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EDITORIAL

Nowadays, the economic situation in different parts of the world is witnessing unparalleled crises across different sectors. Globally, the growth rates of GDP of different countries around the world, flows of trade, investments in international markets, and supply chains are negatively affected. In particular, the continued growth of the health crisis pose significant effects on the global economy further than the traditional measures with a possibility for long-lasting and far-reaching difficulties. The economic predictions reveal increasing risks to a sustained worldwide recovery modelled by a renaissance of infectious COVID 19 cases and probable pressures allied with high consumer demand powered by growing personal savings. In the perspective of supply chain, visible shortages reveal enduring disturbances to labour markets, bottlenecks of production and supply chains, interruptions in the markets of global energy, and increased constraints towards shipping and transportation which are contributing to inflationary pressures.

The current issue of the Skyline Business Journal is a collection of five articles discussing key issues in business management with some highlights about the challenges faced by organizations and nations during the current pandemic. The first article focuses on testing the extent to which the antecedents of nation branding can be leveraged to create a strong nation brand for emerging economies with a prime emphasis on Republic of Zimbabwe. The outcomes of this paper reveal that nations should rebrand themselves towards the creation of country-of-origin brand identity which attracts investment, tourism and economic development. The second paper aimed to evaluate the performance based financing practices among health workers in Nigeria. This paper provides a significant contribution to the literature on health care financing and aimed to stimulate the intellectual discussion among policy makers on long-term viability and sustainability of their businesses. In the third paper, the main focus was centered on assessing effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in promoting sustainable wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. The findings suggest that more effort should be put to ensure that the implementation of legal instruments can help alleviate some of the challenges which are affecting the conservation of wildlife. The fourth paper emphasized on assessing the role of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in enhancing the effectiveness of higher education institutions. The results established the important role of Information and Communication Technology as a viable tool in adhering to COVID-19 protocols. The fifth paper aimed to identify the role of human resource practitioners in attracting local workforces for serving in Malaysian construction industry. The results showed that employee skills and effective policies and procedures play important roles in affecting the involvement of workforce in Malaysia construction industry.

I hope that the issue will be useful for scholars in advancing future research on these topics and provide valuable insights for business practitioners to thrive in today's dynamic environment. Finally, I express my sincere thanks to all the reviewers, contributors, and editorial board of our journal for their continued support. I wish you all a happy New Year and stay safe, and I look forward for future collaborations with you. Thank you!

Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad In'airat,
Editor- In-Chief
Skyline Business Journal

SKYLINE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Skyline Business Journal aims to publish conceptual, empirical, and applied research in the field of business and management. The journal contributes new ideas and themes to the existing knowledge through pragmatic investigation and theoretical analysis to advance an understanding of functioning. SBJ provides an opportunity for enthusiastic researchers to publish their original work on contemporary, innovative, and emerging themes of business and management such as finance & accounting, marketing, supply chain, human resource, and other business-related topics. The journal also publishes reviews of recently released books in the Book Review Section. The aim is to encourage discussion on the ideas expressed by the author/s in newly released books connected to business management and related disciplines.

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EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE BASED FINANCING PRACTICES AMONG HEALTH WORKERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Performance Based Financing (PBF) is an approach to health financing that shifts attention from inputs to outputs, and eventually to the outcomes of health services. The study evaluated the health workers' knowledge, attitude, practice, quality of health care, motivation, infrastructural development as well as addressing the shortage of health work force. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 315 health workers in Nigeria. The majority of the respondents demonstrated good knowledge, however, there was a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of the respondents in the primary health facilities in terms of their age groups. More than half of the respondents agreed strongly that PBF makes them more proactive in carrying out their daily duties with patient's satisfaction. Qualitative analysis showed that the carrot-stick approach in PBF was a real motivator, the carrot was the bonus (incentives) given or withholding to the health workers for good or poor quality service provided. Most of health workers stayed later than closing time to ensure the health services are provided. On infrastructural development, well-constructed and maintained incinerator for waste disposal and running water were installed at all of the health facilities among many other infrastructures. Also, more health workers were employed including laboratory technicians.

Keywords: *Performance, Evaluation, PBF, Health Workers, Nigeria*

Introduction

For any organization, profit or nonprofit, its existence depends on the preset performance targets and with the highest possible quality standards. The performance of a task is judged against pre-determined and well-understood standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In a contract, performance is defined as the fulfillment of an obligation in a way that relieves the performer of contractual obligations (Upadhaya, Munir, & Blount, 2014). However, the mission of most organizations including healthcare providers is high performance of the work force along with delivering high quality service. Healthcare is the maintenance or improvement of health through diagnosis, treatment, prevention of disease, illness, injury and other physical and mental impairments in human beings. Health professionals (providers and practitioners) in the fields of dentistry, midwifery, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, and other health professions provide healthcare services. It also includes the provision of primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare, as well as public health services (WHO, 2013). The operation of the health system services varies from country to country. However, a strong financial mechanism, a well-trained and suitably compensated personnel, trustworthy data on which to base decisions and policies, and well-maintained facilities and logistics to supply quality medications and technology are the bedrock of any country's health system implementation (WHO, 2013).

The healthcare financing system is a process in which revenues are allocated from primary and secondary sources, such as out-of-pocket payments (OOP), indirect and direct taxes, donor funding, co-payments, voluntary repayments, and mandatory repayments, and accumulated in fund pools to share risk across large

population groups, with the revenues being used to purchase goods and services from public and private providers for identified population needs, such as healthcare (Carrin, Evans, & Xu, 2007). The manner in which a country finances its healthcare system is a key factor in achieving universal health coverage (Uzochukwu et al., 2015).

The transmission of money or material commodities conditional on executing a quantifiable action or meeting a predefined performance target is known as performance-based financing (PBF). It is a health-system strategy that focuses on outcomes, which are defined as the quantity and quality of service outputs (Unger & Killingsworth, 1986). This strategy comprises establishing health institutions as autonomous bodies dedicated to achieving health-related objectives. Multiple performance frameworks for regulatory responsibilities, the performance buying agency, and community empowerment are also included. PBF uses market forces but strives to address market failings in order to achieve health gains, while also aiming for cost control and a long-term mix of revenues from cost recovery, government, and international contributions (Unger & Killingsworth, 1986). PBF is a flexible approach that continuously seeks to improve through empirical research and rigorous impact evaluations which lead to best practices (Soeters et al., 2011).

The study seeks to evaluate knowledge attitude, practice, quality of healthcare services motivational and challenges with the implementation of performance-based financing among healthcare workers in primary and secondary health facilities in Nasarawa State in Nigeria. The study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge on health care financing and to stimulate intellectual discussion by policy makers on long-term viability

and sustainability. Ultimately, for possible nationwide adoption of the performance-based financing as an alternative to health financing in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Literature review

Health Service Packages: Complementary Package of Activities

The PBF health service packages are carefully designed to respond to health problems facing the Nigerian population. PBF is an innovative, results-oriented method that rewards providers for meeting pre-determined, measurable performance goals. Financial compensation and public recognition are examples of incentives. Similar incentives might be utilized to encourage community members to use the health facility's services. For example, diapers may be given to mothers who give birth in a health facility or food stuff to patients who have completed a full course of tuberculosis treatment. PBF can increase the quality of healthcare services while also stabilizing or lowering their costs, assisting in the efficient use of limited resources, encouraging community participation, and improving employee motivation, morale, and retention (Gish, 1982).

The performance-based finance was pioneered in nations such as Cambodia, Rwanda and Burundi to extraordinarily good consequences; several other countries such as Zambia, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria have explored the method, Performance-based financing is helping generate better, more inclusive and more accessible health services, it is a crucial component of achieving universal health coverage (WHO, 2010). The PBF and universal health coverage are connected in three key areas. These categories include (a) establishing basic and complementary health-care packages, (b) expanding health-care coverage for

the general public, especially the poorest, and (c) boosting access to high-quality health-care services.

Capacity Building to improving quality in Performance-Based Financing

Low-income countries' healthcare systems are frequently hampered by reasons such as a poorly qualified health workers and a lack of suitable facilities, among others (Zeitiz et al., 1993). People, institutions, and legal frameworks interact systematically to mobilize and allocate resources for health management, prevention, and care of diseases, illnesses, and injuries, which affects health workers' and infrastructure capability. Individuals and organizations' capacity is described as their ability to perform functions effectively, efficiently, and sustainably (UNDP, 2008). Capacity building is defined by some authorities as "the development of long-term skills, structures, resources, and commitment for change in health and other sectors" (NSW, 2001). Individuals, groups, teams, organizations, inter-organizational coalitions, and communities can all benefit from capacity building activities (Bush, 1999).



FIGURE 1. CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

Organizational development in capacity building for PBF

This refers to the procedures and practices which guarantee that an organization's structures, rules, systems, procedures, and practices are aligned with its goals, values, and mission in order to effectively manage change. A learning organization is one that focuses on adopting new ways of functioning in order to respond to changes in strategic orientations. The PBF instituted many organizational policies and framework in the management of health care facilities, most of which are until now, alien to healthcare sectors in Nigeria: The concept includes but not limited to the following:

- a. Concept of business plan.
- b. Measurement and verification of quality.
- c. Health facility autonomy and governance: accountability and facility specific drug revolving fund.
- d. Health facility finance management and indices tool.
- e. Health worker incentivized motivation in form of bonus payment.

Workforce development in capacity building for PBF

Workforce development can be defined as a process that is initiated within a firm and communities in accordance with the system's defined strategic priorities for ensuring that the people who work in these systems have the skills and commitment to contribute significantly to community and organizational goals. Within companies and communities, the term "workforce" refers to both paid and unpaid employees. At the starting up of PBF program, all the facilities managers were trained on implementation modalities and guidelines for successful operation and implementation of PBF in all the

facilities.

For the implementation of PBF, skilled midwives are posted in specialized units such as antenatal care and delivery wards. However, where skilled midwives are unavailable or in inadequate numbers, the facility has the autonomy to employ the required workforce, if the it can afford it. Resources are scarce and always will be, and according to Maslow as one need is met, more would arise to be met. Only prudent allocation of scarce resources based on the needs.

Resource allocation in capacity building for PBF

Resources allocation is primarily concerned with the efficient use of resources and can be thought of as an economic process, not only a planning process (Deeble, 1999). It necessitates both technical and allocative efficiency to ensure that the mix of goods and resources yields the greatest benefit to society. 'Resources' refers to the materials required to run a program. People, physical space, administrative support, planning tools, and financial help are all included. It can also incorporate 'in kind' allocation commitments from inter-organizational groupings or partners. The availability and long-term viability of resources is frequently a deciding factor in whether or not a program is launched or sustained.

During the PBF implementation, the initial lump sum is given to health facilities which have subdivided infrastructure and other areas. For instance, 50% of the money is allocated for infrastructural development, for example, painting walls, mending leaks etc. or purchasing computers and other equipment either the operations theater, laboratory, labor ward or wherever such new equipment is required, while the remaining half is used as Drug Revolving Fund.

Leadership development as capacity building

It is a function of training, experience and personality of people in an organization. There are indeed a plethora of theories of leadership, however, none may be sufficient in all circumstances, as an amalgamation of theory depends on the prevailing circumstances. Within a capacity building approach, healthcare workers seek to foster the characteristics of leadership within programs and across organizations by developing and building leadership qualities in themselves and others. Building and improving the leadership skills of healthcare managers at different levels of the healthcare system is the hallmark of PBF so as to enable it to make plans and develop strategies.

Partnership

There has been a rising development of international partnerships with peer to peer support for improvement in health care (Pekka & Jeffrey, 2017) as such formation and maintenance of partnership is an integral part of the PBF program. Some of partnership groups are the community, the patients themselves, implementing partners, local government health authorities and the states ministries of health and among healthcare facilities. The outcomes of these partnerships could be in the form of shared goals, relation, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustained outcomes. In general, the survival of any organization depends upon its capacity to provide intended goods and/or services for which it was established. This is even significant in the healthcare sector. The health sector needs to have the capacity (human and material resources) to provide quality healthcare service to the population. Incapacity in one domain, either human

or material, invalidates the other. The best-trained worker is only as good as the tool available to them and vice versa.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria. Nasarawa was carved out of old Plateau state on October 1, 1996 with Lafia as its capital. It is located at coordinates and has 13 local government areas. It has a population of 2,040,112 (2006 Census) and a total area of 27,117 km². Nasarawa is bounded in the north by Kaduna state, in the west by the Abuja Federal Capital Territory, in the south by Kogi and Benue states and in the east by Taraba and Plateau states. Due to proximity to the Federal Capital Abuja, there are varied ethnic groups from all over the country. Major ethnic groups are Eggon, Alago, Gwari, Mada and Hausa-Fulani. The state is reputed to have large deposits of solid minerals such as salt, barite, and bauxite mined largely in small scale, often illegally. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy as the population is involved largely in subsistence farming.

Nasarawa state has two tertiary hospitals, Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital, Lafia and Federal Medical Center, Keffi, 17 General Hospitals (twelve of which operate Performance-based financing), 728 PHCs (235 are PBF sites) and tens of private hospitals, maternities and clinics (there 14 PBF private sites). All general hospitals in Nasarawa state implement some form of performance-based financing as one of the three pilot states. In the same vein, at least one primary healthcare center per ward in each LGA implements the same program.

The study design is a descriptive cross-sectional survey using both qualitative and quantitative methods through structured questionnaires and key

informant interviews. The study population were all categories and cadres of healthcare workers in public primary and secondary health facilities that implement the performance-based financing program. Healthcare workers in tertiary or private healthcare and public health workers in facilities not implement the PBF program were excluded.

In order to avoid selection systems, bias multistage sampling technique was used to select 315 respondents. In stage 1, two local government areas (LGA) were selected by balloting from each of the three senatorial districts. In stage 2, from each of the selected local government area level one secondary health facility was randomly selected by balloting (where there were more than one of such in the LGA but where there was only one, that one was taken). Stage 3, at the ward level. Two wards were randomly selected by balloting and since each ward had one PHC implementing PBF; it was chosen as such. In stage 4, in each of the selected health facilities, respondents were selected by simple random sampling to whom questionnaires were administered until the sample size was attained.

However, eight key interviewees, four each from primary and secondary health facilities heads were purposively chosen from the selected study site to which key informant interviews were conducted. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study: An interviewer-administered structured questionnaire containing 37-item and 6-item questions for Key Informant Interview (KII). The questionnaires were administered to all categories of staff while KIIs were conducted with the heads of the facilities or at least a management staff member. Research assistants were recruited and trained on the skills of conducting the interview, the importance

of informed consent and other social skills. Key Informant Interviews were conducted by the researcher himself in English, three were done face-face and five were conducted through telephone. The KIIs were recorded using a phone with recording capability and then transcribed. A structured interviewer's administered questionnaires were administered to selected healthcare workers in selected primary and secondary healthcare facilities in Nasarawa. The questionnaire was developed to capture all of the study objectives.

In order to properly evaluate the health worker on performance-based financing, the knowledge questions were developed, scored and graded. There were nine question items in the knowledge section of the questionnaires; score of 1 was allocated to each correct answer and zero for each incorrect response. The Likert scale (5-0) was used to assess the attitude of respondents towards PBF; 5 represents a very good attitude while 0 represents a very poor attitude. The Attitude Section contained 11 questions. The cumulative is cross tabulated using chi square statistics to determine the difference or association between variables of interest. The Practice Section contained 11 questions. A "yes" response scored 1 point and a "no" response scored 0. The test of validity and reliability was conducted on the tool.

The questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, clean code and edited using a computer. The data from structured questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 20 (SPSS) software. For key informant interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed and classified into relevant main and sub teams. Frequency tables, simple percentages, bar and pie charts were used to present descriptive statistics. Cross tabulation of important variables was done. Chi

square test was used to determine significance of differences or associations of variables of interest at p-value >0.05.

Results and Findings

TABLE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONDENTS

Variables	Knowledge				
	Primary (%)		χ^2/p	Secondary (%)	
	Poor	Good		Poor	Good
Age Groups			16.042/ 0.014		25.062/ 0.001
≤ 24	12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)		1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)
25 – 29	3 (5.5)	52 (94.5)		2 (10.5)	17 (89.5)
30 – 34	7 (12.7)	48 (87.3)		0 (0.0)	38 (100.0)
35 – 39	3 (7.5)	37 (92.5)		0 (0.0)	35 (100.0)
40 – 44	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)		4 (9.5)	38 (90.5)
45 – 49	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)		0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
50 – 54	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		0 (0.0)	29 (100.0)
≥ 55	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)		0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)
Gender			0.562/ 0.453		9.422/ 0.002
Male	10 (10.6)	84 (89.4)		0 (0.0)	113 (100.0)
Female	15 (14.2)	91 (85.8)		7 (8.0)	80 (92.0)
Level of education			19.603/ 0.001		75.544/ < 0.001
Primary	0 (0.0)	7 (100.0)		2 (25.0)	6 (75.0)
Secondary	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)		0 (0.0)	27 (100.0)
CHEW	13 (8.3)	33 (91.7)		3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)
CHO	5 (8.2)	56 (91.8)		0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)
Diploma	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)		2 (2.3)	84 (97.7)
First degree	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)		0 (0.0)	47 (100.0)
Post graduate	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		0 (0.0)	26 (100.0)
Type of employment			4.208/ 0.040		9.959/ 0.002
Permanent	6 (7.0)	80 (93.0)		2 (12.5)	175 (87.5)
Volunteer	19	95		5 (11.1)	40 (88.9)
Category of staff			3.929/ 0.047		2.615/ 0.106
Management	5 (6.6)	71 (93.4)		0 (0.0)	53 (100.0)
Non-management	20 (16.1)	104 (83.9)		7 (4.8)	140 (95.2)

There was a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of the respondents in primary health facilities in terms of their age groups as all of them were above the age of 39 and had good knowledge. A significant number of

the male respondents had good knowledge in both primary and secondary health facilities. Male respondents, 100% have been identified as the major contributors to good knowledge among the respondents in secondary health facilities.

TABLE 2. ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS PBF

Variables	Attitude					
	Primary (%)		χ^2/p	Secondary (%)		χ^2/p
	Poor	Good		Poor	Good	
Age Groups						
≤ 24	0 (0.0)	40(100.0)	5.326/ 0.503	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	7.454/ 0.383
25 – 29	2 (3.6)	53 (96.4)		0 (0.0)	19 (100.0)	
30 – 34	0 (0.0)	55(100.0)		2 (5.3)	36 (94.7)	
35 – 39	0 (0.0)	40(100.0)		4 (11.4)	31 (88.6)	
40 – 44	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)		4 (9.5)	38 (90.5)	
45 – 49	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)		2 (6.7)	28 (93.3)	
50 – 54	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		2 (6.9)	27 (93.1)	
≥ 55	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)		0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	
Gender						
Male	1 (1.1)	93 (98.9)	0.007/ 0.932	6 (5.3)	107 (94.7)	1.140/ 0.286
Female	1 (0.9)	105(99.1)		8 (9.2)	79 (90.8)	
Level of education						
Primary	0 (0.0)	7 (100.0)	1.947/ 0.856	0 (0.0)	8 (100.0)	2.324/ 0.888
Secondary	0 (0.0)	6 (100.0)		2 (7.4)	25 (92.6)	
CHEW	1 (1.1)	86 (98.9)		0 (0.0)	4 (100.0)	
CHO	1 (2.8)	35 (97.2)		0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	
Diploma	0 (0.0)	61(100.0)		8 (9.3)	78 (90.7)	
First degree	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)		2 (4.3)	45 (95.7)	
Post graduate	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	

TABLE 3: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDE OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS PBF

Variables	Attitude					
	Primary (%)		χ^2/p	Secondary (%)		χ^2/p
	Poor	Good		Poor	Good	
Type of employment						
Permanent	0 (0.0)	86 (100.0)	1.524/ 0.217	12 (7.7)	143 (92.3)	0.583/ 0.445
Volunteer	2 (1.8)	112(98.2)		2 (4.4)	186 (93.0)	
Category of staff						
Management	1 (1.3)	75 (98.7)	0.123/ 0.725	2 (3.8)	51 (96.2)	1.153/ 0.283
Non-management	1 (0.8)	123(99.2)		12 (8.2)	135 (91.8)	

Only the 25-29-year-old age group had 2 respondents (3.6%) with poor knowledge of performance-based financing in the primary health facilities and all other age groups had good knowledge compared to those in secondary health facilities that have respondents with poor knowledge cutting across the majority of the age groups. Male respondents appeared to have better knowledge across both primary and secondary health facilities but statistically, it is not significant. Educational qualifications are statistically not significant in the attitude towards performance-based financing among health workers in primary and secondary health facilities. All permanent employees in primary health facilities had good attitude towards PBF (n=86) while in secondary health facilities, 143 (92.3%) out of 155 respondents had positive attitude. For

contractual staff (volunteers), 2 (1.8%) and 2 (4.4%) had poor attitude towards PBF from primary and secondary health facilities respectively. The type of employment, either permanent or contractual had no significant effect on the attitude of healthcare workers towards performance-based financing. Only one management staff member (1.3%) had a poor attitude towards PBF from a pool of 76 respondents from primary healthcare facilities while in secondary, there were 2 (3.8%) out of 51 respondents. The categorization of healthcare workers as management or non-management staff appeared to have no significant effect on his/her attitude towards performance-based financing in primary and secondary health facilities with P values 0.725 and 0.283 respectively.

TABLE 4. ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICE PBF BY RESPONDENTS

Variables	Practice				
	Primary (%)		χ^2/ρ	Secondary (%)	
	Poor	Good		Poor	Good
Type of employment			26.791/ < 0.001		0.341/ 0.559
Permanent	3 (3.5)	83 (96.5)		75 (48.4)	80 (51.6)
Volunteer	38 (33.3)	76 (66.7)		24 (53.3)	21 (46.7)
Category of staff			17.462/ < 0.001		10.758/ 0.001
Management	4 (5.3)	72 (94.7)		16 (30.2)	37 (69.8)
Non-management	37 (29.8)	87 (70.2)		83 (56.5)	64 (43.5)

The relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of respondents showed significant differences with gender and the level of education of the respondents as more literate respondents had good practice of performance-based financing. Age groups and types of

employment of the respondents showed no significant relationship with the practice of performance-based financing.

Results of Key Informant Interviews

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF KEY INFORMANTS

Respondent	Primary	Secondary	Total
Male	2	1	3
Female	2	3	5
Total	4	4	8

Table 5 above shows the distribution of key informants used in the KIIs. It shows that primary and secondary health facilities each had 4 interviewees. The distribution of interviewees by genders shows that 3 males (2 from primary and 1 from secondary levels) participated in this part of the study, while 5 females (2 from primary and 3 from secondary respectively) participated in the KIIs.

The topic analysis revealed six major themes: (1) health quality indicators, (2) performance evaluation mechanisms, (3) health worker motivation, (4) infrastructure development, (5) staffing shortages, and (6) obstacles. According to the findings of this survey, every respondent had a good view toward the PBF's role in assisting and motivating them to enhance the quantity and quality of health services. They stated that the PBF had a good impact on their job in a variety of ways.

Health Quality Indicator

A significant proportion of respondents (62.5%) were of the opinion that health quality indicators were based on the best international practices for which their facility must imbibed for quality service to their clients. Yet, some indicators of quality care are out of line with the current development in the dynamic field of medical practice. The example given was the tracer drugs for essential drugs. They suggested that this needs to be reviewed in line with the current keeping.

One head of a secondary health facility said:

For many reasons, we as health workers forgot or at least, ignored what health quality indicators are. PBF simply awakened us to their existence. It was difficult at the beginning but in the program is gradually becoming a second nature.'

Motivation of health workers

All interviewees agreed that health workers became more motivated in carrying out their respective duties since the commencement of the performance-based program. The carrot-stick approach in PBF was a real motivator. The carrot is the bonus given to personnel for high quality service. The stick is the withholding of the bonus (incentive) and reduction in total finance that comes to the facility for poor quality services. Some workers stay later than their closing time to ensure that jobs/duties were professionally executed.

Infrastructural development

All respondents (n=8) believe that PBF has made a positive impact on the infrastructural development of their facility. Basic equipment was procured for the laboratory, operation theatre, labor room and other service points that require them or there are plans to equip them. One head of a secondary health facility said:

Before the coming of PBF, waste disposal was unorganized, without a proper place for disposal. Now there is a well-constructed and maintained incinerator for waste disposal. And for the first time, there is running water in the facility among many other infrastructures.'

Another head of a primary healthcare center said:

'Before PBF the facility was in dire need of face-lift. There were few and bad waiting chairs, the roofs were leaking, the painting peeled off, but now, all these have been fixed. I feel good coming to work every day.'

Solving manpower shortages

The majority of respondents believed that there were rampant workforce shortages in their facilities. The PBF is, therefore, seen as both a threat and opportunity. The threat arose when there are glaring quality lapses occasioned by shortages of personnel to do the needful. The opportunity comes in the autonomy granted to facilities employ volunteer personnel on an ad-hoc basis according to the need and capacity.

One head of a primary health facility said:

'For more than 3 years, there were no laboratory personnel in the facility, which impeded our ability to offer good comprehensive service to our client. But when PBF program started in this facility 3 years ago, were able to employ 2 laboratory technicians; there are similar instances in other units.'

Another one said:

'This facility was almost non-functional with staff strength of two; myself and a health attendant. Today there are eight of us.'

Challenges of PBF

The three major challenges identified by respondents were shortage of workforce, poor infrastructure and the inability to pay subsidy for the services verified and purchased for the facilities. The number of clients has increased because of the increased quality and range of services but the increases in workforce fall short of demand.

One head of secondary health facility said:

'I am the only a permanent physician in the facility; one is on a National Youth Service Corp member and the other is a volunteer whose stipend is paid by the facility. There is a limit to what the facility can do.'

Another challenge identified is poor infrastructure and utilities like deteriorating physical structure, poor equipment, lack or poor power and water supplies. All key informants interviewed lamented that NSHIP was unable to pay subsidy for the services rendered and purchased.

One head of a primary health facility said:

'We have not received any financial assistance from the PBF program since the last quarter of 2017. I have 4 volunteer staff members that we have not been able to pay their stipend. Imagine the number of moody faces I have to endure daily at work. The difficult part is that, there is no much information coming through. We can scarcely afford even cleaning materials to keep the facility running now. Our superior keeps coming for assessment, what can we do without money?'

Discussion of Findings

The study aimed to evaluate the health workers' knowledge, attitude, practice, quality of health care, motivation, infra-structural development as well as addressing the shortage of health work force in Nigeria. The analysis showed that most of the health workers had direct responsibility for producing quality healthcare regardless of whether or not they are directly involved in patient care. In addition, a significant proportion of respondents indicated that carrying out their duties effectively was essential for the overall attainment of the quality of healthcare, as a large number the respondents demonstrated good cumulative knowledge level in performance-based financing which is in tandem with another study carried out in Burundi (Rudasingwa & Uwizeye, 2017). Also, there is no significant difference between the level of knowledge and the level of healthcare facility ($p=0.154$). It followed then that with some effort, any health worker irrespective of their area of practice at any level of healthcare can understand and appreciate basic concepts and operation inherent in performance-based financing program in the provision of healthcare. Moreover, findings from this study show that there is significant association between the qualifications of the respondent and their level of cumulative knowledge ($p<0.05$). This finding shows education and continuous training of healthcare workers are prerequisite for increasing the quality of service.

Performance-based financing program had motivating factors for a large number of the health workers as most of the respondents demonstrated positive attitude at both primary and secondary health facilities. Moreover, a significant proportion of respondents indicated they are more aware and proactive in carrying

out their daily duties.

More than half of respondents believed PBF do not increase their workload. This finding implies that healthcare workers do not see the PBF program as a different entity, but merely refocusing their daily duties to more directed goals for quality improvement and maintenance. In this study, most of the respondents indicated that community participation ensured quality of service and do not consider the involvement of the community as meddling in the professional affairs of the health facility. This finding shows that respondents saw the community as partner in the provision of good health service not as a meddling outsider. This finding is in line with the goals and objectives of Alma Atta declaration (IC, 2020) which advocated for the full participation of the communities in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all health activities, projects and programs in their communities for the attainment of health for individuals and families in their communities.

The majority of respondents signified that PBF program had made a positive difference to the quality of their daily work output. This finding is consistent with prior research (Rudasingwa & Uwizeye, 2017). Very high proportion of respondents indicated that they want the PBF program to continue in their facilities. This shows that the PBF program is widely accepted at primary and secondary health facilities, and therefore, there is a good chance of its long-term success. Because, habit change especially changes from recognized comfort zones even for better is very difficult (Schriver et al., 2018). In addition, this finding shows that there is significant association between type of facility and attitude towards performance-based financing ($p < 0.05$). In this study significant proportion of respondents indicated they knew

exactly what to do at any time as they have their duties completed explained to them by their superiors. This leaves no room for ambiguity as to duties to be carried out for the overall improvement in the quality of service. A good proportion of respondents signified that they have the basic tools to carry out assigned duties. This is an acknowledgement that no duties can be carried out effectively without requisite tools.

Most respondents also indicated that their immediate superiors (internal supervision) supervised their work closely. Supervision in healthcare is a context-dependent practice with multiple definitions, and is generally regarded as a core part of assuring and improving quality of patient care (Echebiri, 2015). Most respondents also indicated that superiors from the local government health authority (for primary health facilities) and the State Ministry of Health (for secondary) provide regular supportive supervisory visits to their facilities (external supervision). Supervision is generally geared at assuring performance, and typically uses normative or administrative tasks including inspective, support-based supervisory approach and to a lesser extent, formative and restorative, such as cooperative problem resolution and constructive feedback. A Cochrane study was unable to assess the effect of management oversight in underdeveloped nations, and graded the quality of evidence as low or very low. Moreover, almost half of respondents indicated that they do not know the exact amount of money that comes to their facilities and, more than half claimed they do not know about or have access to information on the expenditures of their health facilities. This finding is at variance with the policy of the PBF program, where all information pertaining to financing and expenditures of activities and projects are done

with utmost transparency with the full knowledge of all facility personnel. The findings may have been an expression of resentment of personnel towards management because no funds came to the facilities in the last six months prior to the study on PBF program. Most respondents in this study indicated that there is some form of periodic quality audit of the health facility. This audit consists of measuring outcome or process against well-defined standards, established using the principles of evidence-based practice. The aim of audit is to highlight the discrepancies between actual practice and the standards in order to identify the changes needed to improve the quality of care. The audit is essential to sustain gains in quality of service and reversal to what used to be the seemed to be the norm.

A significant proportion of respondents claimed that they are engaged in good practice in performance-based financing and there is significant association between the level of practice and health facility ($p < 0.05$). This finding shows that although a significant number of respondents are said to be engaged in good practices, both in primary and secondary facilities, there is a significant association between the level of the health facility and practice. Therefore, there is a need for reorientation of healthcare workers at all level to adopt international best practices for the overall improvement and maintenance of healthcare services. Most of the key individuals interviewed in this study said that the PBF positively influenced the delivery of healthcare. This finding is consistent with other studies. There is some improvement in the quality health as indicators of quality health delivery are assessed regularly and, in most instances, increased the utilization of services thereby increasing the workload of personnel; consequently, making the

shortage of workforce more glaring.

The study also shows that healthcare workers are motivated to deliver more qualitative services to clients as a consequence of the carrot and stick motivation approach of performance-based financing programs. In PBF, for high quality of service, personnel are rewarded bonus payments (monetary incentive); a positive reinforcement but when it is low, the bonuses are withheld. Both of which have been known to motivate.

All interviewed personnel were of the opinion that poor health infrastructure and utilities in their facilities hampered their abilities to deliver good quality of services to clients. This finding is consistent with another study (Ojo, 1990). Electricity supply from the national grid is epileptic, where it exists. Alternative power sources like solar panels or diesel-powered generators should be provided to supplement the shortages. This creates other financial problems with the workforce needed to maintain this equipment. Only few respondents said that their facilities are connected to the public water supply while other respondents said they had to find alternative sources of water like wells and boreholes; the quality of which cannot be guaranteed.

The respondents also said they lack some basic equipment/machines required for quality service for their facilities. Some respondents observed that the space in their facilities is inadequate or need a facelift that is beyond the financial capacity of the facilities to handle. They conceded that infrastructural improvement and provision of utilities are embedded in the PBF program, but some of these infrastructural challenges were beyond the financial capacity of the facilities to cope. A previous study confirms these observations showing how health

facilities, with good functional infrastructure and personnel, demonstrate a better capacity to respond well to the PBF schemes than those with little investment and poor health facility management (Dieleman & Harnmeijer, 2006). All key informants (n=8) lamented that the National Strategic Health Implement Plan (NSHIP) did not pay their facilities for services verified and validly purchased in last six months. As a result, planned activities and projects have not been carried out since the last quarter of 2017. The delay in PBF payment is worst felt by voluntary personnel whose stipends have not been paid. The delays in PBF pay were a source of frustration and may ultimately lead to demotivation of healthcare workers and may have negative impacts on the quality of service they provide. This finding is consistent with another finding in Cameroon (DeAllegri et al., 2018).

Finally, all respondents indicated that human resource management for health as a major challenge in carrying out efficient health services required in the performance-based financing. Although rampant cases of workforce shortages are somewhat addressed at facility level within the limit of resources available to them, they have the autonomy to employ essential voluntary personnel to minimize incessant workforce shortages. The remuneration of core clinical staff like physicians, pharmacists, nurses and laboratory scientists is beyond the financial capacities of health facilities to attempt. This is in line with a World Health Organization report that Nigeria has the highest stock of human resource for health (HRH) but, like other 57HRH crisis countries, has densities that are still too low to effectively deliver essential health service (Adeloye et al., 2017). Often this shortage is a result of poorly planned and need based distribution of personnel and unwillingness of some

healthcare workers to work in semi-urban and rural areas.

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ADOPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN COMMUNITIES AROUND HWANGE NATIONAL PARK, ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

Though there are various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), through the Communal Areas Management of Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe is facing perennial challenges that range from illegal hunting, wildlife habitat fragmentation, and wildlife retaliatory killings. The main objective of the study is to assess the adoption of effective CSR initiatives on communities around Hwange National Park on wildlife conservation. A case study research design was used where the target population was communities living around Hwange National Park. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. The data collected from questionnaires was analysed using SPSS and interview data was placed into thematic areas according to objectives. Findings were that there is a legal framework for CSR in place but the challenge is on its implementation. It was noted in the study that the community is not being involved in the conservation of wildlife. The findings also indicated that the economic situation is affecting the daily operation of Hwange National Park; hence, there is reduction of CSR funding which includes the provision of social services. From the study, it was observed that some of the infrastructure like boreholes and roads were no longer being serviced on time due to limited resources. The study recommends that the use of education and awareness campaigns are essential for the conservation of the resources in the protected area.

Keywords: *CAMPFIRE, corporate social responsibility, Hwange National Park, sustainable wildlife conservation and Zimbabwe.*

Introduction

This research sought to establish whether a nexus exists between sustainable development and CSR in the Hwange National Park Area. Globalization has forced many organizations to be more focused on corporate social responsibility

(Yusoff & Yee, 2014). There has been growing interests in taking CSR as a management phenomenon across a range of all business undertakings. It has been noted that the continued existence of many enterprises depends on how they perceive and relate with key stakeholders. Porter and Kramer (2012) support the existence of such relationship between business undertakings and society, since such organization's activities do have a direct impact on the local communities in which they operate.

Some research asserts that wildlife conservation initiatives are closely linked to local communities (Wali, Alvira, Tallman, Ravikumar, & Macedo, 2017). Wildlife conservation is now taken as a business with benefits associated with the undertaking of conserving wildlife species, their habitats, ecosystems as well as biodiversity (Nyongesa, 2012). Wildlife conservation's success at any particular Protected Area depends on surrounding people's perceptions and attitudes towards conservation (Lindsey, Barnes, Nyirenda, Pumfrett, & Tambling, 2013). It has been noted globally that if local communities are not involved in wildlife conservation it is likely to fail (Baroth & Mathur, 2019).

Traditionally management of wildlife conservation areas prioritized that they keep communities out of such areas based on the belief that their activities were unable to coexist with ecosystem conservation (Holmes, 2013). Yet, the actual cost of conservation is borne more

precisely by the local communities who always get inadequate and inequitable benefits which accrue from wildlife conservation. In Africa, various challenges that are related to management and conservation of wildlife have been identified (Nyongesa, 2012). However, there are perceptions that there is lack of balance between costs borne by the local communities and the benefits. This has become the basis that led to the adoption of corporate social responsibility initiatives by wildlife authorities across the globe.

The ZPWMA as the custodian of wildlife in Zimbabwe has considered various CSR initiatives in areas around Hwange National Park which include drilling of boreholes, attending to human and wildlife conflict, provision of meat to the communities, community outreach programmes, establishment of junior ranger programmes in schools, creation of employment to the locals, free entry into the park to the locals, and training of community fire brigades among others. All these were attempts to change the mindsets of communities in promoting the sustainability of conservation of wildlife in Zimbabwe. Hence, little is known or documented on the extent of CSR initiatives in promoting wildlife conservation and management. Though there are various CSR initiatives by the ZPWMA in CAMPFIRE, wildlife conservation seems to be facing perennial challenges that range from illegal hunting, wildlife habitat fragmentation, and wildlife retaliatory killing.

A study by Vergara et al. (2019) focused on conservation efforts of forests in the context of industrialisation. The study focused more on conservation efforts with less emphasis on CSR though the study established that conservation creates employment. This study attempts to establish if there is a nexus between CSR

and sustainable wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. Hancock (2018) developed a Vegetation Trend Analysis too as an aid to understand vegetation data. The focus of the study was devoid of CSR initiatives as variables for sustainable development, a focus of the current study. Topal and Ongen (2006) also carried out a study on governance of protected areas. The study did not focus on CSR whose link with sustainable wildlife conservation is central to this study.

In conducting this study, the researchers focused on identifying the sustainable wildlife conservation CSR initiatives offered to communities around Hwange National Park and whether there were any challenges in offering CSR to surrounding communities for sustainability of wildlife conservation. The ultimate objective was to come up with mechanisms that could be used to enhance CSR offered to communities towards sustainable wildlife conservation in Hwange National Park.

Literature Review

The Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility

It has been observed that each stakeholder defines the concept of CSR in the context of their expectations (De-Roeck, Akremi, & Swaen, 2016). However the objective of any business undertaking or any commercial enterprises globally cannot be divorced from society where it operates from (Yusoff & Yee, 2014). In this contemporary world, CSR is a concept in sustainable development and business where it offers new solutions for dealing with poverty especially in under-developed countries (Zainal, Zulkifli, & Saleh, 2013). According to De-Roeck et al. (2016), corporate social responsibility is a concept that goes beyond the single bottom line (i.e. profit), but rather it

incorporates the promotion of good cause within communities and good practices such as carrying out philanthropy. Thus, all this highlights a firm's ethical position as it builds more fruitful relationships with the organization's stakeholders.

The traditional view of shareholders towards a corporation indicate that every firm has only one objective regarding why it exist, which is to maximise shareholders' profit. This traditional view believes that a firm has a single primary responsibility to its shareholders which is to maximise their wealth and as such social related issues are not supposed to interfere with the business operations (Sushmita, 2013). Friedman (1970) passionately indicated that the only social responsibility of any organisation is to use its resources wisely and indulge in such activities that would only increase profits and shareholders' value.

However, the stakeholder view which is the modern view of the firm operations believes that a firm does not operate in a vacuum, hence the argument for the extension of the fiduciary duties of the directors, apart from company owners going towards protecting the interests of the society even at the expense of the corporate' profits. According to Freeman (1984), the concept CSR has however taken a pragmatic twist from the shareholder view of the firm to the stakeholder view (Sushmita, 2013). The gains that corporates obtain by getting stakeholder support through CSR would be costs which can be suffered by triggering stakeholder anger through social irresponsibility would merge to form a business case for CSR that compels corporates to be responsible socially but voluntarily (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The CSR concept is based on the notion that it is the society that allows companies to operate through its backing as

they use resources within society hence societies would expect businesses to be socially responsible (Giannarakis, 2014). The concept also ensures that corporations bring on board environmental and social issues in their business operations as well as incorporate the voluntary interaction with stakeholders. It is important to note that it goes beyond profit-making, but to be considerate of society. This explanation is however consistent with that of Sushmita (2013) who considers CSR as the extent to which companies meet legal, ethical, economic and discretionary responsibilities as required by its stakeholders. Garriga and Melé (2004) argued that the concept of CSR is importance since there is a misconception by societies that companies lack the moral dimension hence must contribute to the welfare of local populace in the society in the same way that other entities like government and charity organizations do.

On the other hand, some scholars have contrasting views which hold that there are still few empirical studies, especially in Southern Africa, which verify that CSR significantly adds to the development of the communities through reduction in poverty (Nyahunzvi, 2013; Van-Alstine & Afionis, 2013). However, the lack of consistency in the definition of CSR across studies makes it problematic to evaluate and compare the findings from diverse studies because they typically refer to unrelated dimensions of CSR (Pérez & Rodríguez-del-Bosque, 2015).

Theoretical review of Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll's Pyramid

Carroll's Pyramid has been very instrumental to businesses operating within a community so that various societal

obligations can be viewed as expected by societies from business operations (Ferdous & Moniruzzaman, 2015). It can be noted however that the pyramid integrates the corporate citizenship and the stakeholder concept. The base of the pyramid reflects the economic theory which priorities the financial stakeholders meaning the business is aimed at making profit as the principal purpose of any business venture (Fernando, 2013). This is consistent with the Milton Friedman school of thought who postulates that the only purpose of a business enterprise is to maximize profit (Hamidu, Haron, & Amran, 2015). The theory places more emphasis on the issues of productivity and profitability than the well-being of the society.

The legal responsibility suggests that societies have not sanctioned corporates to operate towards fulfilling the profit motive only but also to operate within the laws set by a particular country (Bosch-Badia, Montllor-Serrats, & Terrazon, 2013). The legal perspective of the CSR theory emphasizes on the obligations that the society places on corporates through different legislative and statutory provisions.

Third in the pyramid is the ethical responsibility where society expects the businesses to act in a socially responsible way thus the avoidance of evil. However drawing from this perspective ethical responsibility would comprise those activities, practices or approaches that are expected or prohibited by the society even though they are not part of the legal instrument (Hamidu, Haron, & Amran,

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activities, practices or approaches that are expected or prohibited by the society even though they are not part of the legal instrument (Hamidu, Haron, & Amran, 2015). Lastly, on Carroll's Pyramid is the philanthropy responsibility which encompasses activities t society expects and that firms must practice good. Lastly, on Carroll's Pyramid is the philanthropy esponsibility which respon-

sibility which encompasses activities t society expects and that firms must practice good citizenship by promoting societal well-fare and goodwill (Carroll, 2016). In short, to be socially responsible, a firm must make great effort to generate profit, submit to the laws, be ethical and make a positive contribution to society.



**FIGURE 1: THE PYRAMID OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
(FERDOUS & MONIRUZZAMAN, 2015)**

Social Contracts Theory

According to the Social Contract Theory, all business settings operate through an implied contract with the society as a whole (Rashid, 2015). The society in this case would allow the firm to do business under the pretext that such actions would ultimately benefit society. Generally the contract is strictly a hypothetical agreement aimed at observing the moral rules of which all businesses are expected to agree to this contact.

Corporates Social Responsibility practice in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, a few companies have embarked in CSR activities and have made substantial steps to fully embrace this concept (Mandima, Maravire, & Masere, 2014). Samantara and Dhawan (2020) demanded that companies in the 21st century should indulge and implement CSR activities so as to ensure corporate sustainability. Regardless of such calls from several researchers for companies to engage themselves in such

activities it seems the involvement of corporates continues to be relatively low (Masuku & Moyo, 2013). Where companies attempt to undertake the concept, they tend to target vulnerable individuals of the communities only.

The CSR activities in some areas include sponsoring of education to the underprivileged, the erection of leisure facilities in communities, providing assisting health institutions, establishment of retirement homes for the elderly among other activities. Such companies which have been exemplary include major mining corporations like Mbada Diamonds, Marange Diamonds, Zimplats, Murowa, Mimosa and Zimasco (Mandima, Maravire, & Masere, 2014). Bhasera (2013) also discovered that, although most of these mining corporates involve themselves in CSR initiatives, stakeholders' opinions are that these organizations are not doing enough for their local communities.

CSR initiatives offered to communities around National Parks for sustainable wildlife conservation

Rural communities who live with wildlife must derive benefits from their natural resources. According to Baroth and Mathur (2019), the accrual of such benefits would relate to the rights of access to the protected area and the resources. These benefits are what will assist in conserving wildlife, but these benefits must be real and tangible at each level (Baroth & Mathur, 2019). According to Tchakatumba et al. (2019) the benefits that may accrue from wildlife conservation include economic, social, ecological processes, education and research. It is important to note that the benefits which represent the economic value are not obvious or are they distributed among people in a method proportional to the costs to local people (Nyongesa, 2012). However, the costs of wildlife conserva-

tion are sometimes better acknowledged than the associated benefits. For wildlife conservation to be sustainable, there has to be a sense of community involvement and ownership. Watson et al. (2013) observe that benefits which accrue to those communities will reduce poaching. However, Lindsey et al. (2013) contend that poaching has also incentives and people may continue to hunt illegal, as long as it is more profitable. They further claim that these local communities will most likely participate in wildlife conservation if they understand the ecological environment and the ecosystem services provided by protected areas. This minimizes the future conflicts and improves cooperation between protected area managers and the local communities through education. It was observed in Tsholotsho and Hwange Districts that the communities benefit collectively in wards which produced hunted animals. Alexander and McGregor (2000) claimed that these levels of incentives are exactly what will enhance community perceptions towards conserving wildlife as well as putting value to it. Embarking in initiatives which stem from wildlife has made significant contributions to sustainable wildlife conservation in the two Districts (Alexander & McGregor, 2000). It was also observed that due to poor soils in some parts of the district and low rainfall there is huge expectancy for important economic benefits by the local communities from wildlife which they claim to be the custodians since this has been taken as a land use option by these communities. Positive benefits were also recorded as to outweigh negatives, which are gradually changing peoples' attitudes towards wildlife (Imvelo, 2019). Some of the studies conducted in Botswana revealed that, by setting communities to be in charge of local wildlife conservation, development programs and encouraging partnerships with other private sectors. The community-based natural resource

management approach will provide local communities with more authority to improve conservation as well as development outcomes (Lindsey, Barnes, Nyirenda, Pumfrett, & Tambling, 2013).

The review of literature provides evidence that numerous studies have been conducted on the management of wildlife, human wildlife conflict among others, but limited focus has been placed on whether the adoption of CSR has been a contributing factor to sustainable wildlife conservation. Remarkably, the general decline of population of wildlife is of a worry across the entire globe. In Zimbabwe, human activities together with rising population, demand for agricultural land and declining resources have put significant pressure on wildlife in Hwange National Park. In the review

tuted to fill the existing gap by assessing whether the adoption of CSR initiatives can be used as an aid to achieve sustainable wildlife conservation in protected areas. The conceptual framework below is deduced as shown in Figure 2 below.

Methodology

The pragmatism philosophy was adopted in this study considering that the researchers were more interested in using relevant research approaches in establishing how local communities were being engaged through CSR in the wildlife conservation and management in and around Hwange National Park. Pragmatism centres on linking theory and practice. A mixed-method research approach was used to gather required data. The survey research design was

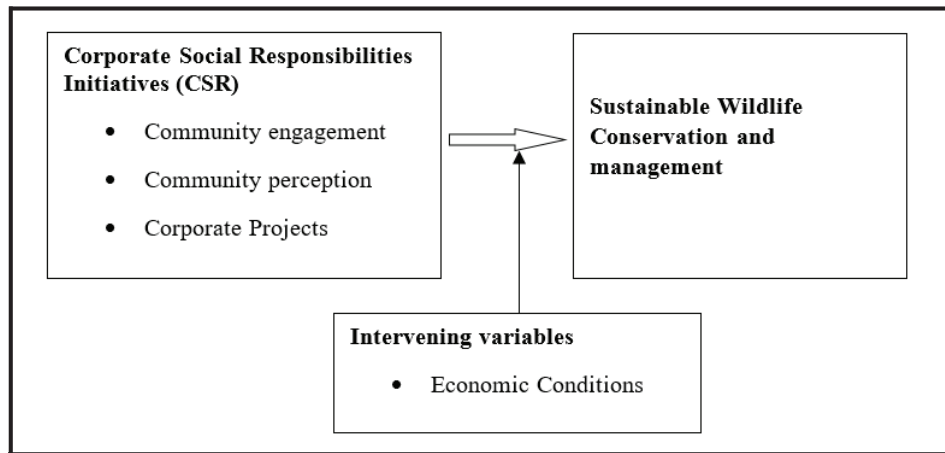


FIGURE 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

of literature it is however clear that various measures have been put in place so as to combat this growing phenomena. In this regard, the review undoubtedly reveals that there is a gap in as far as CSR initiatives can be used to attain sustainability in wildlife conservation in protected areas. It is however against this background that this study is insti-

chosen for this study because it enabled the researcher to meet the objectives by providing information that helped answer the research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). The study took the form of a case study which allowed for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon that is through understanding the participants' mindset whilst in their

natural setting (Mills & Birks, 2014). The population for this study included communities around Hwange National Park, National Parks Management and commercial operators within Hwange National Park. The study mainly used a purposive sampling technique. The target population was 3534 households which are around Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, being the Tsholotsho and the Hwange communities. Because it was both expensive and time consuming to study the whole target population, 190 respondents were purposively selected from Tsholotsho (Wards 1, 3 and 7) and Ward 15 from Hwange District using the Yount (2006) Rule which says 5% of the population is a fair sample. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect primary data from the targeted sample of 190 households. To analyse quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. For qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis was used.

4% were above 60 years. The ages show that most of the respondents were in the age range of 31-40 years, while the least were in the age range over 60 years. The findings reflected that most of the members of Hwange community have the majority in the middle-ages.

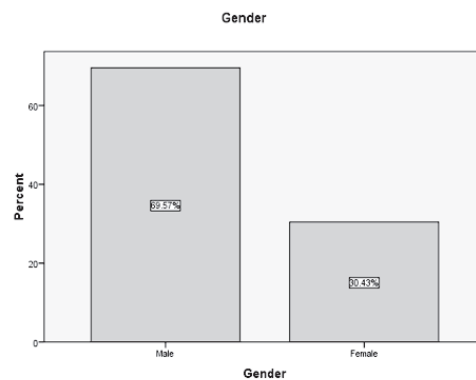


FIGURE 3: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Research tools	Number distributed	Number returned	Returned as a %
Questionnaires	190	184	97%
Interviews	6	6	100%

Findings and Discussion

190 questionnaires were distributed on the respondents and 184 were returned to give a return rate of 97%. All the 15 scheduled interviews were conducted to give a response rate of 100% as reflected in Table 1.

From Figure 4 below, the ages of respondents were 35% for 31-40 years, 30% were in the age range of 41-50 years, 20% were below 30 years of age, 11% were in the age range of 51-60 years and

The gender of the respondents was 70% males and 30% females (Figure 1). The gender statistics reflected that they were more males than females in the Hwange National Park area where questionnaires were distributed.

The educational levels attained by the respondents as reflected in Figure 5 were as follows: secondary education was 35%, 30% had primary education, 20% had college certificates / diplomas, while 15% had a university degree. The findings pointed out that most of the respondents

were literate. However, the majority of the population in Hwange Community did not go beyond secondary education at 65%, while 35% attained tertiary education.

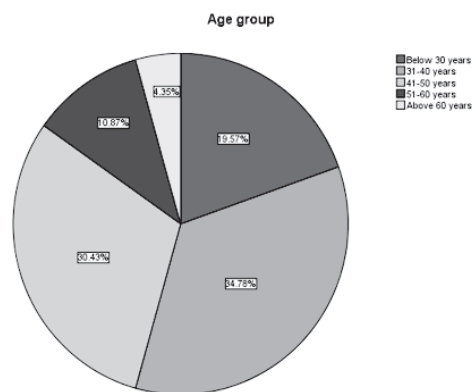


FIGURE 4: AGES OF RESPONDENTS

The educational levels attained by the respondents as reflected in Figure 5 were as follows: secondary education was 35%, 30% had primary education, 20% had college certificates / diplomas, while 15% had a university degree. The findings pointed out that most of the respondents were literate. However, the majority of the population in Hwange Community did not go beyond secondary education at 65%, while 35% attained tertiary education.

Key informants were asked to comment on their perceptions on whether CSR helped in bringing sustainable development around the Hwange National Park. Their sentiments were as follows:

The community and the natural resources of any area should be married to each other to reduce conflict.

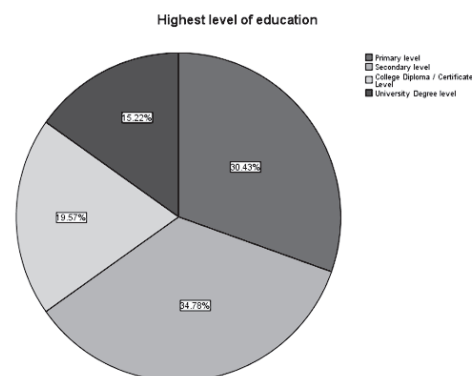


FIGURE 5: HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED BY RESPONDENTS

Key informant 1

The organization surely has a role to play as a CSR. This will help to develop the community.

Key informant 2

Respondents were asked whether the government encourages CSR practices. They were not sure whether the government encourages CSR practices. The key informants however noted that all what is done by the organization is to comply with Acts of the Parliament which enforce CSR. with Acts of the Parliament which enforce CSR.

Respondents were asked to rate whether CSR is good for the community or not. The majority (57%) agreed that CSR is good for the community while the least was not sure (13%). Key informants had the following statements to support CSR: As a stakeholder, I see CSR as the greatest intervention for the purposes of development.

Key informant 3

CSR is good for the community and this is also in support with the Indigenous Act which stipulates that the community should benefit from the resource around them.

Key informant 4

The findings indicated that 54% disagreed that the legal environment is conducive for CSR to take place. Key informants had different views as they felt that:

Regulations are in place and they are clear on CSR. One of the brainchild of CSR born from the legal framework was the CAMPFIRE Programme. It is the corporate responsibility to oversee the programme and to involve the community. However, the challenges come on implementation.

Key informant 3

The legal environment is good but implementation might be the challenge.

Key informant 4

The findings reflected that 69% of the respondents agreed that the economic situation is not permissive for the organization to engage in CSR. Key informants concurred with the findings from the current study as they were of the view that:

The economic situation is making the CSR difficult to engage in. It is making volunteers shun offering their services.

Key informant 6

It is a challenge of the day, the economic situation is hampering the CSR programmes, hence most people are no longer eager to be involved in the CSR

programmes.

Key informant 5

Findings from the survey revealed that there is political interference in CSR initiatives with the key informants in agreement with the same findings.

The community was indifferent on whether it benefited from CSR programmes as indicated by an equal 50% of the response rate of those who agreed and disagreed. However, key informants noted that the community benefits from the CSR initiatives through employment, income generation and other social benefits through interaction with wildlife.

The findings indicated that most of the respondents agreed that there was no community involvement in CSR programmes while the least were not sure whether there was community involvement or not. Tessema et al. (2010) concur with the findings as noted in their study that conservation areas which exclude local people or their participation have frequently caused adverse relations leading to increased poaching and habitat encroachment. Key informants noted the following that:

'The community is involved; however the economic situation is affecting the initiatives of CSR.

Key informant 1

These days community involvement has been reduced but when the need arises the community is always engaged.

Key informant 3

Findings reflected that there are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community which are very

effective in wildlife sustainable conservation. Key informants supported the findings as follows:

Schools around Hwange National Park do dramas for awareness programmes which advocate how to interact with wildlife.

Key informant 1

There are some awareness programmes which assist in the dissemination of information on wildlife conservation and sustainable development.

Key informant 5

The research found that the community benefits from CSR through employment, food, fees and infrastructure. Holmes (2013) however has a different view as the researcher notes that local communities always get inadequate and inequitable benefits which accrue from wildlife conservation.

Research Hypotheses Testing

H0: CSR initiatives do not significantly enhance community perception towards conservation of wildlife.

Since $t_{crita, dft, dfe} = t_{cri} 0.025, 183, 179 = 1.984 < 24.654$ on Initiatives: There are some incentives that promote CSR, 26.536 on Initiatives: The organization advises the community of the daily running of the CSR, 22.515 on Initiatives: There are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community, 22.244 on Initiatives: Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure and 22.689 on Initiatives: Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure, therefore reject H0 and conclude that corporate social responsibility initiatives significantly enhance community perception towards conservation.

TABLE 2: ONE-SAMPLE TEST

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
There are some incentives that promote CSR	24.654	183	.000	2.826	2.60	3.05
The organization advise the community of the daily running of the CSR	26.536	183	.000	2.630	2.43	2.83
There are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community	22.515	183	.000	2.391	2.18	2.60
Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure	22.244	183	.000	2.130	1.94	2.32
Some community members are given roles to curb poaching by Resource monitors	22.689	183	.000	1.804	1.65	1.96

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ANOVA TABLE

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.448	4	2.362	2.089	.084 ^a
	Residual	202.378	179	1.131		
	Total	211.826	183			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR: Recreational activities, Corporate Social Responsibility: Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues, CSR: Provision of game meat, CSR: Attend to human wildlife conflict.

b. Dependent Variable: Strategies: Formation of anti-poaching group.

Since $F_{crit\alpha, dft, dfe} = F_{crit0.025, 183, 179} = 2.463 > F_{cal} = 2.089$, therefore reject H_0 and conclude that the regression model explains a significant amount of variation on the dependent variable.

TABLE 4: PATH COEFFICIENT

Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.655	.421		11.048	.000
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Attend to human wildlife conflict	.166	.114	.119	1.458	.147
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues	-.004	.093	-.003	-.039	.969
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Provision of game meat	-.213	.091	-.181	-2.350	.020
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Recreational facilities	.001	.108	.000	.005	.996

a. Dependent Variable: Strategies : Formation of anti-poaching groups

Since $t_{crit\alpha, dft, dfe} = t_{crit0.025, 183, 179} = 1.984 > 1.458$ on corporate social responsibility: Attend to human wildlife conflict, -0.039 on Corporate Social Responsibility: Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues, -2.350 on Corporate Social Responsibility:

Provision of game meat and 0.005 on Corporate Social Responsibility: Recreational facilities, therefore fail to reject H_0 and conclude that there is no linear relationship between CSR and enhancement of sustainable wildlife conservation. The results signify that it may not only be CSR but other factors that enhance sustainable wildlife conservation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study shows that CSR is essential for wildlife conservation. While there is a legal framework in place in Zimbabwe the challenge is on the implementation of the rules and policies. It was noted that the community is not being involved in the conservation of wildlife. The findings also indicate that the economic situation is affecting the daily operation of Hwange National Park hence there is reduction of CSR which used to be done which includes the provision of social services. The study also concludes that some of the infrastructure like boreholes and roads are no longer being serviced on time due to limited resources.

The following are recommendations from the study: The community should be involved in the daily running of the conservation of wildlife around Hwange National Park. The study recommends that more effort should be put to ensure the implementation of legal instruments can help alleviate some of the challenges which are affecting the conservation of wildlife. The use of education and awareness campaigns are also essential for the conservation of the resources in the protected area. Another way of improving the conservation of the resources is to improve the incentives which are given to the community so that they feel ownership of the resources in their community. The study also established that if ZPWMA engages the community by forming anti-poaching committees to help in the conservation of wildlife around Hwange National Park.

However, the study has not been exhaustive, thus the following areas are recommended for further studies:

- Improving government intervention strategies on crafting policies that allow community involvement in the conser

vation of wildlife resources.

- Ensuring sustainability of incentives offered to the communities for future generations.

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ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. It is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world and causes devastating effects on all sectors of the nation, private universities inclusive. Human resource constitutes an integral part of the University system without which attainment of vision and mission statements would prove abortive. This paper examined human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State. Descriptive research design was used in the study. Twenty Registrars and Deans were purposively selected from the private Universities in Kwara State and used as participants in the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire entitled: "Human Resource Management during COVID-19 Pandemic Questionnaire" (HRMCPQ) was used to obtain relevant information from the participants. Two research questions and one research hypothesis guided the conduct of the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistic were used in data analysis. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrars and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State. Based on the findings of the study, private universities in Kwara State should lay more emphasis on the use of Information and Communication Technology tools in the management of human resource in their institutions in order to achieve stated goals and objectives.

Keywords: *Human Resource, Management, COVID-19, Private Universities, Kwara State*

Introduction

The human resource within the university system is an essential component in the attainment of the institution's vision and mission statements. This is the main reason private universities in Nigeria pay more attention to the management of their personnel. Thus, the role of academic and non-academic staff in ensuring conducive environment for effective teaching and learning cannot be put aside with a wave of hand (Akinnubi, 2019).

COVID-19, as a novel, has modified the experience of work for the vast majority of human resource in both Public and Private Universities in Nigeria. It compelled institutions across the globe to adapt how work is organized and how jobs are designed. The potential for fractures between employee groups has also increased. For example, between those who are Information and Communication Technology (ICT) compliance and those who are not, those who remained on payroll versus those furloughed, and even those in different business units impacted differently by the pandemic (Harney & Collings, 2021).

In a time of crisis such as the one ravaging the human race, human resource manager is called to assess and contribute to a broader response that embeds institution's mission, values, and societal impact with a focus on the well-being of academic and non-academic staff, stakeholders, and the community as a whole. Even those in the production sector are not spared by COVID-19 pandemic which has affected payment of school fees and dwindling funds available in private Universities.

According to Onwuegbuna, Francis and Adedoyin (2021), one of the utmost priorities of Human Resource 1(HR) managers

during covid-19 era was to emphasize health and safety concerns in the organization (for employees and employers) and the rapid adoption of teleworking to cushion the effect of the pandemic for effective and efficient productivity. In particular, HR managers have positioned the workforce to respond to this imminent pandemic by engaging them to be more resilient and productive. In this respect, corona virus (the world's new pandemic) has created numerous challenges for human resources managers. HR challenges are diverse; these challenges were worsened with the advent of the covid-19 pandemic. HR practitioners now have to worry about the efficient and effective functionality of the organization towards the achievement of organizational goals despite the restrictions of movement, inability to hold physical meetings, appraise employees despite remote working, effective ways to sensitize employee on the corona virus and its effects, maintenance of personal hygiene and psychological state of employee to function effectively among others.

Coronavirus pandemic is described by the World Health Organization (2020), as a contagious disease caused by a newly discovered virus known as covid-19. Primarily, the virus is transmitted through droplets of saliva and nasal discharge from an infected person. Covid-19 is described as a pandemic because it has a high rate transmission if not controlled. Corona virus was initially believed to have originated in a food market around Hubei province in Wuhan, China in December, 2019. Currently, it is unclear where the virus actually began. Organizational activities have been disrupted by Covid-19 pandemic. This has become a great challenge to the operations of human resource department in Nigerian Universities. In a bid to control this virus, Private Universities have suddenly

adopted remote working, email and video conferencing to replace on-site operations with all its implications (Lewis, 2020). With the gradual reopening of economic activities, HR professionals are faced with the challenge of hiring additional medical personnel to augment the existing one in order to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic (Onwuegbuna, Francis & Adedoyin, 2021).

There is no gain saying the fact that some institutions during COVID-19 period are working online. These institutions start and complete all their transactions with their clients online. This will lead to contraction in organization activities and consequently result in merging of roles performed by different personnel into one single role performed by an individual. Thereby reducing the human resource required by the organization. Personnel whose roles falls within the merged ones may be rendered redundant. Other organizations may layoff due to inability to engage in business activities due to the effect of the lockdown (Alonge, 2021). Hence, this paper investigated human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Universities in Kwara State.

Literature Review

Human resource management also known as personnel management is an essential approach to attaining competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of highly committed and capable staff using an integral array of planning, staffing, training and development, recruitment and selection, compensation and reward system, employee relations and structural techniques as at when need requires. In any organization, human resource should be considered as a pivot for boosting corporate performance. At present in many institutions and establishments, human resource is encountered with problems such as

ineffective use of employees in the organization to achieve desired goals, when there is no satisfactory relationships among workers and work groups to effectively tap the synergy of group effort. Also, no motivating employees and creating the conducive work environment to enable workers unleash their creative potentials, to satisfy the needs of both the organization and the individual. Having the right staff at the right place and at the right time is utmost important to the survival and success of any institution (Okon et al., 2021).

The use of internet is posing a challenge in implementing remote strategy due to poor network thereby affecting virtual meeting and effective teaching and learning. Staff leaves have been truncated due to corona virus pandemic as majority of the staff were at home during the lockdown. Physical communication was not spared during the pandemic. Adelakun (2020) submitted that the sudden outbreak of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) which originated from the city of Wuhan, China, has become a major public health challenge for not only China but also countries all over the world. In fact the pandemic has led to the total lockdown of most of the human activities in various parts of the world, specifically private Universities in Kwara State.

Armstrong (2006) observed that the assumption underpinning the practice of human resource management (HRM) is that people are the organization's key resource and organizational performance largely depends on them. Therefore if an appropriate range of human resource policies and processes are developed and implemented effectively, then human resource will make a substantial impact on organization performance. Boohene and Ausinura (2011) argued that the case for an association between human

resource management and organizational performance is based on two arguments. The first one being that the effective deployment of human resource offers one of the most powerful bases of competitive advantage. The second argument is that effective deployment of human resource depends on the application of a distinctive combination of practices, or the use of a consistent set of human resources practice (Okon, Obo, Akpan & Mback, 2021).

Strategic human resource management scholars have drawn on the resource-based view of the firm to argue that a high commitment human resource (HCHR) strategy leads to firm competitive advantage by creating greater firm-level employee-based resources that are rare and valuable (Christopher, 2021). Akinnubi (2021) corroborated the aforementioned statement that the implementation of effective human resource strategies in private universities will go a long way in achieving set goals and objectives. Specifically, reduction in students' wastage, identifying redundant staff and improvement in the income of the institutions. Academic staff are able to discharge their tripartite functions of teaching, research and publications and community services when a good human resource management is instituted.

Human resource includes the quality of lecturers. The quality of school achievement in general and students' performance in particular depend on the quality of the academic staff employed. This statement was confirmed by National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014), where it was stated that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. The academic staff of the universities are very essential in terms of the role they perform towards the attainment of the university's vision and

mission statements (Akinnubi, 2010). According to Akinnubi and Oladimeji (2021), teachers at all levels of education are employed to impart knowledge and to contribute to the existing knowledge through research, publications and community service (peculiar to higher institutions of learning). Thus, the lecturer's ability to perform depends on the number of learners he is assigned to teach and supervise their projects at a time. The administrative staff are engaged in the universities to complement the efforts of the academic staff in order to achieve effective teaching and learning thereby resulting to high students' academic performance.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness (Alonge, 2021).

Human resource management is obtaining, using and maintaining a satisfied staff. It is a significant part of management concerned with employees at work and with their relationship within the organization. Human resource management connotes the planning, organizing, compensation, integration and maintenance of people for the purpose of contributing to organizational, individual and societal goals. Human resource management is that part of the management task which is concerned with the staff of the organization and their contribution to its effectiveness. HRM's central concern is the efficient utilization of human resources in order to attain educational goals and objectives. It is that part of the management process concerned with recruiting and selecting people; training and developing them for

their work; ensuring that their payment and conditions of employment are appropriate, where necessary negotiating such terms of employment with trade unions; advising on healthy and appropriate working conditions; the organization of people at work, and the encouragement of relations between management and the personnel (Christopher, 2021; Lewis, 2020).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the strategies put in place in human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private Universities in Kwara State.
2. Determine the level of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private Universities in Kwara State.
3. Investigate the difference between the perceptions of Registrars and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State.

Research Questions

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

1. What are the strategies put in place in human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State?
2. What is the level of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrars

and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used in this study. This design was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher observed and recorded situations as they existed. Mixed method of research was used in the study, that is, both qualitative and quantitative methods of reporting data obtained from investigation were used. Four Universities (Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Crown Hill University, Eyenkorin, Landmark University, Omu-Aran and Summit University, Offa) established before year 2021 served as population and were all used as samples in the study. Twenty Registrars and Deans (Registrars-4 and Deans-16) were purposively selected as participants in the study. Registrars and Deans were used as participants in the study because they could provide required information to pilot the conduct of the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire entitled: "Human Resource Management during COVID-19 Pandemic Questionnaire" (HRMCPQ) was used to obtain relevant information from the participants and it made up of two sections-A and B. Section A sought information on demographic aspects of the participants, while section B obtained relevant information on human resource management strategies. Interview was also conducted to obtain data from the participants. Lecturers in the areas of Educational Management and Educational Measurement and Evaluation in Al-Hikmah University validated the questionnaire designed for this research work. These experts who were readers and professors examined the questionnaire to see whether it was suitable for the information required. In so doing, these profes-

sionals assisted to assess the face and content validity of the questionnaire by ensuring that irrelevances and ambiguous items were excluded. Test re-test method was used through a pilot study undertaken to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire. This yielded 0.89 coefficient of reliability for “Human Resource Management during COVID-19 Pandemic Questionnaire” (HRMCPQ). This was considered reliable pursuant to its use in the conduct of this study. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the participants in the sampled universities. Four research assistants who were lecturers in these universities complemented the efforts of the researcher. Descriptive statistics of frequency and mean rating were used to analyse the research questions, while inferential statistic of t-test was used to test the research hypothesis formulated in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Research Question One:

What are strategies put in place in human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private Universities in Kwara State?

Interview method was utilized to obtain relevant data from the participants on the strategies put in place in management of human resource during COVID-19 pandemic in private Universities in Kwara State. It was realized that remote strategy is implemented as meetings were conducted virtually through zoom and WhatsApp applications. Lecturers engaged the students virtually to ensure that teaching and learning were not affected. The academic calendar was slightly affected which made some of the sampled private universities ended the academic session behind scheduled. As average of one month was added to the conclusion of 2019/2020 academic

session. Both academic and non-academic staff could not proceed on the annual leave having spent an average of five months at home as a result of lockdown. Staff wellness and safety initiatives were put into consideration. Salaries were promptly paid in most of the sampled private universities. Safety equipment which include nose masks, hand sanitizer dispenser and infrared thermometers among others were stated to be in place during COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 safety protocols were strictly adhered to as social distancing was observed. Specifically, staff found to be redundant were not spared during this period. The non-teaching staff engaged in staggered operations. This was to ensure that social distancing was maintained. Physical communication was reduced to the barest minimum. WhatsApp was greatly employed in ensuring free flow of information in the university community. Workshop and seminars were organized for both academic and administrative staff on the use of Information and Communication Technology tools. Some academic and administrative staff were retrenched in order to meet the institutions' finance.

It is therefore the role of human resource managers to introduce new measures to safeguard the health of employees who are risk takers for the organization (Ahmad, 2020). There is also need to be more innovative in response to the current challenges. Such measure may include educating employees the importance of observing social distancing, medical screening to identify employees who may have been exposed to the virus and measures for successful overall business operations despite the challenges (Onwuegbuna, Francis & Adedoyin, 2021). Alonge (2021) discovered that there was high reduction in the quantity of goods and services produced on the part of the organizations, thereby result

ing in low mobility of labour, reduction in wages and salaries, frustration of employment contracts and layoffs. Akin-nubi (2015) observed that human resources (teaching and non-teaching staff) remain essential ingredients in the teaching profession at a given point in

time without which attainment of the stated goals and objectives will prove abortive.

Research Question Two: What is the level of Human Resource Management during COVID-19 pandemic in private Universities in Kwara State?

TABLE 1. LEVEL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1	Implementation of Remote Strategy	2.66	2
2	Consideration of Leave Strategy	1.98	5
3	Care for staff wellness and Safety Strategy	2.43	3
4	Communication Strategy	3.00	1
5	Retrenchment Strategy	2.13	4
	Overall Mean	2.44	

NB. Mean: 0.00 – 1.49 = Low, 1.50 -2.99=moderate, 3.00 and above =High

Table 2 indicates the level of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State. The overall mean is 2.44 points which implies that the level of human resource management is moderate in the sampled universities. Communication strategy was ranked number one as the most strategy used to manage human resource with 3.00, while consideration of leave strategy was ranked the list with 1.98 points. Implementation of remote, care for staff wellness and safety and retrenchment strategies were ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively. It can be further deduced that the overall mean of 2.44 points obtained from the level of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic is an indication that the private universities in Kwara State were able to survive the wave of coronavirus in the area of human resource management in their institutions.

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Okon, Obo, Akpan and Mbak (2021) opined that human resource is a valuable to organizations, especially the university system, all over the globe. The health and wholeness of staff will determine to a large extent their individual and collective contribution to the productive activities in an organization. The need to give

right quantity and quality and at the right time and place. COVID-19 pandemic, if not collectively compacted can truncated the existence of organizations, nations and the human society at large (Christopher, 2021). Private Universities in Nigeria that must remain in business in the face of the dwindling economic reality must ensure that their human resource is in the right quantity, quality and in good state of health so as to discharge their duties as expected of them by the institutions as meeting the students' need depends largely on this. Alonge (2021) submitted that the need to

ascertain the human resource implication of COVID-19 disease so as to guide against its detrimental effect on staff and organizations remains a sine qua non.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrar and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State.

TABLE 2. PERCEPTIONS OF REGISTRARS AND DEANS ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Variables	N	df	Calculated t-value	Probability t-value	Decision
Registrars	4				
		18	1.428	.171	Not Significant
Deans	16				

urgent attention to whatever will affect the supply of human resources in the As shown in Table 3, the probability t-value 0.171 is greater than the set p-value 0.05 for 18 degrees of freedom. This indicates that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrar and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State is accepted. Thus, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrars and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in private universities in Kwara State. Both the Registrars and the Deans viewed management of human resource in the sampled private universities the same way.

Lewis (2020) noted that e-learning enhances the efficacy of knowledge and qualifications through ease of access to huge amounts of information. It is also able to provide opportunities for better relationships between learners by the use of discussion forums without violating the rule of social distancing. Through this, e-learning helps eliminate barriers that have the potential of hindering participation including the fear of talking to other learners. It motivates students to interact with others, as well as exchange and respect different points of view. It eases communication and improves the relationships that help sustain learning. It makes available extra prospects for interactivity between students and teachers during content delivery (Oladipupo, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that private universities in Nigeria significantly contribute to a large extent in students' admission and reducing the rate of unemployment through their graduates who have been groomed to be self-employed. Historically, issues such as youth unemployment and poverty, in general, were thought to be the responsibilities of government and civil society (Awodiji, Ijaiya & Akinnubi, 2020). Private institutions took up these responsibilities notwithstanding that it deviates from their motive of profit-making, and to a great extent, they are doing just fine in solving the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria (Akinnubi, 2021).

Contributions of the Study

This study serves an eye-opener to administrators of private universities in Kwara State and Nigeria as whole on the need to adopt human resource management strategies in achieving their institutions' goals and objectives. This study established the role of Information and Communication Technology as a veritable tool in adhering to COVID-19 protocols. The National Universities Commission (NUC), governmental and non-governmental agencies would find the findings of this study useful in order to be well abreast of ways of managing human resource in this new normal in the university system. Furthermore, this study is of immense importance to future researchers in Educational Management and other related fields. Educational administrators, planners and the general public would see the need to contribute their quotas to the attainment of educational goals and objectives in the area of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in the State and in the country as a whole.

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

It is a truism to assert that the interference of the coronavirus pandemic has caused so many challenges on the Nigerian education system, private universities in particular. Strategies such as effective communication, retrenchment, consideration of leave, implementation of remote and care for staff wellness and safety were put in place in human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State. The level of human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State was moderate with overall mean of 2.44 points. There was no significant difference between the perceptions of Registrars and Deans on human resource management during COVID-19 pandemic in Private Universities in Kwara State.

Effective use of human resource management strategies will help to attain the vision and mission statements of private universities in Kwara State. Private universities in Kwara State should lay more emphasis on the use of Information and Communication Technology tools in the management of human resource in their institutions. COVID-19 protocols, as spelt out by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), should be strictly adhered to in Private Universities in Kwara State in order to secure safety of the human resources in their institutions. More emphasis should be laid on workshops and seminars for both academic and non-academic staff on effective use of ICT tools in discharging of their responsibilities so as to attain effective human resource management. Redundant staff should not be retained in the university system as salaries paid to this category of staff should be put into infrastructural development.

Limitations and Scope of Further Research

This study is limited to Private Universities in Kwara State of Nigeria. The study mainly used questionnaire and interview for data gathering. The generalization of the findings of this study is limited because of the sample and sampling technique employed, which did not include private universities that were established in the year 2021 and other public universities in Kwara State. Nonchalant attitudes of the respondents towards data collection and dearth of relevant literatures also constituted part of the limitations of this study. Registrars and Deans were used as subjects for the study. Considering the limitations of the present study, further studies should be conducted which would incorporate Public universities in Nigeria. Human resource management and administrative effectiveness should be investigated in the Nigerian universities. Similar study should be conducted in the Nigerian Colleges of Education, Monotechnics and Polytechnics. This is because the aforementioned tertiary institutions are gravitating towards effective human resource management.

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NATION BRANDING: TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY BRANDING DYNAMICS IMPACTING EMERGING ECONOMIES IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

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Abstract

This study examines the extent to which nation branding antecedents can be leveraged to create a strong nation brand for emerging economies. The Anholt (2002) nation branding model was quantitatively applied to develop a hexagon of factors which can affect developing economies. The Republic of Zimbabwe was targeted for analysis due to its national brand challenges and the negative brand equity. Data for the study was collected using structured questionnaires. Structural equation modelling (SEM) using Amos Graphics was the main tool for analysis. Findings suggest that government regulatory framework is the single most important key nation brand element which influences emerging economies' brands today. This is followed by tourism, natural resources, sport and entertainment, diasporic citizenry, and religion. The study concluded that if these affordances are capitalised, nation branding for emerging economies can be greatly improved by 58%. The study recommends government and private sector stakeholders to take active roles in capitalising these affordances in order to achieve the nation brand equity.

Keywords: *Brand equity, nation branding, national competence, Zimbabwe, global marketplace.*

Introduction

Zimbabwe is a developing country whose economic fortunes have been plummeting unabated in the last two decades owing to a motley of factors. One of the factors whose effect is the focus of this study is the disdain with which everything Zimbabwean seems to attract on the global market. Lately, local Zimbabwean exporters have been finding it very difficult to gain foothold on global markets owing to the negative image the country that is currently suffering in areas of politics, economics and even sports. In today's globalised world, countries have to compete for basically everything from foreign direct investment (FDI) to tourism (Zeineddine, 2017; Tecmen, 2018). Here, image is everything, and branding has an essential role to play in moulding perceptions about any product. While it has largely been seen as an indispensable element of the marketing strategy of goods or services, branding is an aspect whose full impact in contributing to a national brand equity has only been recently acknowledged. The primary objective of this study therefore is to examine the extent to which nation branding's key areas of national competence can be leveraged to create a strong nation brand for emerging economies, with evidence from Zimbabwe. The Nation Brand Hexagon model, originally developed by Anholt (2002) is deductively applied as an analytical framework.

Background of study

Countries have wittingly or unwittingly been branding themselves for centuries. Kimberley in South Africa has for over a century successfully branded itself as the mecca of diamond mining (Mangwana, 2016). Rome, with its imposing ancient coliseums, has always mystified tourists from all over the world, while Egypt, with

its awe-inspiring pyramids has for millennia been viewed as the cradle of civilisation (Holt, 2004). Recently, Japan has been an exciting case study of how a country with a negatively-perceived nation brand can successfully rebrand itself. Largely perceived as a jingoistic, militaristic country pre-1945, Japan had by the dawn of the twenty-first century successfully rebranded itself to being a competitive exporter of globally-renowned brands such as Sony, Toyota, and Mitsubishi (Dinnie, 2008a; Anholt, 2003a). European countries such as Spain, New Zealand and Ireland are other examples of how successful nation branding can be leveraged for competitive advantage (Dinnie, 2008b).

African countries are not an exception. Nation branding is increasingly being viewed as a way to gain competitive edge by Rwanda, Botswana, and South Africa which have all been outstanding in this regard (Osei and Gbadamosi, 2011). These countries have projected a positive global image that has attracted FDI in their respective economies. Rwanda has taken the centre stage by successfully rebranding as the 'gateway to Africa', a shining beacon in investment and competitiveness (Rwanda ICT Chamber, 2017). Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's negative brand image has now spanned upwards of two decades. The country is mired in a web of international controversies ranging from non-adherence to property rights to human rights abuses. These have negatively affected the image the world holds of the country across all sectors of economic activity.

The mass media play a very crucial role in building a nation's brand identity. The negative media coverage Zimbabwe has been receiving has crystallised the negative way the country is being viewed by investors and tourists around the world. For Machadu (2016) as well as Masango

and Naidoo (2019), an unstable economy, political instability, corruption, and hyper-inflation are among other key issues that affect Zimbabwe's nation brand. According to Dinnie (2008b), though perception may not always represent the true reality on the ground, it is a powerful tool in influencing a nation's brand image. Zimbabwe has failed to attract any meaningful FDI over the last two decades due to its negative image (Masango & Naidoo, 2019; Sikwila, 2015).

Despite being home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World such as the majestic Victoria Falls, the country struggles to attract foreign tourists who still perceive Zimbabwe as somewhat unsafe and politically-unstable (Ndlovu & Heath, 2013; Avraham, 2018). While a lot of the negative perceptions feeding into an unattractive global brand could have been beyond the country's control, some have local origins and can thus be corrected through a conscious and co-ordinated nation branding effort (Dinnie, 2015). While the country could benefit from its populace spread across the globe, Zimbabweans conceivably lack a national identity so much so that they have complicitly helped project an image of their country which is neither flattering nor attractive (Machadu, 2016).

While attempts at rebranding the country and promoting local value addition have recently been made by the Zimbabwean government under the twin auspices of the Ministry of Environment Tourism and Hospitality, as well as the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Zimbabweans have too late discovered, to their discomfiture, that it is difficult to grow an economy while a negative country of origin is hanging over their head (Zimbabwe - A World of Wonders, 2011; Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2019). This is because, at the moment,

there is a gap between the perception the world holds, and the reality of the country in the global market. How that gap between perception and reality may be bridged is the purpose of this study.

Literature review

The concept of nation branding

In 2006, De Chernatony observed that the application of branding techniques to nations was a relatively new practice, but one which had been growing in frequency given the increasingly global nature of competition that nations had to contend with. Two decades into the new millennium, the consequence of globalisation is increasingly making it imperative that all countries must compete with each other for the attention, respect, and trust of investors, tourists, consumers, donors, immigrants, the media, and the governments of other nations (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018).

There is no doubt that a powerful and positive nation brand, therefore, could provide a crucial competitive advantage (Anholt, 2002). Anholt (2002) further argues that when we, for example, express a preference for French holidays, German cars or Italian opera, we are responding to brand images in exactly the same way as when we were shopping for clothing or food. However, nation brands are far bigger than Nike or Nestlé. Makudza, Mugarisanwa and Siziba (2020) introduced the aspect of social media which can be incorporated in the branding of nations. This follows the dictates of brand globalisation and the fusion of social commerce in communicating brand attributes.

Temporal (2002) found that nations are thus increasingly making conscious efforts to leverage nation branding in recognition of the need to achieve three

major objectives: (1) to attract tourists; (2) to stimulate FDI, and (3) to boost exports. A further objective is talent attraction whereby nations compete to attract higher education students and skilled workers. Temporal (2002) further posits that, in addition to these objectives, nation branding can also increase currency stability, help restore international credibility and investor confidence, reverse international rating downgrades, increase international political influence, stimulate stronger international partnerships, and enhance nation-building.

Nation branding and the global market

According to Gosling (2021), a nation brand should not be viewed as a luxury that only wealthy and powerful states can afford. It is something that even middle-sized and small countries can also take advantage of owing to the rapid globalisation and eradication of national boundaries in commerce and trade. Gosling (2021) stated that more and more countries around the world are embracing nation branding for the global market through social media in order to differentiate themselves on the world stage and to strengthen their economic performance in such key areas as exporting, inward investment, and tourism (Makudza, Mugarisanwa and Siziba, 2020).

Well branded nations can be very competitive on the global market regardless of the history of the country (Ammar, 2021). Typical examples of countries that enhanced the performance of their nation brands on the global market space include South Africa, New Zealand, Egypt and South Korea (Knott, Fyall & Jones, 2017; Mikolajczyk, 2017; Ammar, 2021). As Rowala (2021) puts it, the beauty of a nation's brand lies in the beauty of the products and brands that it

produces for the global market. This suggests a close association between nation branding and the products that a nation produces for the global market space (Frig & Sorsa, 2020).

Prior researches highlighted that commercial brands produced by a country are an important facet of nation brand identity. They augment the visibility of the manufacturing countries on the global market space. Certain scholars also reiterate this by highlighting how the nation-brand identity of Germany has been largely built upon the global success of brands such as BMW, Mercedes Benz-Daimler, and Volkswagen among others.

To illustrate the above opinions, Rowala (2021) argues that if Coca-Cola and Marlboro or Nike were not American, if Ferrari or Gucci or Barilla were not Italian, if Chanel or Dior were not French, and if Burberry or Rolls-Royce were not (originally) English, they would probably be half the brands they are today on a global scale. This implies that a nation's exporters have a significant role to play in the export brand facet of a nation's brand identity (Li & Feng, 2021).

Twenty-first century branding dynamics impacting emerging economies

According to Dinnie (2008b), nations need to put significant effort in identity brand development. An identity-building narrative can be constructed, encapsulating the nation's rich historical and cultural heritage by incorporating a nation's creative industry (Rowala, 2021). For example, brand South Africa has benefited immensely from the role that South African artists, performers, and the film industry has played in shaping awareness and contributing to a vibrant 'Proudly South African' nation brand (De

Kock, 2016). Their creative industry has helped South Africans tell their own story and greatly influence the world in viewing them in a manner devoid of stereotypes and clichés.

Emerging economies need to understand very well that how they communicate their nation brand identity is just as important as building a nation brand identity itself (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). A nation's brand image is its brand identity made robust, tangible, communicable and useful (Anholt, 2002). In order to develop targeted communications to counter negative perceptions, emerging economies must segment their audiences (Rowala, 2021). For example, in influencing its country's global image, the Egyptian government divided its country's corporate image into three: firstly, institutional and political image, second, image of Egyptian products and, third, image of Egyptian business contacts (Dinnie, 2008b).

Tourism has a significant potential for enhancing nation branding in most emerging economies. According to Osei and Gbadamosi (2011), tourism offers a significant potential for both domestic and foreign investment and it has been the starting point of nation branding for many countries in Africa. For example, Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, and Botswana represent successful examples of how to position a place brand to attract high-end travellers (Papadopoulos and Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015). Taking a holistic approach to branding enhances likability of the brand (Makudza, Tasara & Muridzi, 2021).

The power of country of origin (COO)

Kumara and Canhua (2010) defined the country of origin (COO) effect as the

relation between place and product. Freire further argues that certain feelings and values attached to a brand are a direct result of the COO of the brand, implying that consumers use countries' names as intrinsic cues to help evaluate products and to make appropriate purchasing decisions. Anholt (2002) asserts that a country's image can either benefit or harm a product depending on whether there is a match or mismatch between the country image and the brand's desired features. A good example is evident in how quickly South African brands such as Ingrams Camphor Cream, Jungle Oats, Crosse and Blackwell Mayonnaise among others have successfully penetrated the African market largely on the back of an attractive 'Proudly South African' nation brand (Dinnie, 2008b).

Popular Zimbabwean brands such as Nestlé Cerevita, Mazoe Orange Crush, Gloria Flour, Mahatma Rice, though enjoying marginal success in a few regional markets are struggling in foreign markets owing largely to a negative COO effect (Machadu, 2016). Anholt (2003a) argues that a powerful and appealing nation brand is the most valuable gift that any government can bestow to its exporters since it imparts an 'unfair' advantage in the global marketplace.

Makudza (2020) further adds the aspect of customer experience which drives likability of brands. For local or imported products, customers need more than just a core product but an experience which is augmented by the benefits and attributes of renowned brands from countries with a positive nation brand equity. This helps explain why the most desirable brands always seem to come from America, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scandinavia, Scotland, Switzerland, or South Korea (Dinnie, 2008b). China is

currently not far behind. With the massive investment it is making in nation brand-building, China may soon be at par with the most competitive countries in the global marketplace (Anholt, 2003b).

The foregoing highlights important lessons that the government of Zimbabwe can learn in its quest to boost its export potential, starting with the need to invest in nation brand-building. The incremental benefits deriving from this are not limited to the economic sphere, but may also be cultural and political.

Key determinants of nation branding

Anholt (2002) posits that a nation brand is the sum of people's perceptions of a country across six key areas of national competence. Brand Hexagon model identifies six national competence areas namely tourism, exports, governance, people, culture and heritage, as well as investment and immigration. Anholt (2002) indicates that for a positive nation brand equity to occur, there is need to enhance all the six competencies. While Anholt (2002)'s supposition is plausible and easy to follow, it has faced criticism from contemporary studies. Jones (2016) argues that the Anholt (2002) nation branding determinants are not exhaustive as there are other elements, such as sport and entertainment. Yousaf and Huaibin (2014) contend that nation brand-building is more affected by religion as opposed to general culture, hence some nations have been branded as either Christian, Islamic or circular. Masango and Naidoo (2019) thus suggest that nation branding determinants should be country or region-specific rather than universal. As with human personality, each country is a unique entity. While some countries have a strong brand awareness on the basis of

their natural resources, others are landlocked with hardly any natural resources to boast of, and others are known for their autocratic systems of governance.

In light of the foregoing discussion on the antecedents of nation branding, there appears to be a convergence on Masango and Naidoo's (2019) conceptualisation of a nation brand. Be that as it may, this study applied Anholt's (2002) model as it relates particularly to the prevailing unique nation branding areas of competence in developing economies. For the purposes of this study, the brand hexagon was thus adapted to include the following: sport and entertainment (Li & Feng, 2021; Rookwood, 2019), diaspora community (Hedge, 2017; Dinnie, 2008b; Baser & Ozturk, 2020), resources other than just people (Frig & Sorsa, 2020; Kimmo, Pappel & Draheim, 2018), governance, including the regulatory framework (Anholt, 2002; Frig & Sorsa, 2020), and religion (Yousaf & Huaibi, 2014; Panajoti, 2018; Anholt, 2002). Figure 1 presents the adapted model of study. These are the antecedents which constitute a conceptual framework (Figure 1) guiding this study.

Through a deductive reasoning, it is the researchers' opinion that the conceptual framework's independent variables have captured most of the key drivers of nation branding in emerging economies. In light of the framework presented in Figure 1, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: *National competence attributes have a positive impact on the nation branding of emerging economies;*
- H2: *Government regulatory framework has a positive effect on nation branding;*
- H3: *Diasporic Citizenry has a positive effect on nation branding;*
- H4: *Tourism has a positive effect on nation branding;*

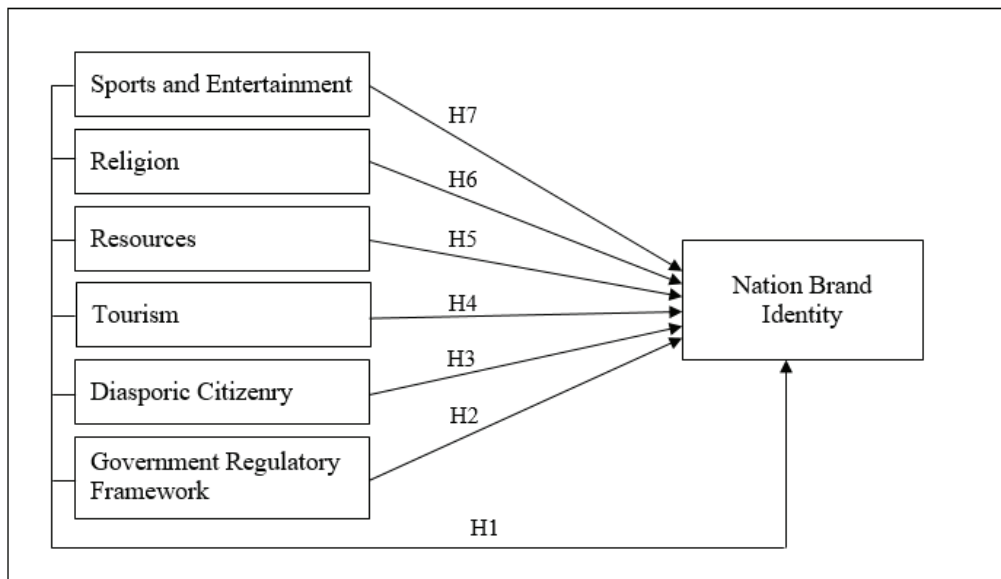


FIGURE 1. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

H5: *Resources have a positive effect on nation branding;*

H6: *Religion has a positive effect on nation branding;*

H7: *Sports and entertainment positively impact on nation branding.*

Most developing economies, as with Zimbabwe, are home to a vocal diaspora community whose invaluable role in contributing to the nation's brand is widely acknowledged (Mangwana, 2016). Coupled with the regulatory framework on ease of doing business in the country, as well as tourism, these are all key nation branding competence aspects that influence the brand equity of a developing economy as an investment and tourist destination of choice. It is unarguable that the conceptual framework's independent variables encapsulate most of the key drivers of nation branding in developing economies.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative approach that is aligned to a positivist paradigm. Using an explanatory research design, a cause-and-effect relationship was measured between the key areas of national competence (independent variable) and Zimbabwe's nation brand (dependent variable). The target population for the study constituted key stakeholders to a nation branding exercise namely the media, business community and policy formulators (government). The study could not quantify the numerical target population because it was infinitive in nature. Using a survey, a stratified random sampling technique was applied in order to arrive at a fair distribution of all the target groups in the sample. Guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 384 was applied.

Data was collected through an online self-administered survey using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire had several scales which were adopted and adapted from previous studies. Sport and entertainment had four items adapted from Li and Feng (2021) and Rookwood (2019); whilst tourism and governance scales had four items adopted from Anholt (2002). Diasporic citizenry had four items adapted from Hedge (2017); whilst four religion scales were developed from studies done by Yousaf and Huaibi (2014). The measurement scale for resources was based on a study by Frig and Sorsa (2020), whereupon four items were developed.

High levels of good ethical conduct were maintained throughout the study. Respondents were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity, including the fact that participation in the study was purely on voluntary basis with the right to withdraw at any given time. Data analysis was done using AMOS graphics.

Findings

Sample characteristics

The study attracted 340 respondents, with 32% of them being females and the remainder (68%) are males. In terms of representation, responses from the business community were the highest with 62%, with almost a third of these having business activities in the diaspora. The media had 21% representation whilst government had 17%. Only respondents who passed the screening question on awareness of nation branding were considered for participation. This was done to enhance the validity and reliability of results. A fair representation of respondents had degrees as their highest academic qualification (46%), whilst 21% had postgraduate qualifications.

Perceptions of Zimbabwe's brand identity

Respondents perceive Zimbabwe as possessing a poor brand identity. The major areas of concern identified relate to weak tourism drive (31%), poor governance regulations (24%), poor resource allocation (17%), as well as weak sporting and entertainment aspects (13%). Religion had the least negative effect, followed by citizens in the diaspora, with 10% and 13% respectively. This suggests that respondents feel that the country largely possesses a weak nation brand identity and that the political turmoil in the country for the last two decades may well have impacted negatively on its nation brand.

Respondents were required to rank the key nation branding determinants in the order of their importance in influencing Zimbabwe's nation brand. About 40.6% of respondents ranked governance first, followed by tourism (27.6%), and natural resources (14.1%). The bottom rung was made up of religion (1.8%), the effect of the diaspora community (6.5%), and sport and entertainment (9.4%). Given the drastic impact that governance issues have had on Zimbabwe's nation brand within the last two decades, it perhaps is understandable why respondents ranked it first.

The measurement model

A confirmatory factor analysis was applied on the results for the measurement model. The divergent validity, convergent validity and reliability were also examined. The results showed an acceptable model fit (CMIN = 107.821, DF = 94, P = 0.091, CMIN/DF = 1.231, GFI = 0.948, AGFI = 0.917, CFI = 0.979, RMSEA = 0.034). All model fit statistics were within the acceptable ranges for a good model fit as supported by Hair et al.,

(2010). Table 1 shows the convergent validity and reliability statistics. The study passed the convergent validity test as evidenced by factor loadings in Table 1. The instrument items loaded highly on their latent variables with the lowest of standardised loading being 0.678. According to Hair et al. (2010), when factor loadings are higher than 0.5, then there is evidence of discriminant validity. The findings therefore confirm that the indicators were converging on

their respective latent variables. Reliability of the study was measured using the Cronbach Alpha and the Composite Reliability test. The Cronbach Alpha score range was from 0.811 to 0.932, whilst the score range for the composite reliability was from 0.825 to 0.937. Reliability tests recorded results which were higher than the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was 0.54 and higher. According to Hair et al. (2010),

TABLE 1. CONVERGENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Factors	Standard Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Sports and Entertainment	0.693	0.861	0.886	0.662
	0.864			
	0.828			
	0.858			
Religion	0.853	0.917	0.932	0.774
	0.878			
	0.911			
	0.877			
Resources	0.992	0.921	0.937	0.786
	0.885			
	0.874			
	0.887			
Tourism	0.678	0.811	0.825	0.543
	0.814			
	0.764			
	0.685			
Diasporic Citizenry	0.984	0.932	0.951	0.830
	0.889			
	0.912			
	0.9			
Government Regulatory Framework	0.906	0.887	0.906	0.707
	0.862			
	0.777			
	0.814			

the minimum threshold for explanatory studies is 0.5 thereby making the study values acceptable.

Discriminant validity

The discriminant validity statistics calculated as the square root of the AVE are shown in Table 2.

validity test results which were calculated as the square root of the AVE. The square roots of AVE were higher than the correlations between other study variables, thereby testifying evidence of discriminant validity (Byrne, 2004). The study therefore concludes that the latent variables of the independent variable category

Table 2 is a presentation of discriminant

TABLE 2. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY STATISTICS

	Sport & Entertainment	Religion	Resources	Tourism	Diaspora	Regulatory Framework
Sport & Entertainment	0.845					
Religion	0.121	0.777				
Resources	0.435	0.092	0.865			
Tourism	0.594	0.208	0.314	0.776		
Diasporic Citizenry	0.157	0.191	0.221	0.443	0.846	
Regulatory Framework	0.211	0.061	0.112	0.397	0.149	0.780

were distinctly measuring unique elements from each other.

The model in figure 2 had a good overall model fit (CMIN = 756.380, DF = 344, P = 0.00, CMIN/DF = 2.199, GFI = 0.931, AGF = 0.905, CFI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.051). The Chi square goodness of fit was statistically significant. This for Hair et al. (2010) is common since the test is affected by large sample sizes. Guided by Hair et al. (2017), all other tests were within acceptable ranges. Hair et al. (2017) stated the following acceptable model fit values CMIN/DF < 3, GFI >

0.90, AGFI > 0.90, RMSEA < 0.08 and CFI > 0.90. Table 3 indicates the significance levels of the hypothesised associations as shown below. The first hypothesis tested whether nation brand competence attributes have a positive impact on the nation brand of emerging economies. That notion was supported with a strong R² of 0.58. This means that if the six nation brand competence elements of the conceptual model are enhanced, Zimbabwe's brand identity footprints can also be significantly enhanced by 58%.

Structural model

Data was further subjected to structural equation analysis. Results of this analysis are presented in Figure 2.

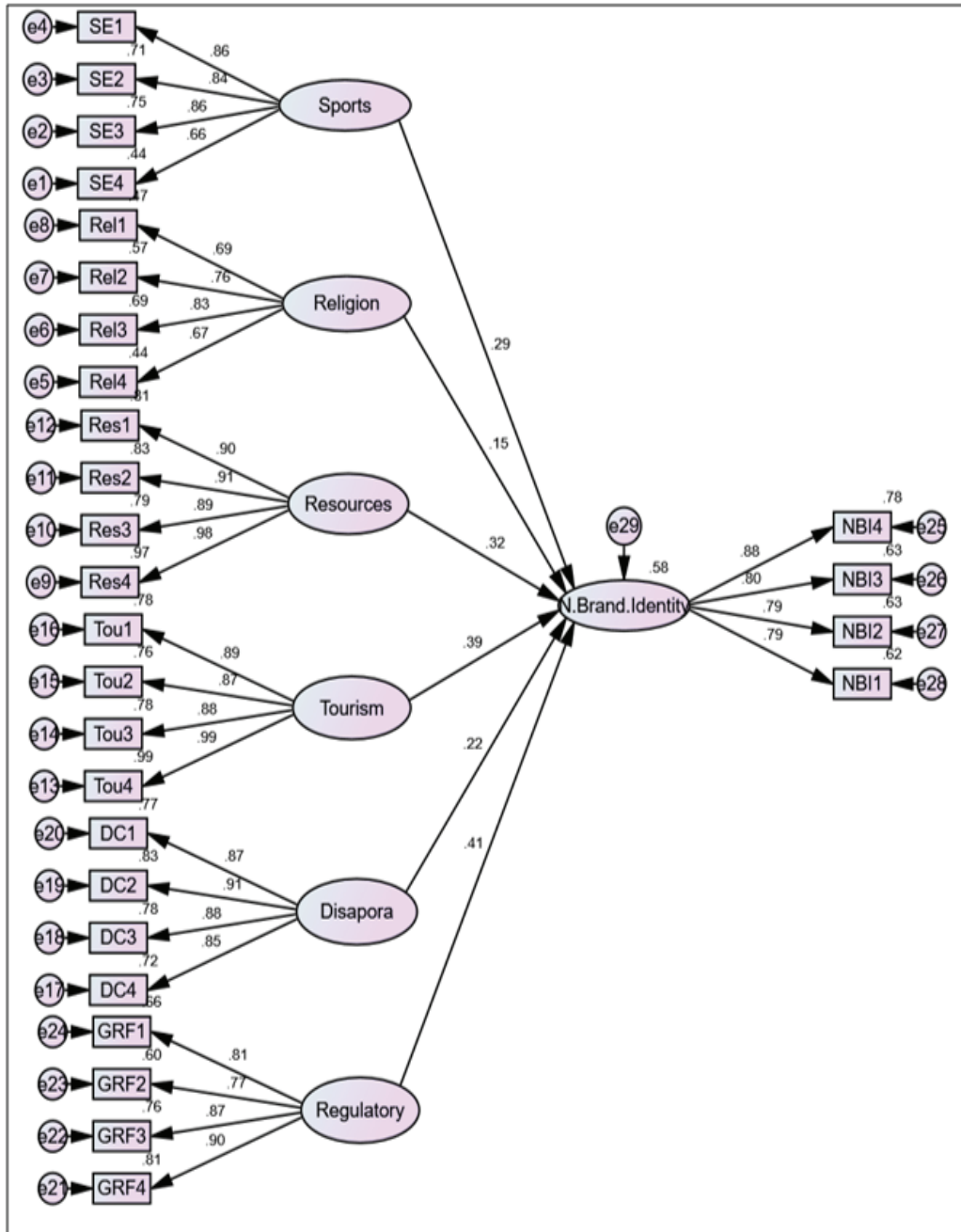


FIGURE 2. PATH COEFFICIENCY

TABLE 3. STANDARDISED ESTIMATES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERACTIONS

			Standardised Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
Nation Brand Identity	←	Sports and Entertainment	.294	.035	6.698	***	Supported
Nation Brand Identity	←	Religion	.154	.031	3.619	***	Supported
Nation Brand Identity	←	Resources	.322	.023	8.240	***	Supported
Nation Brand Identity	←	Tourism	.392	.020	9.776	***	Supported
Nation Brand Identity	←	Diasporic Citizenry	.217	.024	5.424	***	Supported
Nation Brand Identity	←	Regulatory	.408	.021	9.995	***	Supported

The study therefore builds on Anholt (2002) and develop a country/region-specific model of nation branding. For Zimbabwe, as with other emerging economies, there is need to augment government regulatory framework, engage its diasporic citizenry, boost tourism, explore use of natural resources, uphold religious diversity, and promote the growth of sports and entertainment. Table 3 indicates that all other hypotheses were supported ($P = 0.00 < 0.05$). This means that all of the stated associations of the conceptual model were statistically significant. A closer examination of the standardised regression weights indicates that not all nation brand competencies impacted on nation branding at the same wavelength. The highest impactor was governance and regulatory framework ($\beta = 0.408$, $P = 0.00$), followed by tourism ($\beta = 0.392$, $P = 0.00$), natural resources ($\beta = 0.322$, $P = 0.00$), sports and

entertainment ($\beta = 0.294$, $P = 0.00$), and citizens in the diaspora ($\beta = 0.217$, $P = 0.00$). The least impact factor was religion which only recorded a significant impact of 15%.

The study results validate Anholt's (2002) nation brand hexagon model, which justifies the relevance of this model in this analysis. Although the researchers adapted the Anholt (2002) model, the results vindicated the supremacy of that move. The same notion is shared by Dinnie (2008b) who also confirmed the significance of sport and entertainment, and mobilisation of the diaspora in nation branding.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which nation branding's key areas of national competence can be

leveraged to create a strong nation brand for emerging economies. In this regard, research data revealed that emerging economies, and specifically Zimbabwe, regard governance as the single most important area of national competence influencing nation branding. This suggests that any developing nation's branding exercise that ignores this key area may not succeed in projecting a favourable nation brand identity to global audiences.

There was also sufficient evidence gathered from research data to indicate that tourism is another key area of national competence. While the government of Zimbabwe has worked hard, especially since 2011 to brand the country as a tourist and investment destination of choice using the brand mantra, 'Zimbabwe - A World of Wonders,' and more recently 'Zimbabwe - Open for Business,' not much else seems to have been done to get a buy-in from local stakeholders. Resources, the diaspora, as well as sport and entertainment, are other key areas that governments in emerging economies need to leverage in order to create strong nation brands.

Country-specific Implications

Zimbabwean exporters have in the past complained that the government of Zimbabwe has not been offering them much incentives to assist in venturing into lucrative export markets. With a weak nation brand and a negative country of origin hanging over their heads, it is a tall order to expect local producers to come up with branded exports of choice, let alone take the global market by storm. This needs to be looked into. The government of Zimbabwe also needs to quickly clean up its political act and international image that has seen the country carrying along a 'bad boy' brand tag for many years now. It is the single biggest factor

that has tarnished Zimbabwe's global brand image as a trade and investment destination of choice.

While 'Zimbabwe - A World of Wonders' has been marginally successful in positioning Zimbabwe as a safe and unspoilt tourist destination, as evidenced lately by the visits of some high-profile individuals from across the world, in future a more bottom-up, inclusive approach that incorporates all key stakeholders in nation brand-building needs to be adopted as opposed to what is perceived as a top-down, elitist approach, which is how most Zimbabweans view current efforts at branding the country.

As part of a process to leverage the mining and trade in diamonds and other valuable minerals to enhance not only the economic fortunes but also the nation brand, government needs to legislate policy that will help plug all loopholes that have lately been encouraging the smuggling out of the country of precious minerals by the politically-connected and elite, as well as promote the local value-addition, in terms of cutting and polishing, for example, of gems. While this is currently articulated in the Zimbabwe National Industrial Development Policy (ZNIDP 2019-2023), the government of Zimbabwe needs to move swiftly from mere rhetoric to action if this is to help attract much needed investment into creating the much-vaunted US\$12 billion-mining sector by 2023.

The government of Zimbabwe may also need to start communicating with well-placed Zimbabwean diaspora who have the potential to act as de-facto brand ambassadors in encouraging international investors to invest in Zimbabwe. The country has been blessed with a highly educated human resource base which, unfortunately, has largely left for 'greener' pastures in other countries. A

good relationship with this vocal but well-resourced constituency would be a good starting point in helping create a brand identity that resonates with all Zimbabweans.

Finally, the role that sport can play in projecting a positive nation brand identity to the outside world need not be overemphasised. Hosting the 1995 All-Africa Games and co-hosting the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup with South Africa both had tremendous political and economic spin-off benefits for the country, something that remains to be replicated on the country's most popular sport, football. By hosting a football continental showpiece, for example, the government of Zimbabwe would be communicating to the entire world that it is indeed 'open for business'.

Contribution of the Study

The study contributes significantly to practice and theory. Practically, the study informs the need for nations to rebrand themselves towards the creation of country-of-origin brand identity which attracts investment, tourism and economic development. Specifically for Zimbabwe, the study aids the creation of a positive nation-brand which will not only help change attitudes and improve the way Brand Zimbabwe is viewed, but would also influence the government of Zimbabwe to live up to the tone and vision set by the nation-brand, thereby positively influencing the country's global brand image. Therefore, the study informs the development of Zimbabwe's positive global identity, through the augmentation of six factors presented in this study (sports, governance, religion, tourism, resources and diasporic citizenry).

The study further contributes towards the extension of theory of nation brand

identity. The development of the conceptual model of the study was a brainchild of the synthesis of previous scholarly work and primarily the extension of the Anholt (2002) model. The tested model is more applicable to emerging economies, hence complimenting the Anholt (2002) model which was tested in more affluent economies.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, nation brands can be easily affected by a negative brand image and poor country of origin. Amid the woes of negative goodwill within the community nations, the study further concludes that emerging economies can revamp the image of their nations through an active and proactive branding process. The key significant areas to address towards branding of emerging economies were found to be government regulatory framework, tourism, natural resources, sport and entertainment, diasporic citizenry, and religion.

The study therefore concludes that emerging economies should brand and rebrand their countries so as to augment the country-of-origin brand identity. In doing so, branding efforts should be backed up by regulatory framework and a formalised nation branding policy. Natural attraction sites and other tourist destinations should be conspicuous artefacts for nation branding. Sport and entertainment should have a nation identity, one which can be traced backwards to the country of origin. The study reiterates emerging economies to value religious identity and diversity and complement nation branding efforts through embracing the voice of citizens in the diaspora.

The study has some limitations. Firstly, the adapted conceptual model has never been tested beforehand, hence its relia-

bility and credibility in light of the study variables in different aspects and situations cannot be guaranteed. However, at local level the study passed validity and reliability tests. Secondly, to test the model, the study focused on only one emerging economy, Zimbabwe. Although the approach was time and cost effective, that also introduced a limitation of scope and breadth to the study.

Looking beyond the study, current efforts at branding emerging economies, while commendable, are certainly not novel (Guzah, 2018). While destination branding has been done before, these efforts do not seem to have had much impact in the past in terms of changing perceptions the world has of emerging economies. Perhaps where the government of Zimbabwe has failed in the past has been in the communication, monitoring, and evaluation aspect of its nation brand equity, a view also shared by Masango and Naidoo (2019). Therefore, research in future could focus on how best to keep track of the equity of emerging nations' brands and manage them more effectively. In addition, testing and retesting of the model presented in this study is recommended in different countries so as to guarantee its predictive strength in different nation branding and global market situations.

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ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS TOWARDS INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL WORKFORCE IN THE MALAYSIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are to identify the role of human resource practitioner in recruiting local workforce in the Malaysian construction industry and to identify if there is any relationship between the role of human resource practitioner and involvement of local workforce in the Malaysian construction industry. The construction industry has contributed towards the large number of workforce in Malaysia. However, the involvement of the local workforce in the construction field is still currently very low. It is beyond doubt that the economic growth of the country has increased rapidly due to the recruitment of migrant workers in Malaysia. Specifically, by resolving the workforce deficiencies in selected sectors of the economy, it still gives disadvantages to the country such as in the reduction of employment opportunities among local workers. In this study, some of the measures are identified to manage the shortages in the local workforce. Human resource practitioners are known to be responsible for decisions related to recruiting workers. Thus, they play a vital role in order to resolve this problem by implementing an effective selection and recruitment method, provide training to ensure workers are equipped with skills and knowledge, as well as execute effective policies and procedures. The data is collected from 100 respondents among construction companies located in Kuala Lumpur. The data was analyzed using the PLS-SEM technique in assessing the measurement and structural models. The result shows that there is a significant positive relationship between selection and recruitment as well as employee's skills with involvement of local workforce.

Keywords: *Construction industry, selection and recruitment, employee's skills, effective policies and procedures, involvement of local workforce*

Introduction

Malaysia has always recruited extensive numbers of foreign workers to work in different sectors especially in the construction industry. This is mainly because of the low-paying and low skilled fields. The result of too much reliance on foreign workers has become uncontrollable. In general, employment of low-skilled foreign workers is primarily driven by the low paying scheme and simply because of the lower cost of recruitment (Mohamed et al., 2012).

The low involvement of the local workforce in the construction industry has become problematic. This is mainly because of working conditions that seem harsh and difficult for them to carry out (Norhidayah, Kasim, & Shamsudin, 2017). The problem arises when local people are used to the stigma that portray the “3D images” which referred to dirty, dangerous and difficult. This has resulted in the attitude of the local workforce that can be labeled as demanding, where they are too selective in choosing their career. Therefore, this makes this labor a less than optional choice of job for the local workforce. Besides that, factors such as low wages and temporary employment also make the local workforce less interested to work in the construction industry. The small amount of wages that workforce labors receive is inadequate to support their life. Hence, causing them not to venture into construction industry.

Apart from that, temporary employment status has also affected the poor participation of the local workforce. As stated by Casale and Zhu, (2017), temporary employment status can be defined as the majority of workforces that has no social protection (social security coverage). Local workers will aim for a permanent job with a persistent income as well as

insurance protection as an assurance or guarantee for their future life. The temporary employment status that does not secure all the necessities needed by the local workers making them not choose workforce labor as a job as they did not want to take risk. Moreover, usually, the accommodation provided by contractors are unattractive to the average Malaysian laborers (Mohamed et al., 2012).

Literature Review

Overview of Human Resource Management in Malaysia

Human resource management (HRM) is the process of managing people within an organization where it focuses on employee recruitment, the organization's management and providing guidelines for the people who work in the organization with the aim of achieving the organization's goals. All of the issues that related to employee training, performance management and also organizational development is a human resource management concern. The amount of interest in human resources management (HRM) in the construction industry has grown over the last few decades (Wibisana & Indrajaya, 2019). Other than that, human resource management is also defined as the governance of an organization's employees (Geet & Deshpande, 2014). Human resource, in other words, refers to the people who work for the organization.

Overview of Human Resource Management in Construction Industry

In construction, in order for the project to be successfully completed, human resource management is mainly concerned with ensuring that a project has sufficient human resources to carry out a project, equipped with the correct

skill-sets and experience needed. Human resource management plays a significant role in helping organizations gain and sustain a competitive advantage by increasing the performance of the labor workforce. According to Geet and Deshpande (2014), human resource practitioners have to be able to identify and distinguish, as well as record and document, project roles and responsibilities. Thus they are able to build up a plan depicting the end forms that will be required on a project so as to decide its human resource requirements and able to assign the right person to the right job. According to Du, Liu, and Picken (2017), human resource management has a major influence in the construction industry.

Sources of Poor Involvement of Local Workforce in Construction Industry

IPoor participation of local workforce in Malaysian construction industry has caused a labor shortage. This problem arises because, in Malaysia, the younger generation is more willingly to be unemployed rather than have to work in the construction industry. This “unwillingness” to work in the construction industry had forced managers and contractors to recruit foreign workers in order to fill the positions. There are some factors that contributed to the insufficient participation of local laborers in the Malaysian construction industry such as the attitude of local laborers, low wages, temporary employment, poor career path and unattractive job (Saleh, 2008).

Attitude of local workforce

The attitude of local laborers are reflected in the “3D images” that refer to dirty, dangerous and difficult work. Most societies see the labor in the construction industry as a job that lacks prestige, with a low status, because the work is

performed under the sun which they found uncomfortable. Contrary to other countries, people from all level of background are willing to work in the construction field because it is simply out of necessity and not out of choice. While in Malaysia, the younger members of the workforce would rather be unemployed than work in the construction industry because of their skeptical perspective towards labor jobs. Official estimates put foreign laborers at 80 per cent of the entire construction workforce (Saleh, 2008). The construction sector has provided a lot of job opportunities, especially to people who are not selective about their job and desperately need a job. Unfortunately, those attitudes are only possessed by foreign worker. Local laborers consider employment in the construction sectors as not dignified enough.

Low wages and temporary employment

The small amount of wages received are inadequate to support the life of the majority of local workforce members and the wages given can be inconsistent, depending on construction projects (Othman, 2016). The local workforce is reluctant to work as a labor force mainly because of the worker’s low requirement of payment as they are paid lower than the average Malaysian’s income. On the other hand, employers prefer recruiting foreign workers because they are not really bother by the lower incomes they get and unfavorable terms and conditions of employment, and because foreign workers are willing to take the job in the first place, if only to gain sufficient income in a short period of time.

Poor career path and unattractive job

Most societies do not see much opportunity for people in this job, therefore in training and formation for construction

jobs in general, making this job appear unattractive. However, foreign workers that come with low skills and poor educational background are highly engaged in it, making the local people think such work is not suitable for them. Nowadays, the awareness about educational requirement that promise a secure opportunity for a better job has taken over people's perspective in Malaysia. Thus, they go after a better job with the qualification they can obtain in universities. It has proven that educational changes have affected the influx of local workforce in construction industry (Construction Industry Development Board, 2017).

According to MTUC (2018), in the early 1990s infrastructure, including buildings and highways, were completely built by the local workers. However, fast forward to the 2000s, Malaysians mostly prefers to work in the office, rather than construction fields, due to the working conditions which require the workers to work under the sun (Dive, 2019).

The Role of Human Resource Practitioner

Human resource practitioner can be described as the persons who are responsible to manage the employment, training, compensation benefits and development, as well as selection recruitment of employees. According to Hearst Newspaper (2018), human resource practitioners have two basic functions which are to administer department functions and organize and managing employees. In order to avoid any problem that will interrupt project progress, human resource practitioners must be knowledgeable and understand their their roles.

Selection and Recruitment

Recruitment can be defined as the

method an organization deploys to publicize accessible employment opportunity (Gatewood, 2011). Recruitment is the initial steps in employing procedures and seeks to advertise the availability of employment to qualified applicants and to collect information about a pool of qualified individuals (Marsden, 2014).

The most typical situation involved in selecting and recruiting workers is filling in an application form by the applicants, an interview on site and sending details of particular applicants to the contractor's head office for screening process. However, in construction projects, commonly there is no interview being held as, in general, recruitment of laborers is done by itself where contractors or the head office just allow whoever to get on with the job without a proper screening (Bresnen et al., 2017). The recruitment method refers to the ways of establishing contacts with potential job seekers in order to gain their attention. Those methods can be characterized into three categories that is: direct, indirect and third party. The most frequent method that is being used is a direct recruitment where direct employment takes place by laborers in large number of people. Direct employment gives benefits to the contractors as the costs of transferring permanently employed laborers are much lower compared to recruiting a local laborer. As for indirect method, it includes the use of advertisements in newspapers, magazines, various professional journals, on the radio and television and various notice-boards. In order to attract the potential candidate interest towards the vacancy, an advertisement should be brief, catchy and comprehensive.

Additionally, a well prepared and worded sound advertisement can help in building a good impression towards laborer's work. The indirect method is used in

aiming at reaching out to an immense territory or when a particular specialist is needed, when there are no suitable candidates to be promoted within the company (Tabassi & Bakar, 2017). The sub-contractor system is the example of an indirect employment system which has been practiced for a long time in Malaysia. The indirect employment system allows the main contractor to cope with fluctuation in demand of labor as the sub-contractor will hire construction laborers to do construction work. The last method, which is the third party method, is typically used for recruiting candidates for positions that are difficult to fulfill, or for candidates from a specific working field. This method includes the usage of public and private employment agencies, management consultants and voluntary act (Tabassi & Bakar, 2017).

Solutions that can be undergone by human resource practitioners are to develop a strategic solution where it can help in combating workforce demand. Human resource managers are known to be responsible for decisions related to recruiting workers. Thus, human resource managers can use their knowledge about the local workforce shortage and develop strategies for employee retention because, ineffective selection and recruitment strategies, will result in high employee retention rates due to paucity of skilled workforce.

Employee's Skills

In construction companies, the positions held consist of various roles including experienced professionals, to unskilled worker. Thus, when human resource managers are searching for workers, there will be different techniques applied that need to be understood. Recent research suggests that the biggest difficulty faced by human resource managers during recruitment is the lack

of necessary specialist skills (CIPD Report, 2010). This has come from the need of recruiting more skilled workers. Due to high demand of skilled workers, employers often prefer to recruit foreign labors as they will accept the job immediately compared to local labors who are reluctant to take the jobs. However, a large number of the foreign workers that have been recruited are unskilled and in need of training.

As stated by Noh (2017), out of 12 million people working in this nation, 70 per cent consist of unskilled workers. Each year, 200,000 SPM holders did not further their study, neither in tertiary education nor skills training, which has come to a greater concern. The numbers have caused many concerns as they are not only increasing the rate of unskilled workers every year, but also they are entering a job sector that requires no qualification (MBM, 2014). Training is needed for the local laborers so as to prepare and equipped the workers with sufficient knowledge and training.

Effective Policies and Procedures

Nowadays, organizations put high focus on developing effective policies and procedure to ensure the smooth running of their businesses. Therefore, it is important for human resource managers to implement effective policies and procedures while hiring local workforces into the construction industry. This requires the managers to deal with the legal issues successfully. It is also expected that, human resource managers in construction businesses should adopt proper policies regarding discipline and grievance and implement them for dealing with these issues, particularly, when they emerge. Human resource manager can reform the immigration policies to bring in more local labors (Brown, 2017). Thus, the reformation is

able to make the company focus on providing a proper training with required skills for the laborers (Brown, 2017).

As mentioned by the Straits Time (2016), the employability of foreign laborers in the Malaysian construction industry has decided to be suspended including those from Bangladesh. The freeze would be compulsory with an immediate effect and will remain in force while the government reassess the two-tier levy programme for foreign workers.

The new system of charging levies had been implemented towards foreign workers where workers are employed based on two different categories of sectors. All employers are encouraged to recruit local workers more as to help younger generations to take the job that long held by foreigners and with the hope that these younger generations can become the central component of the nation's workforce with the aim to push national economic growth as well as reduce the reliance on foreign labors.

Involvement of Local Workforce in Malaysian Construction Company

In the construction industry, human resources are required to supply sufficient labor for the contractors. There are various methods that can be applied in order to encourage more of the local workforce to participate in the construction field. Firstly, by undergoing a proper selection and recruitment to publicize accessible employment opportunity (Gatewood, 2011). Besides that, in construction companies, the positions held are consist with various roles which are from experienced professionals, to unskilled worker. Thus, when human resource managers are searching for workers, there will be distinctive techniques implied that need to be under-

stood. Based on a previous study, it was suggested that the most difficulty faced by human resource manager during the hiring and selection process was the shortages of required specialist skills in their particular area of business (CIPD Report, 2010). This has resulted in the need of recruiting more skilled workers.

The migrant workforce contributed to the UK economy for quite some time now as the only method applied by which skills shortages in construction industry can be filled (Essays, 2018). Therefore, it is important for human resource practitioners to implement effective policies and procedures as part of absorbing more local workers into the construction industry which requires the managers to deal with the legal issues successfully. In order to overcome these challenges, construction human resource manager have to come out with an effective disciplinary and grievance policies to manage these issues as and when the issues occur. Human resource manager can reforming the immigration policies to bring in more local labors (Brown, 2017).

With reference to the above literature review, the conceptual framework for this study is presented below.

Based on the above conceptual framework, the hypotheses developed as follows:

H1: There is no significant relationship between effective policies and procedures and involvement of local workforce in construction industry

H2: There is significant relationship between employee's skills and involvement of local workforce in construction industry

H3: There is significant relationship between selection and recruitment and involvement of local workforce in construction industry

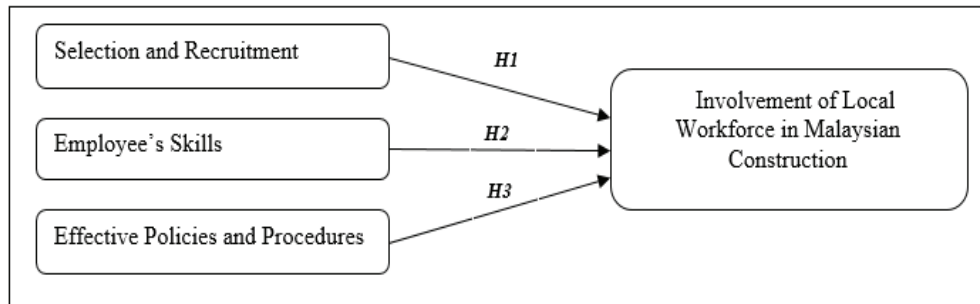


FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Methodology

The population obtained for this research are 180 from G7 construction companies operating in Kuala Lumpur and were acquired from CIDB database. The research approach used for this study is by using quantitative analysis. The sample size illustrated in the construction company in this study is 73 companies located in Kuala Lumpur as this research used simple random sampling. 100 sets of questionnaires were distributed among construction companies in Kuala Lumpur through personal distribution, emails as well as direct approach through the company's official website. The sample size required for this study is 73 construction companies located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The time taken for the respondents to answer the survey is around 3 to 4 weeks approximately. The total number of respondents that have took part in this survey is 77 approximately. Therefore, the sample size for this research are 77 of G7 construction companies.

Instrument Design

The sampling technique that is used due to the quantitative nature of this

research is random sampling. The primary data collection method is distributing questionnaires survey forms that will be distributed among the construction companies. The questionnaire is one of the data collection techniques that is used to collect data from respondents and that information that has been gather and obtained from the respondents will be analyzed. Collection of data from this research's targeted respondents will be distributed and analyze in order to determine the perception of different stake holders in the construction industry in Malaysia (Duat, 2014). The data analysis for this research has been conducted by using Microsoft Excel to determine the respondent's demographic. Smart PLS software are being used to analyze data for the dependent and independent variables.

Results and Discussion

A set of 100 questionnaires were distributed among G7 contractors in Kuala Lumpur as listed in Construction Industrial Development Board (CIDB) official website, and 77 out of 100 questionnaires were answered and returned back. Therefore, based on the questionnaires collected the response rate is to satisfac-

tory as the correspondent sample size for this research are 73 respondents, whereas the achieved result is 77 respondents who have took part in the survey of required sample size with the total of 77 respondents approximately. The method used to analyze the respondent's demographic and profile is by using Microsoft Excel in an ample and comprehensive way. Individuals working in Kuala Lumpur construction companies, specifically the upper level management such as project manager, contractor, and engineer were selected as respondents since this research is exclusively designed for the higher levels in the organization to ensure the novelty of this research with dependable and certifiable information.

Table 1 show the respondent's gender where majority of the respondents that took part in the survey is male with 75.68 % and that makes the minority of the respondents is female with only 24.32%. The age of the respondents where most group of the respondents that have participated in the survey is between 21-25 years old people with a number of 45.95 %. Meanwhile, there are 31.08 % respondents around age of 26-30 years old has participated in the survey and 14.86 % respondents has participated in the survey around the age of 31-40 years old. The least would be people around the age of 41-50 years old with only 8.11 % response rate. There are only 3 different backgrounds involved which is Bachelor's Degree, Diploma and Master's Degree. Most of the respondents that have answered this survey have a Bachelor's Degree background which is 82.43 %. The second highest is respondents with a background of Diploma which is 16.22 % and the least is 1.35% that is respondents with a Master's Degree. The respondents that have took part in the survey is mostly Malay with percentage of 93.24 % followed by Chinese with a number of

4.05 %. Indian and Arab has the least participation in this survey with percentage of 1.35 % for both races. Most of the respondents has a working experience of not more than 2 years with a percent of 56.76 %. The second highest is 31.08 % with 3- 6 years working experience. The third highest is 6.76 % with a working experience of 7-10 years and the least working experience possessed by the respondents is 5.41 % with more than 11 years working experience. In addition, most of the respondents participated in this research are holding engineer position in their company with a total of 55.84 %. Next, there are 20.78 % and these individuals hold project manager position in their company. Other than that, individuals that hold position of quantity surveyor have a total of respondents or 3.90 %. Individuals that hold position as site supervisor has total respondents of 6.50 %. Besides that, there are designer who have took part in this survey with a total number of 2.60 % and others position with a number of 10.39 %.

The summary of demographic scales of respondents for this research are as shown in Table 1 below.

Measurement Model

The technique used to analyze data for this research is by using the Smart PLS version 3.0. Figure below shown the structural dimension model for this research.

By comparing Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2, there are a total number of 12 items that has been deleted because the outer loadings for each item deleted are less than the required value which is 0.500. The deleted items for each variable had been shown in Table 2 below. There are a total number of 18 items left after few items been deleted.

TABLE 1. THE SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC SCALES OF RESPONDENTS

Types	Item	Percentage
Gender	Male	75.68%
	Female	24.32%
Age	21 - 25 years' old	45.95%
	26 - 30 years' old	31.08%
	31 - 40 years' old	14.86%
	41 - 50 years' old	8.11%
Educational background	Diploma	16.22%
	Bachelor's Degree	82.43%
	Master's Degree	1.35%
Race	Malay	93.24%
	Chinese	4.05%
	Indian	1.35%
	Others	1.35%
Years of working experience	2 years and below	56.76%
	3 - 6 years	31.08%
	7 - 10 years	6.76%
	11 years and above	5.41%

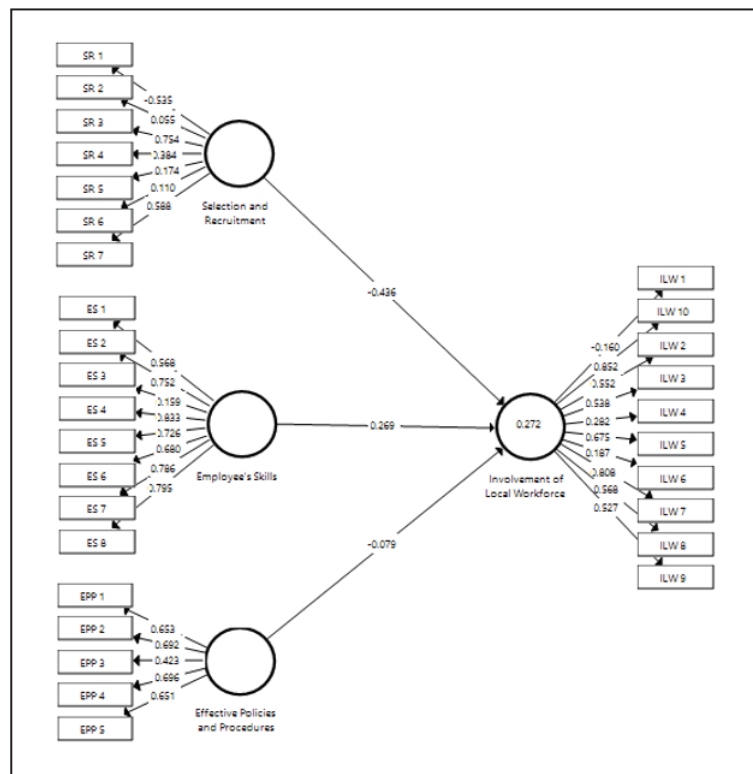


FIGURE 2. PLS PATH ANALYSIS MODEL BEFORE ITEM DELETED

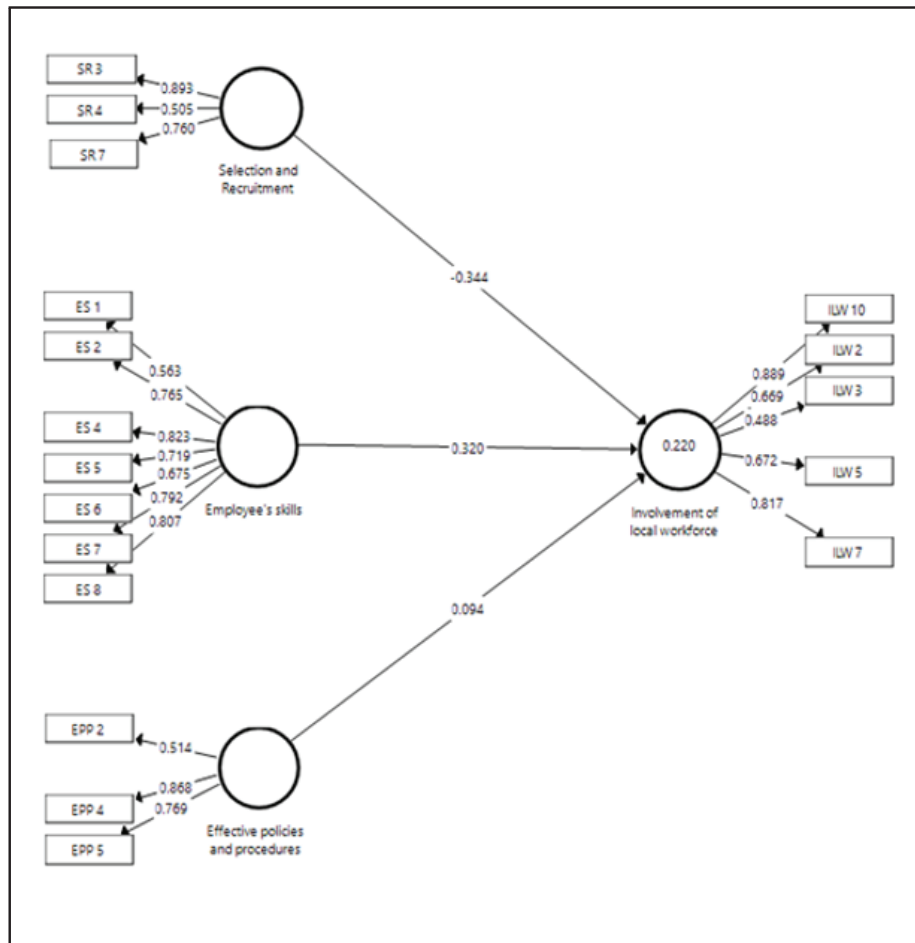


FIGURE 3. PLS PATH ANALYSIS MODEL AFTER ITEM DELETED

TABLE 2. DELETED ITEMS

Variables	Deleted Items	Total Deleted Items	Total Items Left
Selection and Recruitment	SR1, SR2, SR5, SR6	4	3
Employee's skills	ES3	1	7
Effective Policies and Procedures	EPP1, EPP3	2	3
Involvement of Local Workforce	ILW1, ILW4, ILW6, ILW8, ILW9	5	5

Table 3 below illustrates the content validity of the measure used to explain two behaviors. Firstly, there are high loadings in the item on their particular constructs immediately upon it relate to other constructs. Secondly, as stated by

Chow and Chan, (2008) the loadings of the item were significantly loaded on their particular constructs guaranteed the content validity of the measures used in this research.

**TABLE 3. FACTOR ANALYSIS AND LOADING OF THE ITEMS
(CROSS LOADING)**

	Effective policies and procedures	Employee's skills	Involvement of local workforce	Selection and Recruitment
EPP 2	0.514	0.363	0.115	-0.016
EPP 4	0.868	0.273	0.222	-0.014
EPP 5	0.769	0.371	0.092	0.144
ES 1	0.27	0.563	0.159	0.1
ES 2	0.4	0.765	0.166	0.194
ES 4	0.399	0.823	0.228	0.23
ES 5	0.234	0.719	0.265	0.062
ES 6	0.314	0.675	0.015	0.209
ES 7	0.259	0.792	0.305	0.026
ES 8	0.395	0.807	0.212	0.124
ILW10	0.159	0.249	0.889	-0.28
ILW 2	0.245	0.206	0.669	-0.217
ILW 3	0.122	0.191	0.488	-0.127
ILW 5	0.125	0.131	0.672	-0.075
ILW 7	0.133	0.282	0.817	-0.261
SR 3	0.029	0.094	-0.281	0.893
SR 4	-0.089	0.136	-0.177	0.505
SR 7	0.127	0.123	-0.152	0.76

Table 4 illustrate the factor loading values which range from 0.773 to 0.769. These values are greater than 0.7. Based on these findings, the AVE assumptions fit with the level of variance that is covered by measurement items. Barclay et al. (1995) suggested that the lowest acceptable value of AVE is 0.5.

Once achieved, it can be said that a set of items for the construct have reasonable convergence to measure it. As it can be observed in the below table, the values of AVE value across all variables ranged from 0.536 to 0.544 and this indicates an acceptable level of construct validity.

TABLE 4. CONVERGENT VALIDITY ANALYSIS

Construct	Item	Outer Loading	AVE	CR
EPP	EPP 2	0.514	0.536	0.769
	EPP 4	0.868		
	EPP 5	0.769		
ES	ES 1	0.563	0.547	0.893
	ES 2	0.765		
	ES 4	0.823		
	ES 5	0.719		
	ES 6	0.675		
	ES 7	0.792		
	ES 8	0.807		
	ILW10	0.889		
ILW	ILW 2	0.669	0.519	0.839
	ILW 3	0.488		
	ILW 5	0.672		
	ILW 7	0.817		
	SR 3	0.893		
SR	SR 4	0.505	0.544	0.773
	SR 7	0.76		

Table 5 shows the AVE's square root for all constructs and correlations among the constructs of this study. The values of AVE sqrt as shown below are higher than those of correlations values in the particular row and column. Based on

these analysis, we can conclude that the discriminant validity for the constructs is proven. In other words, these results provide evidence of the validity of selected measurement items.

TABLE 5. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	EPP	ES	ILW	SR
Effective Policies and Procedure	0.73			
Employee's Skills	0.42	0.74		
Involvement of Local Workforce	0.22	0.308	0.72	
Selection and Recruitment	0.03	0.152	-0.293	0.737

After the goodness of the estimated model has been confirmed, the following stage is to explore the relationships that were hypothesized for this research. Table 6 described the hypothesis testing. The effective policies and procedures (EPP) variable has signifi-

cant negative relationship with the involvement of local workforce ($\beta = 0.094$, $t = 0.62$, $p = 0.04$) Therefore, H1 which is effective policies and procedures on involvement of local workforce are not supported.

Meanwhile, H2 which is the employee's skills have significant positive relationship on the involvement of local workforce ($\beta=0.32$, $t = 2.102$, $p = 0.018$). Therefore, H2 which is the employee's skills on involvement of local workforce are supported.

As for H3 which is the selection and recruitment also have significant positive relationship on the involvement of local workforce ($\beta=-0.344$, $t = 3.009$, $p = 0.006$). Therefore, H3 which is the selection and recruitment on involvement of local workforce are supported.

The final results of the research objectives are completed whereby the role of human

resource practitioner were identified and the relationship between the role of human resource practitioner and involvement of local workforce in construction companies were also determined. There are 2 hypotheses that were supported and one hypothesis that are not supported. The role of the human resource practitioner which is selection and recruitment as well as employee's skills are proven to have positive relationship with involvement of local workforce in construction companies. However, effective policies and procedures were proven to have a negative relationship with involvement of local workforce in construction companies.

TABLE 6. RESULTS OF INNER STRUCTURAL MODEL

Hypothesis	Path	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	Confidence interval		Findings
					5.00%	95.00%	
H1	EPP \rightarrow ILW	0.094	0.151	0.62	-0.339	0.261	Not supported
H2	ES \rightarrow ILW	0.32	0.152	2.102	-0.293	0.461	Supported
H3	SR \rightarrow ILW	-0.344	0.114	3.009	-0.464	-0.053	Supported

As for the effect size, the value is less than 0.02 and the required value for the effect size is 0.02 which can be categorized as small, 0.15 which can be considered as medium and 0.35 which can be considered as high as suggested by (Oniyinde, 2017). From Table 7, the effective size of selection and recruitment is small, the size of employees

ee's skills considered medium and effective policies and procedure can be considered as large. The effect size has its calculation and it is stated as follow:

$$\text{Effect size (f)} = \frac{R^2_{\text{incl}} - R^2_{\text{excl}}}{1 - R^2_{\text{incl}}}$$

TABLE 7. DIRECT EFFECT IV-DV

R-squared	Included	Excluded	f-squared	Effect size
SR	0.206	0.111	0.1196	Small
ES	0.206	0.130	0.0957	Small
EPP	0.206	0.191	0.0189	None

Conclusion

The objectives in conducting this research was to examine the role of human resource practitioner towards involvement of the local workforce in Malaysian construction industries among industries in Kuala Lumpur. The examination of the relationships among the constructs in this research significantly confirm the factors that have caused poor involvement of the local workforce in the construction field and how the role of human resource practitioner may influence the low participation of local workforce. For this reason, this research focus is on the role of human resource practitioners towards the involvement of the local workforce in the Malaysian construction industry specifically among Kuala Lumpur construction industries.

A part of limitations in the present study appear through the sole focus of the researchers on construction industry in Kuala Lumpur state, Malaysia. Therefore, in order to obtain more precise and consistent result, it is recommended for future studies to test the model in different contexts. Moreover,, the data which was collected for fulfilling the objective of this research may only be generalizable for construction firms of Grade 7. Additionally, this research was done primarily to examine the role of human resource practitioner in recruiting local workforce in Malaysian construction industry and how the role of human resource practitioner can overcome the lack of involvement of the local workforce in the Malaysian construction industry. Thus, in order to broaden our understandings on the topic, future research can measure any external factors influencing the involvement of local workforce in the Malaysian construction industry since this research focused on the internal factors only. In addition, this research

can be more comprehensive to learn other factors that can influence the involvement of local workforce.

In conclusion, this research mainly focuses on exploring the role of human resource practitioner in attracting and encouraging more local workforce to participate in the construction industry. While abundant research has been done related to the poor participation of the local workforce in the construction industry, only a small portion of research is related to how the role of human resource practitioners can overcome the problem. In this study, the role of human resource practitioners was measured only by three factors. Therefore, future researcher can explore more about the role of human resource practitioner and investigating other factors that can resolve in sustaining the satisfaction level of local workforce who are involved in the construction industry.

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