC, Inclusive Education has been seen as the best foot forward, through the teaching of All Day Living or Survival Skills. Failure to successfully bring about or reach that desired objective makes this much famed educational innovation a fanciful hope or pipe-dream.

Access to good quality education, vocational training and workplace learning is a fundamental principle of social cohesion and economic growth. In order to, therefore, *"... promote an inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*", as mandated by one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations General Assembly (2015), persons with disabilities should enjoy all engagements on equal basis, as provided by the mainstream community, including those domains which were ordinarily reserved for the typical or non-disabled. One good example of such human rights engagements is that of employment. Concurring with Rule Number (vii:80) of The World Disability Report: Disability 99, Gwitimah and Kaputa (2007) say that states should recognize that persons with disabilities must also be empowered to exercise their human rights for gainful employment, on equal opportunities. Instead of seeing these persons as distressing, they should also access all services and facilities that are open and readily available to the rest of the other people, where their acquired skills and talents can be spotted. Shipman (1975), in Mutasa and Tafangombe (2010) sees this as a way to prepare them for adult life in work spaces and places such as factories, government offices, mass media and other establishments. Even with such a lucrative mandate, as ensured by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, and further consolidated by the principles of inclusion, what still prevails in the present time labour market does not reveal a significant shift from the historically recorded attitudes of seeing persons with disabilities as pitiful victims of circumstances. This also remains true, despite very powerful legislative statements and strong inclusive commitments to arm exceptional persons with the necessary inclusive skills. Notwithstanding the lucrative policy directives which obligates employers to include these persons in mainstream job spaces through ECC, the majority of these persons with disabilities remain permanently jobless and ever dependent on their families and community members. While Inclusive Education wields '*the celebration of human diversity mantra*', especially for sustainability in this 21st Century, there are labour practice related questions to still grapple with, which include: How much of these well-meaning pronouncements have prospective employers taken heed of? How much have employers reformed and/or transformed from their culture of prejudicing or despising persons with disabilities? While the

benevolent inclusion is being used as a tool for social transformation, a very direct question to also ask in this 21st Century is: Has the much famed inclusive doctrine socially transformed captains of industry, especially from their culture of despising persons with disabilities, as unemployable?

Prompting the above questions are some uncouth labour policies and practices which are perceived as discriminatory, on grounds of disability or exceptionality. No matter the present time 21st Century era, there still exist some types of job recruitment policies, coming through certain types of interviews and trade testing, which have proved to be seriously incompatibly eliminative, to allow PWDs to favourably fit in the structures of the global space. While in schools, Inclusive Education pushes for celebration of human diversity, some employers in the industries still remain skeptical about employing persons with disabilities, as they fear losing prestige from potential customers and other business partners. Some employers are still not easily convinced, hence they still have reservations in engaging PWDs, as they always doubted these people's employability. In a sarcastic tone, some employers have been heard even saying, "Employing someone with a disability equals a disabled business, for this reason, no employer would want to risk losing the glamour of his/her business by employing PWDs!!", as gained from a certain 2010 radio interview on 'People with Disabilities - Employment Opportunities'.

Since a career for life is no longer an option for all people today, enhancing vocational skills for people with disabilities has always been part of Inclusive Education goals, as a way of aligning people with disabilities to job markets. Training in vocational skills has been seen as one way to enable these people to access fundamental principles for economic growth and success. Through appropriate skill acquisition, all those life engagements which were once perceived to be for the non-disabled, will then be also availed to persons with disabilities to enable them realise quality of life (QoL), in form of universal human needs. In order to inclusively provide for all those who want to learn, with access to available resources at any time in their lives, the Kingdom of Eswatini instituted rehabilitation institutions in three centres of: Nhlangano, Malkerns and Mbabane, where youths, and to some extent adults, acquire life skills for independent adult responsibilities. Since fundamental principles

of any vocational training dove-tail into life time engagements like job opportunities and employment, a serious change of mind-set has to also occur to the community of employers. In a way of championing inclusive employment of persons with disabilities, employers have to be seriously oriented about the intrinsic nature or essence of inclusivity in commerce and industry. Tabled for very serious discussions should not only be tax entitlements, like the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), as an example of a tax incentive that is available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups. Prospective employers should have a changed mindset and appreciate that with or without tax incentives, individuals with disabilities have to be a priority, since from time immemorial, they consistently faced significant barriers to employment (https://www.irs.gov›businesses›small-businesses-self-employed›work-...). To fulfill this purpose, prospective employers have to socially transform instead of remaining radical against those persons with disabilities. If prospective employers remain stiff-necked, by segregating persons with disabilities in the job market, thereby unwilling to conform to standards initially set by ideals of Inclusive Education, social justice advocates may end up developing a very low opinion about these captains of industry.

Inclusive education as a bedrock of Nothing about Us without Us

Persons with various forms of exceptionalities encounter quite some exploitative occurrences resulting in them feeling disrespected, disenfranchised and powerless (Wolff, and Huns, 2017). Although they are the very people in need of different services, with disabilities, these persons always felt that deprivation of their liberty is caused by services being imposed on them, without their consent as direct beneficiaries and users. Such a scenario prevails, in spite of them having a voice that must be at the table, from the beginning of any planning process, and never be considered as an after-thought (Wolff and Huns, 2017). Wielding the Inclusive Education mantra, these people have always used language, words, and actions to fight exploitative daily battles which come their way. For sustainability, persons with disabilities have to make informed decisions regarding what is appropriate for them. On this note, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (2011) says that for social cohesion and wide range of social outcomes, people with

disabilities or their advocates have to make decisions about what services they need to enhance participation. To make sure that they are ever included, and never cast out, as commissioned by Inclusive Education, these persons have since used the disability empowerment slogan, 'Nothing about Us without Us' (NAUWU) *(Latin: "Nihil de nobis, sine nobis")*, in all their dealings. From the onset, this empowerment movement goes beyond the status quo of how to perceive persons with disabilities, as it strives to progress toward equity, equality and social justice. As a catchphrase, it is hoped that "Nothing About Us Without Us" will continue to serve as social justice, as it condenses an idea that should resonate with social cohesion (Wolf and Hums, 2017).

The NAUWU empowering words have always fuelled the disability rights movement over the years. Fundamentally, the term "Nothing About Us Without Us," as Wolf and Hums (2017) put it, expresses the conviction of people with disabilities that they know what is best for them. This mantra became the rallying call for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and continues to have relevance, in more ways than one, to people who consistently faced significant life barriers. Wolf and Hums (2017) believe that NAUWU reinforces the role of people without disabilities as allies and partners who share the road toward inclusion and equality, uniting the all he marginalized and invisible individuals and groups who are demanding a seat at the same community table. As a front to share their voice, the phrase NAUWU is used to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any one or representative without the voice and direct participation of members of the group affected by that policy (Wolff and Huns, 2017). The idea of hearing directly from these persons, as Barker and Weller (2003) observe, is based on the premise that even with disabilities, these persons are not simply passive objects, but competent social actors that make sense of and actively contribute to their environment. Underpinning the empowering words from the NAUWU mantra is the conviction that people with disabilities and/or their advocates know what is best for them, thereby advocating for full voicing and their participation (the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 1990). When decisions are being made to relocate accessible parking spaces, for example, this has to be done with consultation of persons with disabilities. From this example, it may be learnt that

even professionals who provide services have the responsibility to provide relevant information to people with disabilities and their advocates, only after consultation. In essence, this slogan emphasizes how people with disabilities must be valued as integral and essential contributors to every sector within mainstream communities, be it in: transport, commerce, industry, entertainment, fashion, recreation, education, judiciary, sports, medicine, business, employment, etc. (Barker and Weller, 2003). Wolff and Huns (2017) believe that it is not enough to have people with disabilities become leaders of disability-focused organizations. Instead, they have to be front and center in mainstream local, national and international organizations. As a follow up to the above, Wolff and Huns (2017) give explanations that in the entertainment industry, for example, people with disabilities need to represent themselves and be visible in movies, TV and advertising. Similarly, in the world of sports, people with disabilities need to be leading Special Olympics movements, without being discriminated against, like Paralympics, Deaflympics and other related sporting activities, as an authoritative order Inclusive Education stands for. The 'Nothing about Us without Us' mantra, therefore, serves as a call for sustainability of those transformed communities in today and those generations in posterity. For sustainability, it is the people with disabilities, themselves whose voices must lead the way. By so doing, the Inclusive Education rooted NAUWU will enable the society to re-define, re-imagine and transform what it means to be a person with a disability in all aspects and all avenues of our 21st Century global society (Wolff and Huns, 2017).

Summary

The paper presented Inclusive Education (IE) as a contemporary curriculum innovation that seeks to re-define the education curriculum for exceptional children. In more ways than one, the paper highlighted how IE focuses more on equity than the traditional dogma of equality. While equity and equality are two strategies that are ingrained to promoting fairness, this paper further crystallized how Inclusive Education 'sees' fairness through e*quity* and *access* lenses. As presented in this paper, equity is characterized by giving everyone the support they need as individuals, in order to access and achieve a desired result. This view, however,

sounds to be in cross purpose with the traditional *equality* in education view that dwells on sameness and equal treatment, where everyone has to benefit from the same support base. For sustainability, IE believes that every exceptional learner should enjoy unquestioned entitlement through access (equity) as opposed to sameness (equality), within their communities. To achieve such, Inclusive Education strives to build inclusive communities, where all causes of inequities are addressed. From a Social Model perspective, it was also noted that IE craves to transform and mould present time societal mind-set and character, for a sustainable future. As it endeavours to inculcate independence and social cohesion in communities, IE is celebrated for instituting Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes. By definition, this paper presented CBR as alternative communal programmes, which give people with disabilities independence, quality of life (QoL), confidence and high sense of self-concept. From this paper, it may also be noted that independence and QoL can only be realised if these learners possess some basic life skills, especially with the realisation that unemployment rate for persons with disabilities remains higher than those without disabilities. To, therefore, prepare and channel persons with disabilities for the job market and equitable productive life engagements, the paper demonstrated how IE insists on the need for additional orthodidactical instructions in schools, which come through Expanded Core-Curriculum (ECC). By definition, this paper presented ECC as a type of an adapted curriculum that has some technical and/or vocational inclination towards acquisition of Survival or Personal Management Skills. Emerging from this paper is the view that the IE driven ECC programmes focus on independent adult responsibilities, which are important factors for Social Transformation and Sustainability. From the paper, it has also been noted that Inclusive Education insists on the willingness of members of a society to embrace and cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper. In the name of social cohesion, it therefore goes without saying that the voice for persons with disabilities or their advocates must be heard leading the way, in whatever decision - good or bad. Upholding people with disabilities' Nothing About Us Without Us slogan has been highlighted as an important drive to Social Transformation. From this paper, one may evidently attest to the notion that the present time Inclusive

Education is in more ways than one, a tool for Social Transformation and Sustainability in this 21st Century era.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BY HIGH SCHOOL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS IN ESWATINI

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Abstract

Teachers are integral to the implementation of inclusive education. Since the introduction of the inclusive education in Eswatini, there is no study conducted to assess the implementation in the teaching of agriculture. Therefore, this study sought to describe the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement inclusive education. A descriptive research design targeting high school agriculture teachers was employed. A sample of 180 agriculture teachers was drawn from the target population using a simple random sampling method. A valid and reliable questionnaire was used for data collection. A six-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the teacher preparedness, experiences and strategies for implementing the inclusive education. A five-point numerical scale was used to measure the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement inclusive education. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Findings revealed that high school agriculture teachers are able to identify different learning needs of all the students. The agriculture teachers have implemented inclusive education to a greater extent. The conclusion drawn was that even though teachers are not trained for the inclusive education; they are doing well in the implementation of inclusive education. Recommendations made were that teachers should be provided with in-service training on inclusive education and proper infrastructure should be built in the school. Further study should be conducted on the adequacy of resources allocated to the implementation of inclusive education in Eswatini.

Index words: agriculture teachers, disability, implementation, inclusive education, special educational needs

Introduction

Inclusive Education (IE) has gained so much attention not only Southern Africa, but also in Eswatini. The mission is to integrate all learners with diverse needs in to the education system. The education system should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 1994). IE implementation does not seek only to keep all learners with disabilities in schools but also to maximize their participation (Ainscow, 2010). IE operates on the basis that education is a basic human right. This claim is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is reaffirmed by the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusion in education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school system without segregation. It is about shifting focus from altering disabled people to fit into society in a bit to transforming the society and the world by changing attitudes, removing barriers, and providing the right support (UN conventions on the rights of the child, 1991).

Inclusive Education (IE) is a relatively controversial topic for many countries (Luseno, 2001). The idea behind Inclusive Education is that students with special needs are placed in the same classroom environment as other students of their age who do not have special needs. Globally, IE is increasingly viewed more broadly as a process of addressing and responding to diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participating in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2007). Barton (2003) considers that IE is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to remove the barriers that prevents learners participating fully in education. These barriers might be linked to ethnicity, gender, social status, poverty, disability, etc.

Eswatini is a signatory of the UN charter; thus it is governed by universal declaration of human rights. Both of these objects observe and respect human rights. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini (2005) states that every Swazi child has the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first grade (The Deputy Prime Minister's office policy document, 2010). Thus, the Government of Eswatini has laid emphasis on the educational

rights of children and has set precedence in favour of Inclusive Education by establishing a policy to implement inclusion in education among public schools in the country. The Deputy Prime Minister's office policy document (2010) on the Rights of Children, Article 23 (2010), states that parties should recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full a decent life, in conditions which promote self-reliance and facilitate his or her participation in the community. The Deputy Prime Minister's office policy document (2010) on the Rights of Children, Article 24 (2010) advocates for equal education opportunities irrespective of the severity of the disability, and stipulates that specific needs of all learners experiencing barriers to learning must be met. This facilitates the development of minimum norms and standards for the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Swaziland National Children Policy (2009) stipulates that compulsory inclusive basic education be provided free for all children in the country, irrespective of gender, age, life circumstances, health, disability, stage of development, capacity to learn and financial status.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to describe the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement Inclusive Education in Eswatini. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics and background information of learners under Inclusive Education in selected schools of Eswatini.
2. Describe the preparedness of high school agriculture teachers to implement of Inclusive Education in Eswatini.
3. Find out the experiences of high school agriculture teachers regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education; and
4. Describe the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement Inclusive Education in Eswatini.
5. Identify strategies that can be employed to enhance implementation of Inclusive Education in Eswatini.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive research design. The target population of the study (N=340) were agriculture teachers from public high schools in Eswatini. A sample of 180 agriculture teachers was drawn from the population using a simple random sampling method. A self-administered questionnaire was hand delivered to the respondents in February 2018. The questionnaires required the respondents to rate the items using a 6 point Likert-type. The Likert-type scale had the following ranges: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = slightly disagree, 3 = disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = slightly agree, and 6 = strongly agree. A five-point numerical scale was used to measure the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement inclusive education. The questionnaires were validated by four lectures in the Agricultural Education and Extension Department (AEE) at the University of Eswatini, Luyengo campus. The inter-item reliability coefficient (r=0.82) of the instrument was calculated using Cronbanch's alpha formula. Letters seeking for permission to conduct the study were written to school principals and the respondents, and permission was granted. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the questionnaire was formulated such that respondents' names were not revealed. Also the data were accessible only to the researchers. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 were used for analysing data.

Findings

Demographic characteristics and background information

Table 1 presents the background information and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The table depicts that 72 of the agriculture teachers (45%) were male teachers while 88 teachers (55%) were female. Interestingly, only 43 agriculture teachers (26.9%) once lived with a person disability while 73.1% of the agriculture teachers (n=117) had never lived with a person disability. Moreover, 34.4% of the agriculture teachers (n=55) were having learners with special educational needs (LSEN) in their classes. One hundred and five of agriculture teachers (65.6%) were not having LSENs.

Surprisingly, a majority of the agriculture teachers did not receive training on inclusive education (n=155, 96.9%). Lastly, the table depicts that 152 agriculture teachers (95%) acknowledged that they needed to receive training on Inclusive Education.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics and background information of the respondents (n= 160)

Characteristics	**(f)**	**%**
Gender		
Male	72	45
Female	88	55
Age (years)		
27-39	99	61.9
40-49	52	32.5
50-55	9	5.6
Live with a person having disability		
Yes	43	26.9
No	117	73.1
Have LSENs in class		
Yes	55	34.4
No	105	65.6
Ever received training on IE		
Yes	5	3.1
No	155	96.9
Have seen a need to train		
Yes	152	95.0
No	8	5.0

Preparedness of high school agriculture teachers for the implementation of inclusive education

Table 2 depicts that teachers are able to design learning tasks that involve indiscriminate interactive behaviors (M = 4.81, SD = 1.24); planning and preparing for learners with special needs (M=4.73, SD=1.13); having the ability to use different student activities to suit learner's interests and abilities (M=4.73 SD = 1.06); colleagues helping with issues which arise from students with special needs (M=4.73, SD=1.15); and creating teaching materials that meet the varying needs of learners (M=4.70, SD=1.07). However, the agriculture teachers submitted that they did not have an opportunity to undergo refresher courses and training geared towards developing appropriate values and attitude, skills and competence to effectively handle inclusive classes (M = 3.15, SD = 1.57).

Table 2

Teacher preparedness for Inclusive Education

Statements	**M**	**SD**
Teachers design learning tasks that involve exchange through indiscriminate interactive behaviours.	4.81	1.24
Teachers to plan and prepare for learners with special needs.	4.73	1.13
Teachers have the ability to use different student activities to suit learner's interests and abilities	4.73	1.06
Colleagues helping with issues which arise with LSENs	4.73	1.15
Teachers able to create teaching materials that meet the varying needs of learners	4.70	1.07
Teachers have the ability to provide feedback that caters for students individual differences.	4.68	0.95
Teachers feel comfortable in teaching students with disabilities	4.48	1.17
Teachers have the ability to handle complex behavioural	4.43	1.21

tendencies of all inclusive classrooms		
Teachers have practical skills and knowledge in handling different learners.	4.37	1.28
All efforts are made to educate students who have barriers to learning in regular education classroom.	4.18	1.16
Teachers support the implementation of inclusive education in schools.	3.76	1.43
Government provides teachers with in-service training opportunities in order to appropriately teach students with disabilities.	3.38	1.69
Teachers undergo refresher courses and training, geared towards developing appropriate values and attitudes, skills and competences to effectively handle inclusive classes.	3.15	1.57
Overall	**4.32**	**1.24**

Rating scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Slightly Disagree (SLD), 4 = Slightly Agree (SLA), 5 = Agree (A), 6 = Strongly Agree (SA). M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation. Cut-off point: <3.5 disagree and > 3.5 agree.

Experiences of high school agriculture teachers on the implementation of Inclusive Education in Eswatini

Table 3 presents information regarding the experiences of high school agriculture teachers on the implementation of Inclusive Education in Eswatini. The table depicts that agriculture teachers accept the diversity of the learners day after day (M = 5.44, SD = 0.77); and they are have joy and satisfaction when LSENs performs better in their school work (M = 5.24, SD = 0.91). However, agriculture teachers are not prepared to teach students who have special needs (M = 4.56, SD = 1.12). The agriculture teachers also noted that work becomes unbearable with higher target set for learners to achieve (M=5.11, SD=0.98) and are please when witnessing a positive change in the child's aggressive behavior (M=5.10, SD= 0.88), among others.

Table 3

Experiences of agriculture teachers regarding Inclusive Education

Statements	**M**	**SD**
Educator accepting the diversity of the learners day after day.	5.44	0.77
The joy and satisfaction is really indescribable when learners with LSENs perform better in their school work.	5.24	0.91
Work becomes unbearable with higher target set for them to achieve	5.11	0.98
Become pleased when witnessing a positive change in the child's aggressive behaviour.	5.10	0.88
Teachers perceive learners with behavioural disorders as more challenging in the classroom.	4.98	0.97
Teaching LSENs is stressful	4.96	1.06
It is tough to teach learners without special needs together with learners with learning difficulties in the same classroom.	4.94	0.96
Reduced ability to teach learners with hearing problems effectively also proved to be stressful.	4.84	1.00
Suffering because of the teaching overload	4.79	1.18
Giving support to LSENs gives a sense of satisfaction	4.79	0.98
Struggling to adjust to the new way of doing things.	4.75	1.15
Teachers perceive learners with emotional disorder more challenging in the classroom.	4.69	1.13
Do not always feel prepared to teach students who have special needs	4.56	1.12
Overall	**4.94**	1.01

Rating scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Slightly Disagree (SLD), 4 = Slightly Agree (SLA), 5 = Agree (A), 6 = Strongly Agree (SA).

M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation. Cut-off point: <3.5 disagree and > 3.5 agree

Extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement inclusive education

Table 4 presents information regarding the extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement Inclusive Education. The agriculture teachers were able to do the following to a greater extent: face the student as they talk to allow those students to pick the message from the movement of lips if they encounter hearing problems (M= 4.48, SD= 0.60); project their voices loud enough to accommodate students that are having hearing problems (M=4=46, SD=0.74); use body language as they teach (M=4.36, SD=0.84); ensure that all learners, irrespective of their physical disabilities are given equal opportunities in class (M=4.26, SD=0.84); identifying different learning needs of all the students (M=4.10, SD=1.01); creating warm and motivating learning atmosphere that support all learners, and so on. Unfortunately, the agriculture teachers were not doing enough to persuade the school in order to provide infrastructure to accommodate all the needs of students (M= 3.08, SD= 1.24).

Table 4

The extent to which high school agriculture teachers implement Inclusive Education

Statements	**M**	**SD**
Teachers face the students as they talk, to allow those students to pick the message	4.48	0.60
Teachers project their voices loud enough to accommodate students that are having hearing problems.	4.46	0.74
Teachers use body language as they teach.	4.36	0.84
Teachers ensure that all learners, irrespective of their physical disabilities are given equal opportunities in class.	4.26	0.81
Teachers identify different learning needs of all the students.	4.10	1.01
Teachers create warm and motivating learning atmosphere that support all learners.	4.04	0.66
Teachers are aware of the differences that exist in classroom.	3.99	0.75
Teachers are working in collaboration.	3.94	0.84
Slow learners are not given any special attention; they repeat classes in order to improve their performance.	3.76	1.11
Teachers prepare adequately for learners with special needs.	3.74	0.99

Teachers design learning task that are equitably distributed to all learners.	3.63	1.06
Teachers advocate for adjustment of infrastructure to accommodate all the needs of students.	3.08	1.24
Overall	**3.99**	**0.89**

Ranking criteria: 0 - 1.49 = Not at all (NA), 1.5 – 2.49 = Least extent (LE), 2.5 - 3.49 = Moderate extent (ME), 3.5 – 4.49 = Great extent, 4.5 - 5 = Very Great extent (VGE).

M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation

Strategies that can be employed to enhance implementation of Inclusive Education

Table 4 presents information regarding strategies that can be employed to enhance the implementation of Inclusive Education. The following were strategies that can be employed to enhance the implementation of Inclusive Education: Supporting Learners with LSENs to the best of ability (M = 5.28, SD = 0.86); having a positive attitude toward Inclusive Education (M= 5.22, SD = 0.84); adapting my teaching style to the new inclusive environment (M=5.12, SD=0.76); showing equal respect towards all LSEN (M=5.11, SD=0.86); knowing strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learners needs (M=5.06, SD=0.85); adjusting lessons to be suitable to every student (M=5.04, SD=0.88); and so on.

Table 4

Strategies developed to implement Inclusive Education

Statements	**M**	**SD**
Supporting LSEN to the best of ability	5.28	0.86
Having a positive attitude toward inclusive education.	5.22	0.84
Adapting teaching style to the new inclusive environment	5.12	0.76
Showing equal respect towards all LSEN.	5.11	0.86
Knowing strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learners needs.	5.06	0.85

Adjusting lessons to suite every student	5.04	0.88
Understanding educational needs of the LSEN	4.99	0.88
Understanding the characteristics of children with disabilities e.g. special educational laws, strategies for assessing the learner's need	4.88	0.84
Having trust in the educability of the LSENs.	4.84	0.94
Treating all learners in the same way (e.g. not showing more sympathy with the LSEN).	4.79	1.15
Having faith in the LSEN's learning ability.	4.27	1.56
Discipline all learners in the same way (e.g. not be lenient towards the LSEN)	4.01	1.68
Overall	**4.88**	**1.01**

Rating scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Slightly Disagree (SLD), 4 = Slightly Agree (SLA), 5 = Agree (A), 6 = Strongly Agree (SA).
M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that agriculture teachers in Eswatini were able to identify and assist learners with different learning needs. The findings indicted that the agriculture teachers were prepared to implement Inclusive Education as they were able to plan and prepare for learners with special needs; even though they were not trained. These findings are attested by Luseno (2001) that effective implementation of inclusive programmes requires that the teachers know the characteristics of learners with disabilities. Opertti (2009) further argued that inclusion involves changes and modification in content, approaches and strategies. Hyam (2004) reported that teachers seemed to embrace the human rights philosophy underpinning the introduction of Inclusive Education. However, Downing (2002) stated that the implementation of Inclusive Education was not as easy as it signals a dramatic paradigm shift for mainstream educators.

The findings of the study also revealed that Inclusive Education is stressful as some learners have behavioural disorders posing a challenge for classroom management. Hay (2003) reported that that teachers were struggling to adjust to new ways of

doing things yet they have to accept the diversity of learners. Findings of the study indicated that having a positive attitude toward Inclusive Education and supporting LSENs to the best of ones' ability is an effective strategy in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This was attested by Koay (2006) that success of inclusive education depended mainly on the perception and attitudes of teachers within mainstream schools. Also, the findings disclosed that adjusting lessons to accommodate all learners is an effective strategy in the implementation of IE. Similarly, Smith (2010) reported that teachers, administrators and other stakeholders need to adjust lessons and school curricula to make them favourable for learners with special educational needs.

Conclusions

The study concluded that high school Agriculture teachers are implementing inclusive education despite the challenges encountered such as not being equipped with the necessary expertise to handle learners with special educational needs. The agriculture teachers are able to identify different learning needs of all the students. They are able to design learning task that are equitably distributed to all learners. The agriculture teachers are able to accommodate all the students in the IE. However, the agriculture teachers lack clear and precise knowledge and understanding of what Inclusive Education is. This emanates from the fact that the agriculture teachers were not trained on inclusive education. The agriculture teachers have a whole range of experiences related to behaviour, speech, language and communication.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations

i. The Ministry of Education and Training need to provide teachers with a diverse curriculum that will meet the needs of the wide range of learners if they were to successfully educate learners in inclusive setting.

ii. The Ministry of Education and Training may consider providing support such as continual workshops to educate and equip teachers on how to effectively implement IE.

iii. The Ministry of Education may consider reducing the teacher-pupil ratio since the learners in the Inclusive Education era demand more attention due to diverse needs.

iv. The Government of Eswatini may consider revisit the school infrastructure to ensure the inclusive education.

v. The agriculture teachers need to be sensitive to the different needs and challenges of the learners and attempts to support the learners especially during the practical sessions.

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Effects of guided inquiry instructional strategy (giis) on academic achievement of metalwork students in LAGOS STATE technical colleges of NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the Effect of Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy on Metalwork Technology Students' Achievement in Lagos State Technical Colleges. Two types of Instructional Strategies namely: Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM), two types of gender (male and female) as well as two types of location (urban and rural) were also investigated. Quasi-experimental design which involved groups of students in their intact class assigned to two groups. The entire population of 122 second year students (95 males and 27 females) obtained from four state owned Technical Colleges were used for the study because of the relatively small size and its accessibility. Three research questions and three hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The instrument used for data collection was Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement Test (MTSAT), was subjected to face validation by three experts. The reliability index was found to be 0.69 and 0.71 using test re-test method. Data obtained from the administration of the instrument were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistic was used at 0.05 level of significance to test the hypotheses. Findings from the study indicated that Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies undeniably offer more promises than the traditional Conventional method in bringing about meaningful learning and understanding of Metalwork Technology, also the main effects of male students taught Metalwork Technology with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies is higher than the main effects of female students, and finally there was significant difference between the main effects of location on students' achievement in Metalwork Technology. The result shows that urban students had a higher mean score than rural students.

Keyword: Instructional strategy, Metal work, technical College, academic achievement.

Introduction

The growth and development of most nations are dependent on technology, science and mathematics education. This explains why some researchers, among others, have in recent times concentrated their research efforts on finding teaching strategies that promote teaching and learning of technologies so as to increase achievements and enrolments of students in Technical Colleges (Osuafor, 1999). Emphasis has shifted from traditional methods that are more teacher-centered and encourages rote memorization of facts to strategies that are more learner-centered involving hands-on, minds-on science activities (Nzewi and Osisioma, 1995). Teaching and learning processes during which learners ask their own questions, plan their own inquiries, analyze and discuss their findings and construct their own understandings make learning to be more effective and long-lasting. Inquiry model requires a high degree of communication among environment, content, materials, learners and teachers (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, & Gibson, 1998). The most important feature of this method is to enable both teachers and learners to be researchers, idea propagators and problem solvers.

Many educators discuss the nature of the inquiry by making use of mostly two concepts such as open inquiry and guided inquiry (Hassard, 2005). Open inquiry is described as a student-centered approach. Students, in this approach, form their own problems and hypotheses, make plans for a scientific research, carry out these researches in order to test their hypotheses and discuss their findings with other friends (Colburn, 2000). However, it was reported that this approach did not have a significant effect on improving students' academic achievement and developing their scientific process skills (Berg, 2003; Khishfe & Ab-El-Kalick, 2002; Klahr & Nigam, 2004; Schneider, Krajcik, Marx, Soloway, 2001). According to Furtak (2006), scientist teaching stands somewhere between the boundaries of the traditional method, in which certain answers known by the teachers are transferred to the students and the open inquiry method in which students construct their own problems and solutions. This version is called Guided Inquiry method. Guided inquiry is integrates the scientific and constructivist rationales together with the facts, principles and rules accepted as scientific and stressed by contemporary science

education reforms (Magnusson and Palinscar, 1995). Guided inquiry could be defined as interacting with concrete materials to gain knowledge about some concepts by making use of the guidance made to a certain degree apart from the teacher in order to be able to solve a problem (Lewicki, 1993).

In guided inquiry method, teachers and learners play a crucial role in asking questions, developing answers and structuring of materials and cases. The usage of guided inquiry method is very important in transition from lecturing method to other teaching method which are less and more clearly structured for alternative solutions. Guided inquiry activities help students to develop their individual responsibility, cognitive methods, report making, problem solving and understanding skills. According to National Research Council (NRC) (2000), guided inquiry environments can best facilitate focusing on learning the development of certain scientific concepts, but while students in the teachers' guidance focus their attention on to the content, they have less suitable means for discovering scientific thinking processes and gaining experience (Kai and Krajcik, 2006). Felder and Brent, (2004), observe that the characteristics of high levels of intellectual development and a deep approach to learning are essentially the same. Both contextual relativism and a deep approach involve taking responsibility for one's own learning. Questioning authorities in other to probe and give meaning to learnt concepts rather than accepting their statement at face value, and attempting to understand new instructional conditions that induce students to adopt a deep approach should also promote intellectual growth.

Alant, (2004) studied students' intellectual ability and discovered that students of varying ability levels performed differently depending on the type of method of instruction. Adesoji (2002) opined that students are not the same especially when we find out the rate at which facts and principles in sciences are being assimilated. This implies that the rate of which an individual performs his specific task differs. The ability level of student is a construct of its academic achievement (Aremu, 2001). Salami (2000) discovered that students' performance depends on its cognitive ability. Studies have shown that learners are qualitatively different in their ability levels and in learning problems (Adesoji, 1997; Chang & Mao, 1998; Iroegbu, 1998). Iroegbu (1998) asserted that a method of instruction can improve the achievement of

students with low ability levels when the strategy is learner centered. Adesoji (1997) discovered that problem solving strategies were effective in teaching students of different ability levels. Okebukola (1992) confirmed that the use of appropriate instructional strategies can influence the performances of low achieving students. Constructivist learning is based on cognitive theory of learning which holds that learning takes place as a result of intuition that is, the individual intuitively bring a number of events together to serve a purpose in solving a particular problem at a particular time.

Guided inquiry is an example of constructivist learning strategy which poses significant contextualized real-world situations and providing resources, guidance, and instruction to learning as they develop content knowledge and problem-solving skills (Yager, 1991). Maloney (1994) defined Guided inquiry as a strategy that consists of carefully selected and designed problems that demand from the learner acquisition of critical knowledge, problem solving proficiency, self-directed learning strategies, and team participation skills. It reduces teacher's instruction where learners are seen as active listeners and passively involved in classroom activities as in the case of conventional method. Guided inquiry instructional strategy has been used effectively in medical schools which have been found to be effective and enhances retention. The researcher is hereby optimistic that if GIIS can be used appropriately in metalwork technology classroom it will bridge the existing gaps and further improve the student's achievement most especially students with low ability level.

Technical Colleges are institutions where students are trained to acquire relevant knowledge and skills in different occupations for employment in the world of work (National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), 2000). According to Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2004), a Technical College is a segment of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) designed to produce craftsmen at the secondary school level and master craftsmen at the advanced craft. The goals of Technical Colleges as stated in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2004) are to, provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technician levels; provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;

and give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

Metalwork technology is one of the trades involves the application of scientific knowledge in the design, selection of materials, construction, fabrication and maintenance of Metalwork. Metalwork technology is one of the mechanical trades offered in Nigeria Technical Colleges (Federal Republic of Nigeria) (FRN, 2013).

Gender issue has assumed prominence discourse in technical and vocational education. A study by Hunt and Kirk (2000) has shown that there is differential performance in activities as a result of gender. Wallace and Kang (2004) found that the number of enrolments in technical education courses was significantly lower for female. In addition, Trusty (2002) examined the effects of background variables on choice of courses in colleges. He found that performance is positively affected by courses taken, which in turn, positively affect the choice of occupational field chosen later. Gender can be a factor when considering learning strategies or modes

The Annual failure rate of Metalwork technology students' in the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) examinations (NABTEB External examiners report 2010-2016); noted that, continuous training and graduating of unemployable technical College students will lead to under employment. (International Labor Organization (ILO) and United Nations Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO, 2002), necessitates the need to seek for appropriate learning mode and instructional technique that is student centered (Attewell, 2001). The integration of guided inquiry instructional techniques under different learning mode may assist the Metalwork Technology student in Technical Colleges to benefit from a shift from teacher centered learning to student centered for better acquisition of problem-solving skill and thinking skill that can make room for lifelong learning.

Literature is replete with evidence that teachers use ineffective methods and strategies in Technical teaching, which among other factors, have contributed to the student's poor achievement in Metalwork Technology trade. This situation therefore, calls for exploration of the effectiveness of other teaching-learning techniques, which have been found effective in sciences and mathematics subjects. The present skill demands, for lifelong learning and self-reliance among developing countries is aimed at reducing unemployment empower its citizenry and further reduce wastage caused

by the production of unskilled Technical College graduates. Imandojemu (2001) assert that Technical Colleges produce more graduates than what was obtainable in the early sixties but with little or no skills. Ogwo (2004) noted the pitiable situation where the Technical College products are neither good in liberal education nor technically skillful (possess required basic skill to enter the industry), which has resulted in unemployment of Technical College graduates especially metalwork technology graduates. In this regard the employer responded by non-demand of the products of Technical Colleges. Employers prefer to develop their own in-house craftsmen instead of employing the half-baked graduates produced in technical colleges.

It seems the students don't understand the important concept in the trade. NABTEB (2005) states that there is a clear evidence of severe problems in the understanding of some seemingly difficult concepts on psychomotor related activities among technical students in the technical colleges, especially in metalwork technology. The Federal Ministry of Education FME (2000) reported a high failure rate among the graduates of the technical colleges in the certificate examination conducted by NABTEB for a period of over five-years in the trade courses. More so, the industrial nature of Nigeria as a developing country demanded for highly skilled metal craftsmen that will fit into various small-scale production industries. However, majority of the students have been completing the programme with very poor academic performance and inadequate skills. This could not earn them paid or self-employment, or worse still, admission into higher technical institution for advancement in their academic pursuit. Also, modern technological awareness has made fabrication, machining and welding an easy task but there is the need to increase equipping the technician with adequate skill in carrying out operations with the new digital machines and equipment.

Kere (1996) explained that many countries like India, Korea, Sweden, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, have re-oriented their TVE for better delivery and adequate skill acquisition. Sahlim, Hedin and Hagman, (1996) observe that increasing technical education products, unemployment and the decline in enrolment into technical institutions, despite the increasing demand for skilled manpower, has

presented additional challenges for re-orientating instructional delivery in TVE programme. Kere also contended that, in a highly competitive market with increasing competition for quality workers, unique instructional strategies must be identified and adopted if quality skilled students are to be produced.

Despite the clear evidence of difficulties experienced by these students, technical teachers and professionals in technology education have not considered it necessary that skills for lifelong learning in TVE need appropriate instructional strategies (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2005). This fact has necessitated the need to investigate teaching strategies that can enhance learning.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean achievement scores of students taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and those taught using Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in Metalwork Technology skill Achievement Test (MTSAT)?
2. What is the difference in the overall mean achievement scores of male and female students exposed to GIIS and CTM in Metalwork Technology?
3. What is the difference in the overall mean achievement scores of rural and urban students exposed to GIIS and CTM in Metalwork Technology?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean MTSAT scores of students exposed to GIIS and CTM.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean MTSAT scores of male and female students exposed to GIIS and CTM.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean MTSAT scores of rural and urban students exposed to GIIS and CTM.

Method

The study utilized a quasi-experimental design, specifically the non-randomized control group design involving two group, 122 second year students (95 males and 27 females) drawn from four Lagos State Technical Colleges offering metalwork technology took part in this study. The data was obtained from the 2016/2017 session register of each of the four Technical Colleges (Government Technical College Odomola- Epe, Government Technical College Ado-soba, Government Technical College Ikorodu and Government Technical College Agindigbin).

Research Instrument

Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement Test (MTSAT) validated by two subject experts from Science and Technology Education Department University of Lagos and one expert from School of Technical Education Federal College of Education (Technical) Akaka Lagos. The comments and suggestions on each of the Instruments by the validators were incorporated into the final draft of the Instrument. The test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the practical exercise performance test. (PEPT). The test yielded reliability for 0.69 and 0.71 for the first and second test respectively.

Method

The teachers that taught each of the groups subjected the students to pre-testing before treatment using MTSAT pre-test. In the pre-test, the tools, materials and equipment needed for the practical work were provided; while the students were carrying out the practical work the teachers used the marking scheme to grade the students by imploring a process evaluation format for grading the Skill Achievement of the students. During the MTSAT posttest items that contained the same equivalent test were used; it was administered, supervised and graded by the teachers that taught each of the groups. The scores were collected from the teachers (Research assistants) and collated by the researcher. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0. 05 level of significance.

Research Question 1

What are the mean achievement scores of students taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and those taught using Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement Test (MTSAT)?

Table 1: Mean Achievement Test Scores and standard deviation of Students taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and those taught using Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in Metalwork Technology skill Achievement Test (MTSAT)

Gender	Instructional Strategy				
	Conventional Teaching Method (CTM)			Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS)	
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Male	48	24.08	4.79	47	30.98	5.46
Female	12	23.58	4.08	15	27.52	5.11
Marginal Mean score	60	23.83	4.44	62	29.25	5.23

The data presented in table 1 shows that treatment groups taught Metalwork technology with conventional teaching method had a marginal mean achievement score of 23.83 while the treatment groups taught with Guided Inquiry Strategy had a marginal mean score of 29.25 With these results, the main effect of Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy on students' achievement in Metalwork technology is higher than the main effect of conventional method with a difference of 5.42.

Research Question 2

What is the difference in the overall mean achievement scores of male and female students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy and Conventional Teaching Method?

Table 2: Mean Achievement Test Scores and standard deviation of male and female students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy and Conventional Teaching Method.

Instructional Strategy	Gender	Pre-test		Post-test	
		X	SD	X	SD
Conventional Teaching Method (CTM)					
	Male	22.58	2.05	24.08	4.79
	Female	22.08	2.03	23.58	4.08
Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS)					
	Male	22.76	2.19	30.98	5.46
	Female	22.43	2.09	27.52	5.11

Table 2 shows that in Conventional Teaching Method, male students had a higher post-test mean gain of 4.79 while the female students had a higher post-test mean gain of 4.08. Also, in Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy, male students had a higher post-test mean gain of 5.46 while the female students had a higher post-test gain of 5.11 However the differences are very negligible within sexes but significant between gender and also between the two instructional strategies used in this study, but according to the table there are differences between pre-test post-test mean score of male and female as a result of using Guided instructional strategy.

Research Question 3

What is the difference in the overall mean achievement scores of rural and urban students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy and Conventional Teaching Method in Metalwork Technology?

Table 3: Mean Achievement Test Scores of rural and urban students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy and Conventional Teaching Method in Metalwork Technology.

Area	Instructional Strategy				
	Conventional Teaching Method (CTM)			Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS)	
	MMS	N	Mean	N	Mean
Rural	7.40	68	4.75	68	12.15
Urban	9.10	54	5.47	54	14.57

From table 3 above it is observed that, the marginal mean score (MMS) on Metalwork technology test of the rural students taught with Conventional Teaching

Method was 7.40 while the marginal mean score on Metalwork technology test of the urban student's test taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy was 9.10. The result shows that urban students had a higher mean score than rural students with a difference of 1.7. Thus, there is an effect attributable to location on Skill Achievement of students taught Metalwork Technology with Guided Inquiry Strategy.

Test of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement

Test (MTSAT) scores of students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and

Conventional Teaching Method (CTM).

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement

Test (MTSAT) scores of male and female students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional

Strategy (GIIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM).

Ho3: There is no significant interaction in the mean Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement

Test (MTSAT) scores of rural and urban students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional

Strategy and Conventional Teaching Method.

Table 4

Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for Test of Significance of main effects of treatment (GIIS) and CTM), Gender (male and female students), Location (rural and urban) and interaction effects of treatments given to students exposed to Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy (GIIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) with respect to their mean scores on Metalwork Technology Achievement test score.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates	20.539	1	20.539	3.134	.078
Pre-test	20.539	1	20.539	3.134	.078
Main Effects	1781.060	2	890.530	135.868	.000
Treatment	1419.413	1	1419.413	216.559	.000
Gender	428.346	1	428.346	65.352	.000
2-way Interactions	5.817	1	5.817	.887	.347
Treatment*location	5.817	1	5.817	.887	.000
Explained	4402.221	4	1100.555	167.911	.000
Residual	1455.074	222	6.554		
TOTAL	5857.295	226	25.917		

*Significant at sig of F< .05

The data presented in Table 4 shows F-calculated values for three effects: treatment, gender and interaction effects of treatments and gender on students' achievement in Metalwork Technology. The F-calculated value for treatment is 216.559 with a significance of F at .000 which is less than .05. The null-hypothesis is therefore rejected at .05 level of significance. With this result, there is a significant difference between the main effects of treatments (Conventional Teaching Method and Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy) on students' achievement in Metalwork technology. The F-calculated value for gender is 65.352 with a significance of F at .000 which is less than .05. This means that there is significant difference between the main effects of Gender on students' achievement in Metalwork technology. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the main effects of gender (male and female) on students' achievement in Metalwork Technology is rejected at .05 level of significance. The interaction of treatment and location has F-calculated value of .887 with significance of F of .000. Since .000 is less than .05, the null hypothesis for interaction effect of treatment and location is rejected. Hence, there is interaction effects of treatments given to students taught with Guided Inquiry

Instructional Strategies and their location with respect to their mean scores on Metalwork technology achievement Test.

Findings of the Study

The main effect of Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy on Skill Achievement of Metalwork Technology students is higher than the main effect of Conventional Teaching Method with a difference of 8.55.

The main effects of male students taught Metalwork Technology with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies is higher than the main effects of female with a difference of 2.30.

Gender has effect on students' Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy in Metalwork technology

There was a significant difference between the main effects of treatments (Conventional Teaching Method and Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies) on students' achievement in Metalwork Technology.

There were interaction effects of treatments given to students taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies and their location with respect to their mean scores on Metalwork Technology Skill Achievement Test.

Discussion of Findings

The data presented in Table 4 provide the answer to research question one, finding revealed that the main effect of Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy (29.25) on Skill Achievement of Metalwork Technology is higher than the main effect of Conventional Teaching Method (23.83) with a marginal mean score difference of (5.42). In the same vein, analysis of covariance was used to test the first hypothesis, Table 4, at the calculated F-value (216.559), Significance of F (.000) and confidence level of .05 there was a statistically significant. The implication of this finding is that Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy is more effective than Conventional Teaching Method in enhancing students' Skill Achievement in Metalwork Technology. This finding rests the arguments that exposing student to Conventional Teaching Method and Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies is more facilitating to the learning of Metalwork

Technology, the potency of the Guided Inquiry accords well with the finding of Okebukola and Jegede (1989). Guided Inquiry help to make clear to students the smaller number of the ideas they must focus on for any specific learning task (Novak and Gown, 1984). Okebukola (1990) in a research had earlier found out that Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies promote better understanding of processes than Conventional Teaching Method in Technology laboratory, thus through the use of this strategy concepts are no longer learnt as discretion isolated entities favoring note learning, students are able to consciously and explicitly tie new knowledge to relevant concept already possessed thereby making learning more meaningful.

The data presented in Table 2 provide the answer to research question two. Finding revealed that main effect of gender on Skill Achievement Test of Metalwork Technology Students (male and female) taught Metalwork Technology with Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategy and Conventional Teaching Method with a slight difference between the marginal mean score of the sexes. This finding indicates that Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies is more effective in stimulating students' interest in Metalwork Technology.

The data presented in table 3 indicates that, the marginal mean score on Metalwork Technology test of the rural students taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy was 7.40 while the marginal mean score on Metalwork technology test of the urban student's test taught with Guided Inquiry Instructional strategy was 9.10. The result shows that urban students had a higher mean score than rural students with a difference of 1.7. Thus, there is an effect attributable to location on Skill Achievement of students taught Metalwork Technology with Guided Inquiry Strategy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the subsequent discussion, and their implications, the following recommendations are made:

In order to promote meaningful understanding and development of favorable attitudes to metalwork teachers, school administrators should incorporate the use of Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies in their teaching methodology.

Students should be carefully instructed in the use of teachers' strategies to enable them successfully integrate new concepts into their existing cognitive structure. This should be made to realize the concepts taught in isolation from other concepts are not likely to become functional. Misconceptions held by students which would not have identified by students themselves. This can then be corrected immediately.

Teachers training programmes should incorporate the teaching of pre-service teachers in the use of the Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies at University Level. This will not only help them to learn how to learn but would enable them gain experience in the use of the new strategies thereby enabling them to impact the use of the strategies in their students after graduation.

In service-training, conference and workshops should be organized for serving teachers on the proposed strategies as most teachers grew up under Conventional Teaching Method and have continued to use same in the classroom interactions.

Conclusion

In line with these proposed strategies, there is an urgent need for curriculum developers and planned to take a critical look at the prevailing instructional strategies prevalent in our schools which have been found obsolete and then re-formulate new ones in line with the new strategies being recommend in this study.

Examining bodies should upgrade their test instrument to lay additional emphasis on Blooms (1956) higher order objectives. It would be of no immediate benefits for student to use the Guided Inquiry Instructional Strategies and be evaluated predominantly on simple recall of knowledge acquired. The fact that Conventional method and the proposed strategies tap different capabilities from the learner should be clearly kept in view.

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