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HUMANS AND MACHINES: THE REPLACEMENT OF HUMAN LABOR WITH TECHNOLGY IN INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

Editorial of the International Journal of Economic Behavior, Vol. 12

The relationship between humans and machines has evolved dramatically over the past few centuries. From the early days of the Industrial Revolution to the current age of automation and artificial intelligence (AI), machines have played a crucial role in transforming the way we live and work. The Industrial Revolution marked the beginning of a profound transformation in human labor. Mechanized textile manufacturing, steam engines, and other innovations significantly increased productivity and efficiency. However, these advancements also led to the displacement of many workers whose jobs became obsolete.

As technology continued to advance, the scope of automation expanded beyond manual labor to include more complex tasks. The advent of computers and digital technology in the 20th century further accelerated this trend, enabling machines to perform also intellectual tasks. The development of AI has brought us to a new era where machines can analyze data, and make decisions. Advances in AI and machine learning have enabled machines to take on intellectual activities that were once considered the exclusive domain of humans. These activities include not only data analysis, but also decision-making and even creative endeavors like writing and composing music.

Automation and mechanization have fundamentally altered the nature of work, leading to increased efficiency and productivity. This shift has significant economic implications. On one hand, it has led to the creation of new industries and job opportunities in technology and maintenance. On the other hand, it has resulted in job displacement and the need for workers to acquire new skills. The impact on employment varies by sector and region, with some workers finding it easier to adapt than others.

One prominent example is the use of AI in healthcare. Machine learning algorithms can analyze medical data to diagnose diseases, recommend treatments, and predict patient outcomes with a high degree of accuracy. This not only improves the quality of care but also allows healthcare professionals to focus on more complex and human-centric aspects of their work.

In the financial sector, AI algorithms are used for trading, risk assessment, and fraud detection. These systems can process vast amounts of data in real-time, making decisions that would be impossible for humans to achieve at the same speed and accuracy. Similarly, in the legal field, AI can assist with document review, legal research, and even predicting case outcomes.

Despite the benefits of automation, there are significant challenges and concerns associated with the replacement of human labor by machines. One major concern is the potential for widespread job displacement. This is particularly true for jobs that involve routine and repetitive tasks, which are most susceptible to automation. Related to this issue is the potential for increased inequality. The benefits of automation are not evenly distributed, and what is

happening is that those with access to technology (or owning capitals to purchase it) will prosper, while those without it will be left behind. This is leading to increasing economic and social disparities.

The origin of the problem is in the fact that all development models continue to be based on the axiom that the generation and distribution of wealth must be guaranteed by human work. This was substantially valid even after the first and second industrial revolutions, it began to be questioned starting in the 1970s, with the third industrial revolution, and today, with the so-called Industry 4.0 (the fourth industrial revolution), it is clearly showing that the replacement process is probably only at the beginning, with dynamics that are not easily predictable and much less quantifiable in terms of employment impacts. As we are seeing, the process of machine/labor substitution is not limited to manufacturing processes and also involves cognitive processes, with AI representing the frontier (Autor, 2015; Acemoglu et al., 2020; Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2020).

Despite this, positions remain unchanged in current interpretations, even as regards the concept of a knowledge economy still emphasizing the centrality of human labor. Economic and social growth continue to be associated with work, human dignity with work, and individual self-fulfillment with work. However, technology is leading to labor savings given the same levels of value produced. Whether this is harmful and detrimental to human dignity seems more like a cultural legacy than a fact.

In democratic societies, work has always been a means to distribute the wealth generated by value-creation processes. What we witness today, is a response to competitive dynamics and to the threat of substitution of work with automated processes, with work being largely underpaid, fueling new forms of exploitation. This is due to productivity gains and greater efficiency concentrating the value generated towards a few beneficiaries, challenging the model of capitalist and liberal economies, leading to questions about whether a system of rules can ensure value redistribution, as in the case of proposals to impose a technology tax, which pose problems that are not easily solvable:
  - What degree of innovation should be considered taxable;
  - How to measure the economic benefits produced;
  - How to ensure uniform conditions internationally and avoid tax evasion;
  - How to avoid discouraging innovation and the adoption of new technologies.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to identify which models might be more appropriate, perhaps needing to go beyond market mechanism regulation and envisioning a sort of democratically based planned economy. But this was already anticipated by Marx, when he spoke of the predominance of "being" over "having," meaning free time for personal and cultural interests, sporting, playful, scientific, erotic, artistic, and political fulfillment, rather than the desire for infinite product possession. But we know how that turned out.

Looking forward, the relationship between humans and machines is likely to continue evolving. Rather than viewing machines as mere substitutes of human labor, there is potential for a collaborative approach, with machines and humans complementing the other's strengths and capabilities. For example, in creative industries, AI can be used as a tool to enhance human creativity. AI algorithms can generate new ideas, suggest improvements, and handle repetitive tasks, allowing human creators to focus on the more nuanced and expressive aspects of their work. Similarly, in fields like engineering and architecture, AI can assist with complex calculations and simulations, enabling professionals to design more innovative and efficient solutions. To achieve this collaborative future, it is essential to invest in education and training programs that provide workers with the skills needed to work alongside machines. This includes

not only technical skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence, which are areas where humans have a distinct advantage over machines.

Fabio Musso

Editor-in-Chief

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ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS AND DISCRETIONARY BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIAN ACADEMICS: THE ROLE OF ACADEMICS STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

In the history of tertiary education in Nigeria, there had been incessant strikes to draw the Government's attention to a range of problems that have continued to hinder the education sector. Despite the various phases of industrial action, embarked on by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), this action has not been able to bring a permanent solution to its demand. As a result, the study examines the analysis of psychological contracts in Nigerian academics: the role of academics' staff union of Universities. The study was anchored on social contract theory to explain how every human competes with each other for the resources they desire. in-depth interview (IDI) was employed to collect qualitative data from two management staff members (from the registry unit) and two members of the Academic Staff Union (from the ASUU leadership). Thematic analysis was used to transcribe, identify, and analyze the data collected from IDI. The qualitative findings revealed that university academics were dissatisfied with their working conditions, underfunding, shortages of facilities and equipment, and, most importantly, the quality of service, which had resulted in multiple industrial unrests, brain-drain, and plans to transfer high-skilled academics to other universities. The study found that the Breach of Psychological Contracts (BPC) affected academics in a variety of ways, with a preference for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Deviant Workplace Behaviour (DWB). Unfortunately, the proclivity for DWB surpassed the proclivity for OCB. It was recommended that building psychological linkages between organizational and staff goals should help universities integrate employee behavior.

Keywords: Psychological contracts, citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, ASUU.

1. Introduction

The creation, diffusion, and application of knowledge are one of the University's main roles. This improves other essential teaching and research duties, as well as determining national and worldwide ranking. However, Breach of Psychological Contracts (BPC) may occur when an employee perceives that their employer has failed to live up to its obligations. Unfortunately, the employer is not likely to see such a BPC since the employer has the power to ensure that employees do what they are expected to do at the right time. This is why many existing studies pay more attention to the consequences of BPC on the employees rather than the employers.

Meanwhile, the common BPC in Nigerian Universities is broadly categorized into three (3), namely, the welfare of members, poor condition of service and arbitrariness of administration. For instance, the welfare of members is linked with poor and inconsistent payment of salaries and allowances. Similarly, the poor service conditions include poor work settings (working environment, laboratories, classrooms, long hours of work), fringe benefits (office space, internet, office furniture, computer, cabinets, printer, etc.). Other recent BPC issues are the non-payment of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA) arrears, coercing academics into the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS), which not long ago led to striking in the university environment across Nigeria. These have severe implications for both employees and the organization because when a BPC occurs, employees may tend to have more thoughts of revenge, and the performance of an organization is more likely to be negatively affected.

Moreover, the isolation of Federal Universities in the North-central is credible because those Universities in the North-central have attracted attention for a decade due to violations of BPCs. For instance, at the University of Ilorin, where the administration sacked academics arbitrarily, their actions have triggered litigation that caused Government fortunes in prosecution and judgment debt granted to illegally sacked staff. There was a case of misconduct against an erstwhile Vice-Chancellor (VC) at the University of Abuja, which ended up in an indictment of the University administration in the white paper and the case was alleged as being suppressed to date. The media was recently awashed with pictures and stories of staff at the Federal University, Lokoja proclaiming the obituary of the immediate past VC over her BPC while in office. Similarly, the exercise to the appointment of a substantive VC of the University of Jos has been put on hold following protests by some candidates who cited anomalies of BPC.

In the succeeding years after the formation of the Academics Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), there has been a proliferation of Federal Universities in Nigeria, with today's figure standing at 43. Despite the establishment of many Universities, most of the lecturers operate within an unconducive environment where there is limited office space with up to three lecturers sharing a small office. The learning environment is compromised by over-congested classrooms, infrastructural inadequacy, poor academic standards, inadequate monitoring and poor inspection by regulatory agencies, poorly equipped laboratories, equipment, among others.

However, in the history of tertiary education in Nigeria, there had been incessant strikes to draw the Government's attention to a range of problems that have continued to hinder the education sector. Since the union's inception, the union has undergone series of

industrial actions that amount to several strike actions apart from the internal strikes by the various chapters of the union. However, despite the various phases of industrial action, embarked on by the ASUU, this action has not been able to bring a permanent solution to its demand. The Government on the other hand purported ASUU to be ungrateful and insatiable, adding that academics are so high in demand for one thing or the others coupled with involvement in deviant behaviors such as sexual harassment, among others.

In view of the focus and context of the previous studies (Anzam, 2016; Aliyu, Akinwale & Shadare, 2020), some gaps exist for future studies to be undertaken, because studies such as have worked on the related topic. Yet, there were dearth of studies on BPC focus on the Federal Universities from dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) towards the academics (OCB-A); OCB towards the University (OCB-U) (Baharuddina, Ruzainy, Asyraf, Omara, & Ismail, 2017). Similarly, Deviant Workplace Behavior (DWB) towards the academics (DWB-A); DWB towards the University (DWB-U) (Pickford & Genevieve, 2016). In addition, previous studies revealed a need for more scientific studies on the types of discretionary behavior exhibited mainly by academics when psychological contracts are breached (Aliyu, 2021).

The study investigates the psychological contract, its breaches and implications for Nigerian Universities, considering the contemporary problems bedeviling Universities in Nigeria. Therefore, it is imperative to scientifically investigate analyses the psychological contracts in Nigerian academics in order to expand the frontiers of knowledge on discretionary behaviour and psychological contracts in Nigeria.

2. Literature review

Psychological contracts are becoming increasingly important in describing the relationship between employees and the organizations and employees' performance. In contrast, a psychological contract is built on trust and represents that employees believe that the organizations can fulfil their obligations and commitments. Argyris (1960) introduced the term psychological contract to present the importance of implicit mutual expectations between employees and organizations (Anzam, 2016; Maguire, 2016).

The psychological contract idea was defined by Argyris (1960) as the employer and employee expectations and mutual duties of the work relationship. Many academics produced alternative ideas on the contractual arrangement between employee and employer after Argyris' formulation (Blackman & Benson, 2012; Bolino, Turnley, Lester & Bloodgood, 2012).

Rousseau (1989) was later acknowledged with a new approach to psychological contract theory (Dialoke & Nwakamma, 2016; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Rousseau (1989) expands on the core idea. Rousseau (1989) emphasized the psychological contract's unilateral nature as a personal conviction about the terms and circumstances of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focused person and another party. The psychological contract is a set of unwritten ideas held by both the employee and the organization about what each should give and what each is required to deliver in the exchange relationship that exists between them (Anzam, 2016; Adom & Hussein, 2017; Rousseau, 1989, 1995).

In his exploration of the word, Rousseau (1995) described it as a reciprocal responsibility based on verbal and implicit agreements. It stands for psychological contract, a social psychological concept that anticipates how individual workers would understand

their work experiences and expectations (Anzam, 2016; Atkinson, 2007; Avey et al., 2009). The contract outlines perceptual limits that exist outside and beyond any structured legal instrument or work contract (Mathijs, 2009). This promotes both conceptual and empirical inquiries into how and where employment relationships thrive and become commonplace, as well as how and why they collapse, particularly in situations and places when one or both parties appear to have betrayed trust (Atkinson, 2007).

Breach of Psychological Contract occurs when an organization or employee fails to fulfill one or more of the psychological contract's duties. It largely accounts for what the employee believes to be a violated promise. PCB referred to an employer's violation and perceived breach in this study. The actual abdication of the exchange agreement by the employer is referred to as an employer's breach. A perceived breach, on the other hand, is the cognitive judgement that a key promise has not been kept.

2.1 Features and forms of psychological contract

Rousseau (1989) emphasized the psychological contract's three fundamental characteristics: subjective, conditional, and reciprocal. To begin with, psychological contracts are subjective since they are founded on people's opinions or views about how they want to trade money. The acts or reactions of third parties can be used to infer implicit commitments made by organizations or personnel (Mazur, 2018; Najjar, Shamasi & Almandeel, 2019).

Second, psychological contracts are conditional because they are based on exchanges in which one party's fulfillment of promissory commitments is conditioned on the fulfillment of other parties' duties. Third, psychological contracts are reciprocal because they entail shared ideas about the relationship's mutual duties. Each party's views affect its contributions to the other, and each party's subsequent contributions can either strengthen or destroy the other party's ideas about reciprocal exchange (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Maria-Lavinia, 2011).

Literature revealed four major forms of psychological contract, namely; as transactional, relational, balanced and transitional (Tekleab & Taylor, 2005; Yang & Chao, 2016).

a) *Transactional Contract:* When an employment relationship is for a brief or limited period of time, the transactional contract is present. It is largely focused on the exchange of work for money, with a defined definition of duties and obligations and minimal engagement in the organization. This means that the employee is only required to execute a specific set of tasks and only as much as the company requests. According to Rousseau (2001; 2003), an employee is only bound to do a defined or limited set of responsibilities for which they are compensated. On the other side, the employer is devoted to providing employees with only limited engagement in the organization, little or no training or other forms of employee development, and short-term employment. An employee who is only committed to working for a short period of time has no commitment to stay with the company.

b) *Relational Contract:* Long-term work relationships based on mutual trust and loyalty give rise to the relational contract. Seniority is the primary source of career advancement and pay, whereas other bonuses and awards are only tangentially linked to job performance (Subramanian, 2017). Relational into stability (employee is bound to stay with the business and do what is necessary to maintain a job) was defined by Rousseau (2001; 2003). An employer is dedicated to providing steady

salaries and long-term employment) or loyalty (employees are required to put the company's interests first and to support and be a good corporate citizen). In addition, the employer cares for its employees' and their families' well-being).

c) *Balanced Contract:* A balanced psychological contract is a dynamic and open-ended employment agreement that is predicated on the employer's commercial success as well as the employee's ability to build skill sets and possibilities for career progression depending on skills and performance. Rousseau (2001; 2003) divided the balanced contract into external employability (i.e., the employee is required to develop marketable skills, while the employer is committed to improving the employment prospects of its employees in both the external and internal labor markets), and internal advancement (i.e., career advancement within an internal labor market). An employee has a responsibility to improve abilities that are appreciated by their present company. While an employer is committed to providing employees with opportunities for career advancement within the company, dynamic performance (i.e., the employee is required to successfully complete new and more demanding goals that may change frequently in the future to help the company become and remain competitive) is also important. An employer, on the other hand, is dedicated to encouraging continual learning and assisting employees in achieving these various objectives).

d) *Transitional Contract:* It's a mental condition that reflects the effects of organizational change and transitions that are incompatible with previously established work arrangements. This is simply a moment of transition between two psychological contract conditions. Here, the individual has doubts about the organization's motives and is concerned about his or her job security and advancement. The company may also have doubts about the employee's motivations and hide crucial information from them. The employee is unsure about his future responsibilities to the company. The company may also refuse to provide the employee with job security. If this psychological contract is not maintained, the employee may continue to receive confusing signals from the organization and grow unsure if his contributions will result in enough reward (Avey, Avolio, Crossley & Luthans, 2009).

Transitional was classified into distrust in the literature (Bankole & Ajagun, 2014) (i.e. employee believes he received contradictory and confused signals from the corporation about its aims and mistrusts it.) The employer has concealed critical information from the employee and has a negative attitude toward its employees.) uncertainty (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2012) (i.e. the employee is unsure about the nature of their responsibilities to the company).

Employee uncertainty (Epitropaki, 2015) (i.e. employee expects to receive fewer returns from their contributions to the firm than in the past; anticipates continuing declines in the future) and erosion (Epitropaki, 2015) (i.e. employee expects to receive fewer returns from their contributions to the firm than in the past; anticipates continuing declines in the future). As a result, a business may make adjustments that lower employee salaries and benefits, lowering the quality of work-life in comparison to past years).

2.2 Social Contract Theory

The Social contract theory was originally pioneered by Hobbes (1651). He begins by stating that everyone is fundamentally equal in strength and intelligence. Nobody is so clever or strong that they can't be outwitted or vanquished by someone else (or maybe a few others). As a result, everyone believes that he is capable of obtaining everything he desires. Furthermore, people always behave in their own best interests. As a result, every human competes with each other for the resources they desire. As a result, the 'state of nature' was coined by the social contract theory to explain men's initial state. Man created a social compact to escape the state of nature (Abdulazeez, Waidi, & Hameed, 2019).

The argument went on to say that in their natural form (before government), humans would be constantly at odds with one another, with everyone vying and battling for resources that aren't plentiful enough for everyone to have all they want. This is man's natural condition, in which individuals live in "constant fear and threat of violent death," and existence is "solitary, impoverished, ugly, brutish, and brief." Hobbes states that humans are essentially selfish and that if there are no rules to constrain them, they would do whatever they need to survive.

In a similar vein, John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) developed Hobbes's previous social contract theory, suggesting that the need for social order and certain inherent limits may offer a natural basis for morality. While there may be enormous incentives for social anarchy in the absence of an objective (and maybe supernatural) source of morality, the incentive is built into the social system by the mere fact that we live with one another. Naturally, there is a need to agree to treat each other with fundamental respect and to adhere to some basic standards.

Based on their respective conceptions, these three social contract theorists contend that humans existed or would have survived without the state and its apparatuses. As a result, social contract theories propose the possibility of two living forms before and after the state's inception, according to Gauba (2003). The following questions arise as a result of this voluntary agreement of all people who make up the state: (1) What was the situation like before there was a state? (2) If the state was created on an agreement, what were the terms of its formation? (3) Between the creator and the creature in issue, who has the upper hand? Although the first point involves the state of nature, the second and third points address the conditions of the contract and the character of sovereignty, according to Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau's responses.

A prisoner A betrays the other prisoner, as shown in Figure 1. Instead of serving a year in jail, prisoner A will be released if prisoner B keeps silent (for remaining silent). If prisoner B betrays prisoner A, however, prisoner A will only be sentenced to 5 years rather than 10 years if he keeps silent. In any case, it is beneficial for prisoner A to betray prisoner B. The same is true for prisoner B.

Overall, while the social contract theory has been useful in explaining the nature of government and conceptualizing democratic values in modern state systems, it has been subjected to some criticism. The legality of the social contract notion is also questioned. It is argued that a legally sound contract presupposes the presence of some authority and the sanction of that authority before the contract is entered into. According to him, the belief that men lived in a "state of nature" before deciding to create political institutions based on a mutual agreement to produce order and security is false. As a result, the cultural shift is thought to have been from one status to another. Thus, in early civilization, an individual's rank was decided by his or her participation in a social group. Customs regulated man's life

at various levels of grouping: family, clan, tribe, and so on. Law, sovereignty, and political institutions were claimed to have emerged slowly and gradually through this process, rather than as a result of a freely contracting individual's agreement.

Figure 1 − Illustration of the Social Contract Theory

	Prisoner B remains silent	Prisoner B betrays prisoner A
Prisoner A remains silent	Prisoner A: 1 year Prisoner B: 1 year	Prisoner A: 10 years Prisoner B: Goes free
Prisoner A betrays prisoner B	Prisoner A: Goes free Prisoner B: 10 years	Prisoner A: 5 years Prisoner B: 5 years

Source: Sharma & Garg (2017)

2.3 Empirical review

Findings from the study conducted by Baharuddina et al. (2017) showed a positive relationship between psychological breach contract and employee intention to quit indicated that people tend to quit if they perceived that their organization do not fulfil their promises and obligation. Meanwhile, psychological contract fulfilment was found to be negatively correlated with intention to quit, suggesting that when employer fulfilled their promises and obligation, employee intention to quit is low. It was concluded that the telecommunication company needs to pay intention in their employment relationship with their employees especially concerning the commitment as well as obligation.

Using transactional psychological contract, relational psychological contract and perceived supervisor support on organizational citizenship behavior of hospitality employees in South Korea by Liu, Cho and Seo (2018). A descriptive research design was used with a self-administered questionnaire distributed across 350 employees working in international hotel chains in South Korea. Findings from a study conducted by Liu et al. (2018) revealed relational psychological contracts did not affect hospitality employees' OCB either; thus, was rejected and the results of the study showed that when hospitality employees in South Korea perceive greater supervisor support, they would demonstrate more organizational citizenship behavior.

Findings from Oyelakin and Agu (2017) revealed that the effect of community on the relational psychological contract was 0.016 thus, the effect is small. The effect of community on employee turnover intention was 0.019. Inner life on the relational psychological contract was estimated at 0.075. Inner life on employee turnover intention has 0.021. Meaningful work has the highest effect of 1.032 on relational psychological contracts, while meaningful work does not affect employees' turnover intention. It was concluded that creating an atmosphere of spirituality in the workplace and having an employee's positive attitude to work is critical to encourage employees to stay in an organization.

3. Conceptual framework of the study and hypotheses development

The conceptual framework in Figure 2 shows a hypothetical relationship between DB among academics and BPC by the Federal Universities as influenced by academics' sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, work experience and designation.

Figure 2 − Conceptual framework of the study
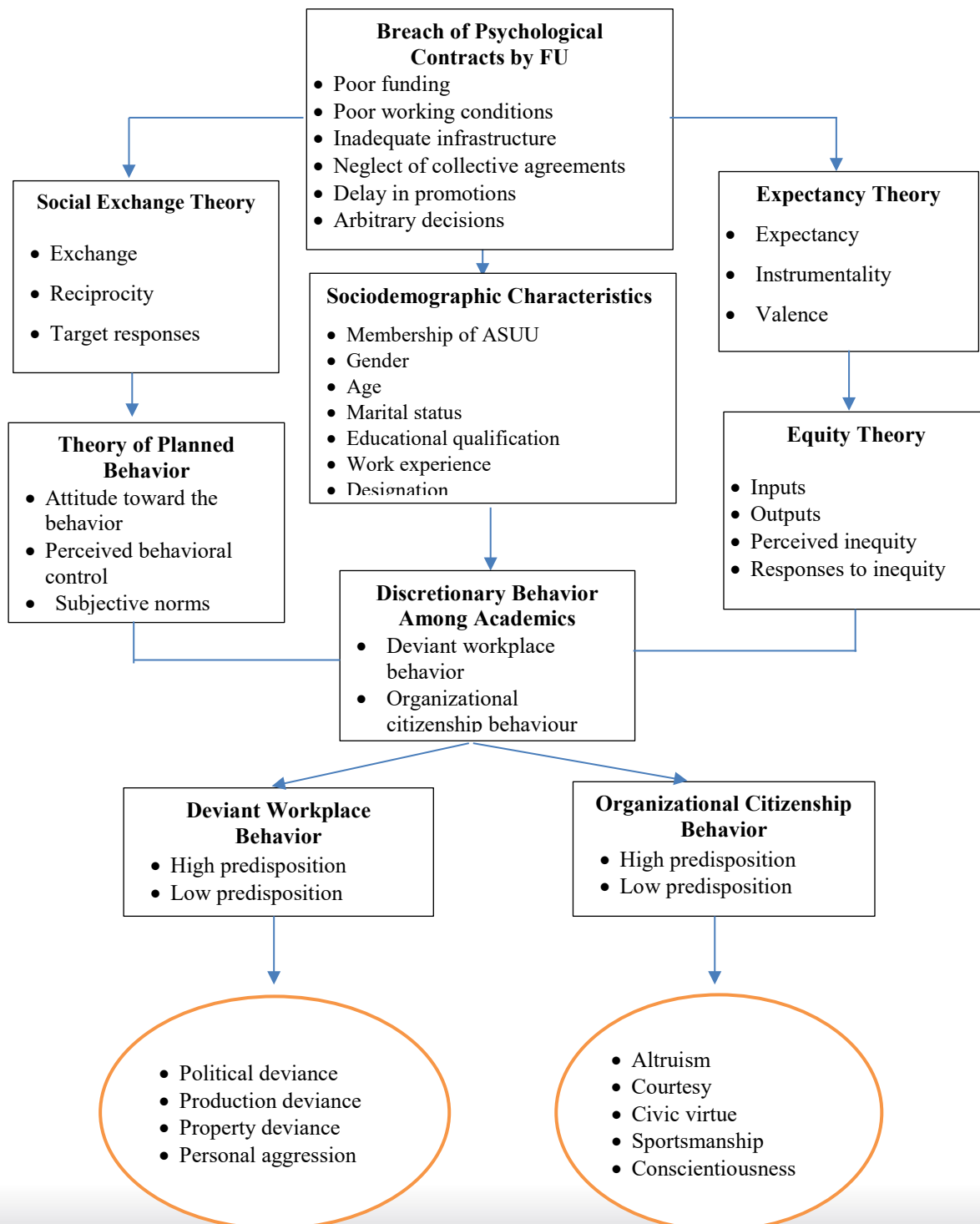
Consequently, academics irrespective of their socioeconomic status expect improvement in what bothers on BPC elements such as poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, neglect of collective agreements, delay in promotions, arbitrary decisions, among others. However, their awareness of participation in, and level of benefit from collective agreements can be largely determined by their sociodemographic characteristics.

The framework further demonstrates that the BPC may influence academics' DB such as OCB and DWB. For instance, when an individual becomes employed in a university, many paper contracts are signed where both the employee and the institution develop expectations of each other. However, if academics feel their inputs are greater than the outputs, they may seek to reduce the inequity by determining their equitable return after comparing their inputs and outcomes with those of their colleagues; and distorting inputs and outcomes in their minds. As a result, when academics perceived inequity from their employer, they may respond to inequity by engaging in DWB and vice versa.

Finally, when academics experience unfavorable treatment from their employer, they may reciprocate by engaging in DWB. Similarly, when academics experience favorable treatment from their employer, they may respond by upholding OCB. Meanwhile, TPB was conceptually independent antecedents leading to the behavioral intention from the attitude toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms. This measures the degree to which academics have a negative/positive evaluation of their performance. Each of these variables might have more or less weight depending on how academic staff perceived the BPC by the Federal Universities. Meanwhile, the framework proposes that the predisposition for behavioral outcomes could be high or low depending on the values and perceptions from person to person at different times and places.

Hypotheses Development:

H_{01}: *Perceived breach of psychological contracts by Federal Universities is not associated with deviant workplace behavior among academics in Nigeria.*

H_{02}: *Perceived breach of psychological contracts by Federal Universities is not correlated with organizational citizenship behavior among academics in Nigeria.*

4. Data and methods

The relevant information was elicited directly from the target population throughout the Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria using a descriptive survey approach. The participants in this study are academics from all of Nigeria's Federal Universities in the north-central region. North-central Nigeria had seven federal universities as of 2018. (NUC, 2018). Because they are owned, sponsored, and governed by the federal government, federal universities were chosen for this study because they are anticipated to give a fair and truthful assessment of their operations' plans.

The qualitative data was created with the goal of acquiring primary data for the research. For this study, the in-depth interview (IDI) was employed to collect qualitative data. These two ways are deemed acceptable since they will aid in the provision of in-depth information, expertise, and unique insight into the subject under consideration (Jaclyn,

Richard & Ann, 2010). Twenty-eight (28) in-depth interviews were done to investigate the individual meanings associated with discretionary behavior. This means that from each Federal University in Northcentral Nigeria, two management staff members (from the registry unit) and two members of the Academic Staff Union (from the ASUU leadership) were picked. The choice was made based on the researcher's preferences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). ASUU's registry units and leadership supplied details on the nature of Federal University breaches of psychological contracts that led to professors' discretionary behavior.

The interactions were recorded with the aid of a tape recorder. The in-depth interviews give room for flexibility and provide an opportunity to probe deeper into some aspects, which the questionnaire might not cover. Questions for IDI were the same for each respondent and was directly linked to study objectives.

In-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data (IDI). The aims of the study were conveyed to the respondents during the interview. The purpose of the first half of the interview was to build rapport and encourage people to engage. The responders were also guaranteed secrecy and anonymity by the researcher. This instilled faith in their ability to respond to inquiries. The interview lasted at least one hour and took place at the respondents' offices. The interview subjects were enabled conversationally, allowing respondents to speak freely about whatever they wanted. To minimize data loss, all interview sessions were recorded on audio recordings while notes were collected.

In addition, thematic analysis was used to transcribe, identify, and analyze the data collected from IDI. This was done manually, using Fisher's (2004) four-stage process: (a) data collection: Before starting work on a new day, the researcher's thoughts and observations, audiotape redirection, and transcription for the previous day were gathered. (b) data reduction: to decrease error, the data were sorted and organized. The data was coded and analyzed thematically. (c) Data Presentation: Data was presented following the study goals and concerns relating to academics' discretionary behavior. (d) results: presented the results of the qualitative data analysis.

5. Results

This section presents the result derived from the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interview (IDI), which was transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis. This was done in four stages, namely; assembling of data, coding, sorting and organisation of data to reduce errors. The following report of the thematic analysis was done based on responses obtained from 14 academics' representatives (ASUU leadership) and 14 Management staff.

The majority of respondents interviewed were holders of PhD degrees with a few among them being holders of MSc, MBA, among others. This includes membership of the academics' union (ASUU leadership) and management staff with a minimum of 5 years and above. The respondents show great excitement and interest in participating in the study, thus accomplishing many challenges, and affirm that not beyond what one can uphold with time. However, the study revealed that the respondents were not satisfied with the poor working condition and the quality of education to students; thus, they crave excellently to work as an academic in Federal Universities, Nigeria. While some feel fortunate and happy to work, others complained the jobs are very tasking and that the workload is too much. Five themes emerged from the interview conducted with sub-themes under each of them articulated below.

5.1 Perceived responses on the interpretation of BPC in Federal Universities

"I feel happier when I am teaching at university. It is a great experience for me. Well, I feel fulfilled and grateful; thus, I don't either see it as a privilege rather than what I have been destined to do. However, I can check out if I see any other better offer". ASUU members

This, however, means that informal arrangements, mutual beliefs, common ground and perception of the employer-employee relationship are not met. Therefore, perceived some elements of breach of psychological contracts, which may lead to absenteeism, reduced productivity and in some cases, turnover intention. The theme further emerged from the interviews was that of a shift toward fair returns, such as employees performing adequate responsibilities that are predicated on self-monitoring behavior.

Some respondents articulated that;

"They have adequate responsibilities with little return. When asked what are the main responsibilities of academics in the university where they are currently working? ...." "My responsibility is not far from research and teaching. Majorly, the job of an academic is teaching, the issue of researching has vied for promotion, but teaching is the main responsibility of academic staff. The teaching of knowledge, research, report of research should help, Government, industry etc. and community service. Teach and guide students, counselling, marking of scripts. Impacting knowledge and providing a solution to societies problem through the conduct of research. Teaching (lecturing), research and community services. Academic like me is expected to teach, carry out acceptable research as well as community services".
ASUU members

This directly implies that fairness is a significant part of the psychological contract, bound up in equity theory "returns for responsibilities of good services and fairness". This implies that employees need to perceive that they are being treated fairly to sustain a healthy psychological contract. Furthermore, this resonates with a shift from fair rewards for good work. This, however, may have a direct influence on discretionary behavior.

"I am a registry staff, and administrative precisely, I coordinate the affairs of mostly academic staff of the university. My work is more of administrative, other assignment given to me by registrar or VC". Also, "Coordinating and organizing the administrative records, taking the registration and graduating function of the university were the roles played in some cases attaching to the Assistant faculty office and secretary to any faculty boards in academic-related matters".
Management Staff

The above statement is shown that there are distinct roles played by the administrators, but mostly shoulder on the affairs of academics in the Universities. This means that a psychological contract creates opportunities for an organizational chart that clearly defines lines of authority and responsibility that matched the performance settings and goals of individuals. Meanwhile, every function should be monitored by a specific individual in the

scheme of responsibilities among academics of Federal Universities in North-central Nigeria.

5.2 Predisposing Factors affecting discretionary behavior among academics

Sub-theme: Lack of Spacious offices
    One of the participants from ASUU standpoint claimed that:

"It is very hard because I cannot seat longer than expected because my office choked me". This means that the respondent envisaged the lack of spacious offices and congestion, leading to suffocation and boredom services among academic staff and the need to expand the offices of academics in Nigerian Universities.

Sub-theme: Lack of teaching and research facilities
    Other participants (ASUU) articulated that:
    "Sometimes, I feel dissatisfied with the routine jobs, taking the same course every time without any opportunity for review. It is an arduous task; it's never an easy job to prepare for classes, conduct acceptable research and other peculiar issues. It is very hard working under intense pressure with a little teaching and researching aids".

From the excerpt above, it means mounting pressure on academics to teach and conduct research without providing them with teaching and research aids leading to job dissatisfaction and posing a great challenge to psychological contracts between employers-employees relations.

Sub-theme: Poor infrastructural facilities
    "carrying out my responsibilities is easy when necessary facilities and conditions are in place, thus very tedious due to overload and short notice of deadlines".
    ASUU members.

When asked the participants on the state of facilities or infrastructure for teaching in the university, the response given was that:

"The issue of facilities and infrastructure is grossly inadequate. This is one of the problems in Nigerian Federal Universities, and there are no adequate facilities for infrastructure for teaching, most of our lecture halls are not adequate, likewise the theatres. This poses great challenges and the need for support in terms of recruitment and career development to give students what they need."
    ASUU members.

Sub-theme: Lack of Learning Facilities
    While management staff said that:

"Library equipment and public address system, modern-day electronics and other e-learning facilities are moderate but not adequately provided, though, the institutions are trying their best but much needed to be done on necessary infrastructure for effective teaching in most Universities".

One of ASUU correspondents lamented that:

"*Of the major problem is an erratic power supply and off and on internet facilities that is why most of my work is done at home*".

This implies that researching without e-learning facilities prohibit many academics from co-written articles in both local and foreign outlets. This has a great effect on the efficiency and productivity of academics of Federal Universities in North-central, Nigeria.

Sub-theme: Inadequate research grants and aids
Another set of respondents (ASUU) revealed that:

"*I don't know of other private Universities in Nigeria, but the majority of academics published an article with their money. So, no provision or no adequate provision for research grant*".

This means inadequate grants for research among academics may be hindered them to do their job well because difficult situations and financial circumstances that may affect productivity aren't seen by the management staff as a breach of the psychological contract.

Sub-theme: Poor working conditions
Participant 8 from ASUU members indicated that:

"*We are only encouraged to engage in community service but no provision of adequate facilities and grants to that effect, if I am, must be sincere with you. Academic usually encouraged to engage in community service but not enough time to do it. There are no adequate facilities at all. If were ranked between teaching, research and community service, attention usually low on community service because of no anything to community service……*".

5.3 Review of causes of incessant strike in Nigerian Universities

Sub-theme: Excessive social and welfare demand

"*there is social requirements of average employees and the employer, on the other hand, trying to maximize profit. Academics across the length and breadth of Nigeria have been baffled with demand from management and Government of all levels. Quite long ago. The issue of labour union management is an everyday routine because the union will continue to make one demand or others. There are a lot of instances, specifically on welfare matters and other rights of members seemingly deny or delay*". Management staff

"*It's usual occurrence to have such disagreement between unions and management. It is an ongoing process every time because unions always have one demand or the others which are not implemented. Therefore, Conflict in Federal Universities cannot be ignored. The main idea is the provision of working conditions and other welfare matters. The issue of conflict in the university is a*

long story that does not end easily; hence, its usual affairs. Usually, academic members have one or two things on demand. If those demands are not met, so the issue".
Management staff

While responses of ASUU members on the conflicts/issues raised were:

"Academic earnings and a lot of many issues. This, however, was triggered by the way management does manipulate the academics and confused the union leaders to their tune. This includes the abandonment of the 2009 agreement".

"Yes, in 2017, when the VC of the university was in serious trouble with the non-academic of the university. ASUU has been on the issue with FG since the failure to honor the 2009 agreement which they willingly signed with ASUU. Presently, there is an ongoing conflict between union members and the Nigerian Government over non-challan attitude in handling union matters".

"Failure on the part of the Government to implement the agreement signed with ASUU members usually cause conflicts. This occurs when management or Government do not pay the academics their check-off dues as at when due, poor wages and late payment of salaries usually demoralize workers. This is one of the reasons for industrial frequently staged by the unions".

From the excerpt of the interview above, it is clear that breach of psychological contract raised many issues which are positively or negatively affecting academics of Federal Universities. Addressing the issues by the Federal Government and many of the conflicts positively give rise to OCB, and when the implementation of demands is abortive or negative, it can lead to DWB. As participant 13 rightly attributed these issues and conflicts to poor career development, lack of motivation and a competitive learning environment. Other were lack of regular management and employee meetings, as well as poor communication.

Sub-theme: lack of trust and goodwill
Failure to do what is required in a psychological contract leads to the violation of psychological contracts because there is no mutual fulfilment of a promise or whatsoever. If trust and goodwill are ignored, the possibility to develop intention in what is worth doing in duties and obligations may be far from reach. Trust is what they have done, but cannot be trusted in what they have not done. In an employment relationship, the employer wanted to spend less to gain more at the expense of employees but with the union, all things being equal. This was bolstered in responses from some ASUU members:

"The truth is that management and even the Federal Government cannot be trusted when it comes to fulfilling promises made to academics. We do not trust them a bit. We don't trust the university management as well. No trust exists even at 40% on average based to some extent of those currently at the helm of affair in this university cannot trust anyone when it comes to fulfilling a promise".

In response to ASUU members, some management staff lamented that:

"Of course, the allocation attributed to university is very small, so, it may be difficult to keep up to the promise of academics".

"No, academics are not lacking anything, and all promises made to them have been fulfilled."

Sub-theme: Poor Implementation of MoU; MoA
Participant 7 from a management staff standpoint revealed that:

"Though, management always try to give competitive reward to our staff to at least keep them on the job. Well, in my institution, rewards policies are formulated but not consistently implemented by changing needs, attributed the failure from the Federal Government to respond to their demands". This directly implies that there is a breach of trust and promise which eventually regenerate into discretionary behavior among academics".

5.4 Responses on the expectation to the fulfillment of psychological contract

Sub-theme: Expectation in administrative of visionary leadership roles
It is an administrative role to contribute by responding to people demands and effectively promoting the organizational culture of the academic environment and correcting any DWB that can lead to a breach of psychological contract in academic settings. One of the respondents opined that:

"I expected an environment to make me grow and excel and contribute my quota efficiently. A well-organized environment. Thought was going to be a smooth environment for academic growth………, and to reach the peak of my career and get fulfilled as at when due with the ability to a visionary leader for people working around me, have an impact in people's life…".
Management staff

Participant 9 from an academic standpoint opined that;

"I expected to progress faster with adequate facilities. I was expected an enabling environment, power supply, printer, internet facility, among other social amenities. My expectations were high both in terms of income and working conditions".

Sub-theme: Training and development
Participant 5 opined that:

"The greatest emphasis for change in this institution should be on training and development of academic members. This will make a lot of difference. Yet, the inadequacy in the facilities were factors expected to change the breach of psychological contract".

One of the respondents were of the views that:

"They feel consideration should be given to the factors relating to staff conveniences such as proximity of postal services, transport, recreation, sports facilities though the reality was very different, conditions of service was not adhered to by the employer and my expectation here not been met. Well, I have a growing, demand change, yet, I want to continue to influence people's life."

Participant 8 from the management standpoint opined that:
"The institution should have different packages for staff development which followed the approved standard by NUC which will encourage the people in academic to engage themselves in Training and Development".

Others were of the views that there should be a change in promotion schemes of the Universities;

Sub-theme: Expect Change in Promotion Schemes
Participant 9 from the management standpoint said that;

"To my knowledge, the criteria for promoting academic are in tandem with international standard and any academic who is fit for promotion got it without stress. Strictly by AP&C format. The criteria for promoting academic staff is something that distributes and the process is communicated, opened and transparent where all academics are aware of". The rate is relatively good and equitable.

One of the respondents further said that;

"To the best of my knowledge, (university name held) promotion is one of the open operate affairs where all academic has the information, and the selection is based on approved criteria. The criteria are usually determined by the university's promotion committee. The guideline is usually communicated among academic staff every year to give room for the qualified members to apply".

This means it is expected that the upward reassignment of individuals in academics should be looked into, accompanied by increased responsibilities, enhanced status and usually with increased income, though not always so in the university system it needs to be changed. The change and expectation of promotion schemes must provide for uniformity in promotional schemes in the university system. This will make justice to the ratios of internal promotions to external recruitment that should be the same at various levels in all departments. If this ratio is differing greatly from one department to another discretionary behavior may be seriously impaired the morale and commitment of staff. Therefore, a sound promotion scheme must be able to tell the employee in advance what avenues for advancement exist. This should be open and communicate effectively.

5.5 Union' roles in fulfilling the psychological contract of academics

The interview also explored the union' roles in bridging the gaps between the breach of psychological contract by the Federal Universities and discretionary behavior among academics in Federal Universities. It was found that enabling working environment, redesign job responsibilities, job security/protection, administration of collective bargain, timely review of salary, allowances and benefits, provision of healthcare facilities, giving competitive rewards, grants and aids, increasing funds allocation to Universities and provision of good working conditions.

Sub-theme: Acknowledging the Role of ASUU

While participants acknowledge the role of the union, thus inadequate when compared with other Universities.

> *"Without union members, there wouldn't be any remarkable academic environment in the Universities in Nigeria. Hence, management must note that challenging, interesting, enlarged and enriched jobs should be assigned to workers, and these should be commensurate with their status according to the ladder of responsibility".*

While majorities acknowledged the role of the union thus some few respondents said:

> *"Union has little or no impacts in solving problems in a Federal University in Nigeria. Their role has been unsatisfactory, and the union leaders are not reliable, they should be trusted".*

Thus, it is advocated that the employer-employee relationship is only possible through union and it's only through the fulfilment of ASUU's demand is the measure at which an incessant strike can be curbed.

6. Discussion of findings

Based on the interview conducted for the ASUU members and management staff, the following findings were reached. It was evident that BPC by the Federal Universities in North-central Nigeria influences academics' discretionary behavior, though the degrees vary. For instance, responses from ASUU members showed that there is some perceived breach of psychological contracts, which might have led to disagreement, reduced productivity and in some cases, turnover intention. Mounting pressure on academics to teach and conduct research without providing them with teaching and research aids lead to job dissatisfaction. The issue of facilities and infrastructure is grossly inadequate, and there are no adequate facilities for infrastructure for teaching, most of our lecture halls are not adequate, likewise the theatres. This finding was in tandem with study of Anyim, Obisi and Aliyu (2018) who found analyzed deviant workplace behavior in Nigeria.

Findings on the causes of conflict in Federal Universities, ASUU members lamented that failure on the part of the Government to implement the agreement signed with ASUU members usually cause conflicts. This occurs when management or Government does not pay the academic due as at when due, poor wages and late payment of salaries usually

demoralize workers. Thereby management staff, on the other hand, said, the issue of conflict in the university is a long story that does not end easily, hence, its usual affairs. Usually, academic members have one or two things on demand. This was also in consistent with the outcomes from Yang & Chao (2016) that conflict matter is positive, give rise to OCB, and when the implementation of demands is abortive or negative can lead to DWB. As attributed to the issue of conflicts to poor career development, lack of motivation and competitive learning environment.

On the issue of promotion, the qualitative report revealed that the upward reassignment of individuals in academics should be looked into, accompanied by increased responsibilities, enhanced status and usually with increased income, though not always so in the university system, therefore, it needs to be changed. The change and expectation of promotion schemes must provide for uniformity in promotional schemes in the university system. Because it was reported by Subramanian (2017); Sharma & Garg (2017) that the ratios of internal promotions to external recruitment that should be the same at various levels in all departments. If this ratio is differing greatly from one department to another, certain behavior may seriously impair the commitment of academics.

While asking for the role of ASUU in fulfilling the psychological contract of academics, it was found that if Government provides the enabling working environment, job security/protection, administration of collective bargain, timely review of salary, allowances and benefits, provision of healthcare facilities, giving competitive rewards, grants and aids, increasing funds allocation to Universities and provision of good working conditions have been the watchword of ASUU. Because Abdulazeez et al. (2019); Liu, Cho and Seo (2018) believed that if academics are well-paid and compensated, this, in turn, will satisfy them psychologically and improve their performance on the job.

While management must evaluate substandard welfare packages and compensation structures, all employees were taken along through proper channels of communication and feedback, especially when there was discretionary deviant behavior due to work discontent, according to an excerpt from the IDI. The qualitative findings revealed that university academics were dissatisfied with their working conditions, underfunding, shortages of facilities and equipment, and, most importantly, the quality of service, which had resulted in multiple industrial unrests, brain-drain, and plans to transfer high-skilled academics to other universities.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

The study found that the BPC affected academics in a variety of ways, with a preference for OCB and DWB. Unfortunately, the proclivity for DWB surpassed the proclivity for OCB. When a university breaks its commitments or fails to do what it should for academics, many academics may retaliate by engaging in deviant behavior such as misusing official cars, the internet, failing to attend statutory meetings, sexual harassment, and plagiarism, among other things. When the university fails to keep its promises to academics, the results show that some academics may be more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors such as promoting the university's image, assisting colleagues in resolving issues, working longer days, being punctual, and showing tolerance, among others. The study, therefore, recommends that building psychological linkages between organizational and staff goals should help universities integrate employee behavior. So, the academics

who uphold OCB despite the perceived BPC should be encouraged to sustain their good behavior.

7.1 Managerial implications and limitations

The practical implication is aimed at establishing effective incentive systems that have the potential to improve tertiary institutions' satisfaction and productivity. Particularly, because a provision of adequate funding serves as a stimulating factor and predictor for organizational citizenship behavior towards academics (OCB-A), i.e. satisfaction among academics and organizational citizenship behavior towards University (OCB-U) productivity.

Meanwhile, the theoretical implication shouldered on infrastructural should be targeted at enhancing poor working environments to mitigate against deviant workplace behavior in the Universities. However, if it is not taken into consideration, it could lead to the pronouncement of deviant workplace behavior towards academics (DWB-A), i.e. job dissatisfaction, quit intention, and deviant workplace behavior towards University (DWB-U), i.e. low productivity.

From this study, that the dimensions of BPC are not much pronounced on OCB unlike the DWB, which means there should be further research to expand knowledge in the relationship between BPC and OCB in a similar organization using qualitative techniques for more clarity on the adopted theory in this study.

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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, PRODUCTS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS IN THE COSMETIC INDUSTRY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This article explores the research domain of the impact of Country of Origin (COO) in the cosmetics industry in relation to products from different countries and cultural backgrounds. This study aims to provide a relevant and comprehensive organization of the research around this topic, offering an original, reliable and practically useful resource. In this way, a systematic literature review was conducted. Twenty documents published between 1997 and 2020 were analyzed and classified into three research themes. Specifically, the three themes are: COO and purchase behaviour related to cosmetic products (Theme A), COO and country perception in relation to cosmetic products (Theme B), COO and marketing strategies for cosmetics companies (Theme C). For each of the themes, emerging content and the potential for future research was highlighted. The findings of this paper have value not only for Cross-Cultural Management and Marketing scholars, but also for managers of cosmetics companies who plan to use the Country of Origin and the Country Image to communicate the company brand. The analysis is original and shows that this is an under-researched topic that offers important insights for future research and implications for managers who intend to consider the COO in business and marketing strategies.

1. Introduction

The Country of origin (COO) has its roots at the end of the First World War, with a different meaning than the one that today is part of our common imagination: the "Made in" label was in fact compulsorily placed on products coming from defeated countries, such as Germany, to mark them as products to be avoided (Munjal, 2014). The concept of COO was studies for the first time in economic terms since 1965, when Schooler (1965) empirically demonstrated that identical products were perceived differently in relation to their country of origin. Nowadays, in an increasingly connected and globalized world where consumers can purchase products from all over the globe, the COO has significant importance. In particular, it represents not only the image, reputation and stereotypes that businessmen and consumers attribute to the products of a given country (Nagashima, 1970), but also the set of beliefs that consumers have about the countries themselves (Strutton et al., 1995; Roth & Romeo, 1992; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). In addition, the COO is considered as an extrinsic feature along with the brand and therefore can act as an additional assurance during the purchase process of a product with which one is unfamiliar (Josiassen & Harzing, 2008).

This phenomenon, which is triggered by the importance of the COO, is also classified as the halo effect (Han, 1989). On the other hand, as consumers become more familiar with a country's products, the country image may become a construct that summarizes consumers' beliefs about product attributes, which inevitably affects their attitudes towards the brands associated with those products (Han, 1989). However, the phenomenon related to COO involves very often some categories of products and not all products from the same country. For example, Japanese wine producers have a harder time gaining credibility in the market than camera and television manufacturers from the same country. Similarly, German cars, sporting goods and computers designed in the United States (Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2006) are perceived positively by consumers compared to others from other countries. In this vein, the purchasing process of consumers turns out to be influenced by country-product associations that are in turn the result of the information that consumers have about the country of origin, as in the case of shoes made in Italy and perfumes made in France (Kalicharan, 2014).

Moreover, with regard to Italian products, those related to the agri-food, clothing and home furnishings industries are perceived worldwide as synonymous with quality linked to the high creative content of the industrial process, which validates the term "Italian style". In this regard, De Nisco and Mainolfi (2016) showed that foreign perception of Italy and Italian products is linked to the image of the cultural heritage of the Italian country brand and has a significant interaction with some cultural attributes (such as culinary tradition, aesthetics and art) and with the main product categories of the so-called Italian 'Bello e Ben Fatto' (such as food, leather goods, design and home furnishings). In addition, Italian excellence in some industries has generated the phenomenon of 'Italian Sounding' (Francioni & Albanesi, 2017), which consists in the use of words (i.e. recipe names and person's names and surnames) and images (i.e. the flag or geographical references such as Italian locations or monuments) evocative of Italy, in order to promote and market products that are actually not Made in Italy. Francioni and Albanesi (2017) demonstrated with a sample of German consumers, that Italian sounding damages the perception of 'Made in Italy', since very often consumers do not pay much attention to the label during purchase.

Some scholars (Maheswaran, 1994; Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000) have examined the COO phenomenon according to its cognitive aspect, evaluating the

conditions under which consumers are more likely to use COO in their decision-making process. In these cases, it was found that when consumers are faced with choosing a product, they very often tend to minimize the effort to process information (Maheswaran, 1994) and for this reason they use COO as a heuristic to quickly make a judgment and evaluate a product based on the degree of certainty (or uncertainty) they have regarding the quality of the product (Maheswaran, 1994; Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000). On the other hand, other scholars (Klein et al., 1998; Chen et al., 2014; Septianto et al., 2020) have analysed COO according to the emotional aspect. For example, Klein and colleagues (1998) showed that Chinese consumers are unlikely to purchase Japanese products because of the memory of Japanese occupation on their territory. From an emotional perspective, it follows that the positive emotions an individual has about a country will affect a product from that country in a positive way, and conversely, negative emotions will affect a product from that country in a negative way (Chen et al., 2014). However, contrary to this claim, Septianto and colleagues (2020) showed that in cases where the COO has a less favourable image, emotions have a greater influence on consumer purchase behaviour, highlighting the moderating effect of the COO in matching country and product-related emotions.

In light of these elements, this paper aims to study the importance of the concept of COO related to cosmetic products and understand how its perception changes not only depending on the cultural context in which the study takes place, but also in relation to the COO of the products under consideration. Therefore, a review of all existing literature related to studies that have linked the concept of COOs to cosmetic products and have addressed the topic from an economic and cross-cultural perspective was conducted. Moreover, in the literature there was no review of the literature related to COO dedicated to the cosmetics sector, therefore the originality of this study goes to fill this gap by analysing the phenomenon from a cross-cultural point of view. The literature review follows a fully systematic and replicable process involving research, inductive analysis, and organization of previous studies based on recurring findings and cultural contexts of reference.

Thus, the following research question guides the study:

RQ. *How has the impact of COO in the cosmetics industry been studied in relation to products from different countries and cultural backgrounds?*

Since COO is often considered a synonym for Country Image (CI) (Yagci, 2001), they are also considered in this review in this way, although they are actually mean different things. Effectively, CI represents the set of descriptive, inferential, and informational beliefs that people have about a particular country (Martin & Eroglu, 1993) and this occurs in relation to mental representations of people, products, culture, and national symbols (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999), combined with other factors such as economic and political maturity, historical events and relationships, technological virtuosity (Bannister & Saunders, 1978), and environmental issues (Allred et al., 2000). This paper inventories the entire domain of COO related to cosmetics to provide comprehensive, relevant, and organized research support. Several studies were reviewed, inductively synthesized, and classified in relation to their findings and cultural reference contexts, while also attempting to identify major research themes. Finally, this study adopts a cross cultural approach in order to open a discussion regarding the phenomena, issues, inconsistencies and intermediate debates on which new research can be conducted, facilitating the sharing and

reusing of meaningful information in relation to different cultural contexts. The next part of the study presents the research method including its scope and analytical procedures. This is followed by our findings, including observations of the literature and areas for future investigation. This leads to a more general discussion and conclusions of the work combined with a future research agenda.

2. Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive state of the art about the concept of country of origin in the cosmetics industry and to ensure replicability for future research, the process of systematic literature review was followed. In fact, systematic literature reviews aim to provide a reliable and scientific overview of ongoing research on a specific topic and provide guidance for future research (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). Furthermore, the purpose of systematic literature reviews is to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all relevant studies using a transparent and replicable process to answer a particular research question (Tranfield et al., 2003). To comply with principles such as transparency, clarity, focus, accessibility, and synthesis, a search protocol was followed and based on it, the criteria for searching, including, and excluding papers were established.

The first step of the review was to define a search protocol compliant with the research aim to review articles dealing with the impact of COO in the cosmetics industry in relation to products from different countries and cultural contexts. Eligible studies for this review could refer to both the concept of COO and CI related to cosmetic products in different cultural contexts from both an economic and cross-cultural perspective. During the search, the terminology Country of origin image (COI) also emerged: it too was considered suitable for our review. Thus, the first inclusion criterion was to find and analyze studies in the literature that linked the concept of COO (or CI and equivalent terminologies) to cosmetic products in different cultural contexts from both an economic and cross-cultural perspective. In addition, the second inclusion criterion required that the research had been open to collect both empirical studies, conceptual studies, and reviews. In addition, a third inclusion criterion was that articles published in peer-reviewed journals were included in a priority way because these articles are considered more reliable due to the double-blind review process they undergo before being published (Podsakoff et al. 2005). Moreover, a fourth inclusion criterion, stated that both high-impact and low-impact journals were considered, as long as the articles belonging to them met the other inclusion criteria. Finally, under the fifth inclusion criterion, books, book chapters, and working papers were considered and allowed as exceptions if they were strongly in line with the other inclusion criteria. In contrast, papers that did not deal with the concept of COO, or CI, related to cosmetic products in different cultural contexts according to perspectives other than economic and cross-cultural were excluded. Furthermore, papers that did not consider COO and CI as the central topic of the work were also excluded. Finally, periodicals, conference proceedings were also excluded. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are also provided in the table below (Table 1). Subsequently, the research took place in the second step. Specifically, the search for papers was done by first entering the keywords (Table 1) into the EBSCO, Scopus and Google Scholar search engines without limiting the search to a specific time period and by searching through the titles and abstracts of the content. In addition, a manual search for relevant articles was conducted through the reference lists of relevant articles found in previous steps. Moreover, the same keywords were manually

entered on the journal search engines in order to identify additional studies that might have escaped the automatic search of the previously mentioned databases. Finally, 20 papers (19 from peer-reviewed journals and one book chapter) were identified for inclusion in the final database for our analysis.

Table 1 – Methodological procedures for search, selection, inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion criteria	1. Papers that linked the concept of COO (or CI and equivalent terminologies) to cosmetic products in different cultural contexts from both an economic and cross-cultural perspective; 2. Empirical AND conceptual AND review; 3. Peer-reviewed journal articles preferentially; 4. Both high-impact journals and lower-impact journals; 5. Exceptions for books, book chapters and working papers if they were strongly in line with the other inclusion criteria.
Exclusion Criteria	1. Papers that did not consider COO as a central topic of the paper; 2. Periodicals and conference proceedings.
Research Method - Stage I	1. Admission criteria for general keyword search using Scopus, EBSCO, and Google Scholar; 2. Initial focus on: a) citation and abstract, and b) title. 3. Key words: • Country of Origin and cosmetic • Country Image and cosmetic • Country of Origin and perfume • Country Image and perfume • Country of Origin and skincare • Country Image and skincare
Search method - Stage II	1. Manual search of relevant articles through the reference lists of relevant articles found in the previous stages; 2. Manual search in search engines of the journals of the studies previously identified; 1. Include and evaluate articles deemed suitable for the search criteria.
Final sample for analysis	n= 20 (nineteen papers from peer-reviewed journals and one book chapter)

Source: Author's elaboration

3. Results

Subsequently, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used for content coding and comparison. In addition, the methodology of the studies, the samples used for the research, and the countries in which the studies were conducted, the country of origin, or the reference image country were identified. Next, the various contributions were analyzed by identifying not only the value of culture in the various reference contexts in which they take place, but also the main research themes.

An initial analysis of the existing literature shows that the scope of the research ranges from 1997 to 2020. In terms of the methodology adopted, eighteen of them are quantitative studies and only three are qualitative. Finally, three research themes were identified and are reported below. They are: COO and purchasing behavior related to cosmetic products, COO and country perception related to cosmetic products, COO and marketing strategies for cosmetics companies. This information is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary table of studies clustered by theme

Theme A: COO, CI and purchase of cosmetic products				
Study	*Country of study*	*Country of origin*	*Sample*	*Methodology*
Zbib *et al.*, 2021	Lebanon	France and China	300 Lebanese female consumers	Quantitative. Structured questionnaires. One-way ANOVA, multinomial logistic regression, single and multiple regression analysis and chi-square tests
Ishak *et al.*, 2019	Bangi Selangor (Malaysia)	Not specified	150 female consumers from four higher education institutions	Quantitative. Self-administered questionnaire, descriptive, t-test and correlation analyses
Moslehpour *et al.*, 2017	Taiwan	Korea	437 Taiwanese people	Quantitative. Mean, median, standard deviation and other Descriptive statistics. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Cronbach's Alpha, Kaiser-Meyet-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett''s test measure, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
Tjoe and Kim, 2016	Indonesia	Korea	227 Indonesian consumers	Quantitative. Online surveys. Principal component analysis (PCA), multiple regression and process analysis
Zbib *et al.*, 2010	Lebanon	Pantene (KSA, France and USA), Sunsilk (Egypt, Turkey and France), Palmolive (Lebanon, USA and France)	332 consumers of shampoo	Quantitative. Demographic variables; one-way ANOVA tests
Marcoux *et al.*, 1997	Poland	Poland and Western Countries	265 Polish university students	Quantitative. Univariate analysis of the scores of preference and stepwise multiple regression analysis.
Azuizkulov, 2013	Malaysia	Not specified	227 students from Universiti Utara Malaysia	Quantitative. Exploratory Factor Analysis, Correlation Analysis, Regression Analysis
Montanari *et al.*, 2018	Brazil	Ralph Lauren (USA), Chanel (France), Hugo Boss (Germany)	329 students	Quantitative. Questionnaire. 1-5 Likert scale, Descriptive analysis, Kruskal-Wallis tests, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney test)
Hsu *et al.*, 2017	Taiwan	Not specified	300 respondents	Quantitative. Paper-based questionnaire, Structural equation modelling, hierarchical moderated regression

Jin *et al.*, 2020	USA and China	Korea	491 consumers ages 20 and older	Quantitative. Structural equation modeling
Jin *et al.*, 2019	USA, France, China, Vietnam	Korea	900 consumers aged 20 or older	Quantitative. Multiple regression analyses.
Jin *et al.*, 2019	USA and China	Korea	250 consumers ages 20 and older	Quantitative. Structural equation modeling
Xiao *et al.*, 2016	Beijing and Shanghai (China)	Korea	255 customers	Quantitative. Survey, Descriptive statistics, Hierarchical regression analysis
Rezvani *et al.*, 2013	Malaysia	Malaysia	196 customers	Quantitative. Survey, Descriptive data analysis

Theme B: COO, CI and country perceptions

Study	*Country of study*	*Country of origin*	*Sample*	*Methodology*
Baran, 2018	Poland	Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States	Web Panel of 1012 respondents	Quantitative. Descriptive statistics.
Pilelienèa and Šontaitè-Petkevičien èb, 2014	Lithuania	Lithuania, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, China	1262 respondents	Quantitative. Questionnaire, 1-7 Likert scale, Mean, N, Standard deviation
Cheah *et al.*, 2020	Australia	Italy, Australia, South Korea and China	200 undergraduate business students	Quantitative. Survey, ANOVA tests

Theme C: COO, CI and marketing strategies for cosmetic companies

Study	*Country of study*	*Country of origin*	*Sample*	*Methodology*
Suter et al, 2018	Brazil	Brazil and Brazil production with France origin	Two companies: Natura Cosméticos (Brazil domestic company) vs L'Occitane au Brésil (France-owned)	Qualitative. Multiple case study method, semi-structured interviews
Sutter *et al.*, 2015	Brazil	Brazil	Natura Cosméticos S.A.	Qualitative. Case study analysis, semi-structured interviews
Rebufet *et al.*, 2015	Not specified	France, Usa, China, Panama, Spain	7 professionals from French cosmetics companiesoperating internationally	Qualitative. Multiple case study method, semi-structured interviews

Source: Authors' elaboration

3.1 Theme A: COO and purchase behaviour related to cosmetic products

The first theme includes studies that have used COO (or CI) to explain consumer purchase behaviour. In particular, Zbib and colleagues (2021), with a sample of 300 Lebanese women, showed that taking into account cosmetic products from France and China, the level of involvement that female consumers have towards a given product constitutes an exogenous variable that influences the level of importance of COO in the purchase of cosmetics and in particular skin care products.

They also showed that for products from France, COO information search and change in the perception after trying the product are correlated due to the presence of a halo effect related to French products. Furthermore, they found that COO information search and change in the perception are not correlated when it comes to Chinese products since Lebanese consumers did not change their perception towards the products after discovering their Chinese origin (Zbib et al., 2021).

However, for low involvement product categories such as shampoo, it has been shown that country of origin is not one of the key attributes influencing Lebanese consumer choice (Zbib et al., 2021). This was demonstrated in Lebanon with a sample of 332 shampoo consumers from brands and countries of origin such as Pantene (KSA, France and USA), Sunsilk (Egypt, Turkey and France) and Palmolive (Lebanon, USA and France) (Zbib et al., 2010). Furthermore, taking as reference companies and their countries of origin such as Chanel and France, Hugo Boss and Germany and Ralph Lauren and USA, it was shown that, for a sample of 329 Brazilian students, country of origin has little importance in the purchase of luxury branded perfumes. In this case, price and brand had been considered the factors that most influence the choice (Montanari et al., 2018). In particular, the study showed that only for Chanel the value of country of origin was higher, probably because the brand name communicates the country of origin (Montanari et al., 2018). Furthermore, Hsu and colleagues (2017) demonstrated with a sample of 300 respondents in Taiwan, that perceptions of COO moderate the links between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and purchase intention of green skincare products.

Specifically, the relationship between the variables appears to be stronger at high levels of COO perception and weaker at low levels of COO perception (Hsu et al., 2017). In addition, Ishak and colleagues (2019), on a sample of 150 Malaysian high school women, showed that purchasing cosmetic products is part of the 'limited decision-making process' and specifically, in the purchasing process, country of origin obtained a mean value of 3.91 on a Likert scale 1-7 (Ishak et al., 2019).

Moreover, also in Malaysia, with a sample of 227 university students, it was shown that not only country of origin is strongly correlated with both purchase behaviour and brand reputation, but also has a positive influence on brand loyalty when referring to cosmetic products (Azuizkulov, 2013). Moreover, Tjoe and Kim (2016), in their study made a distinction between Country of Origin Image and Country Image, considering the former as the country of manufacturer's products or brand is associated with its home country (Samiee, 1994) and the latter as the set of people's beliefs, images, ideas and impressions about a certain country (Kotler et al., 2002). In particular, they demonstrated, with a sample of 227 respondents, that Country of Origin Image (and not Country Image) significantly influenced consumers' purchase intention towards Korean products in Indonesia.

Moreover, this study also juxtaposes the concept of COO with that of ethnocentrism, as did Marcoux and colleagues (1997) who, with a sample of 265 Polish university

students, showed that patriotism is a dimension of ethnocentrism that leads consumers to prefer Polish products, while preference toward Western products is related to the demonstration of social status.

In addition, another study conducted in Malaysia with a sample of 196 consumers showed that patriotism has a strong influence on Malaysian consumers' intention to purchase cosmetic products made in Malaysia (Rezvani et al., 2013). Moreover, Moslehpour and colleagues (2017), by analyzing the key factors influencing the repurchase intention of Korean cosmetic products by 437 Taiwanese consumers, showed that COO significantly influences both word-of-mouth and product repurchase behaviour. In addition, also regarding Korean products, using a sample of 491 American and Chinese consumers aged 20 and older, Jin and colleagues (2020) showed that product-specific country image, also referred to as micro country image had a positive influence on quality ratings of Korean cosmetics in contrast to overall country image (macro country image) and prototypical brand image (e.g. Samsung). However, the same authors (Jin et al., 2019) examined the impact of Korea's macro and micro image and the level of materialism of global consumers on the quality evaluation of Korean cosmetics, a sample of 900 consumers aged 20 or older from the USA, France, China, and Vietnam.

They showed that only in the USA and France was the effect of macro and micro country image on quality evaluation significant, while the impact of micro country image was strong in all four countries. Furthermore, the same authors (Jin et al., 2019) showed with a sample of 250 consumers ages 20 and older, that for the evaluation of the quality of cosmetic products, the positive impact of the macro country image is not valuable, while the pathway related to the cultural phenomenon of the Korean Wave is significant.

Also related to knowledge spillovers, Xiao and colleagues (2016), with a sample of 255 Chinese consumers, stated that cinema, theater and the internet represent sources that have increased knowledge regarding Korean cosmetics. They also verified that the general CI and general product CI of Korea have a positive influence on the Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and purchase intention of Korean cosmetics (Xiao et al., 2016). From these studies, we can see that the COO in some cultural contexts and for some product categories is particularly important in relation to consumer purchasing behaviour, while in others its influence is less. In particular, we notice that cosmetics made in France and Korea are those which have the greatest influence on the purchasing process of consumers in Lebanon, China and Taiwan.

From a cultural point of view, this phenomenon can be traced back to the concept of Mianzi (literally, face) which represents one of the main personality characteristics of the Chinese people and other East Asian peoples (Yang, 1994; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). According to this cultural characteristic, East Asians tend to own and purchase goods that allow them to achieve a certain social status on which they base their prestige (Yang, 1994), build their reputation (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998), and the way they are accepted by others (Hwang, 1987) by publicly displaying their wealth and willingness to be fashionable. Moreover, particularly for China, these reasons meet explanations in its cultural evolution that started after the death of Mao Tse Tung and the historic entry into the global economy in 1978, which had consequences on the consumption of products and emulation of foreign lifestyles by the Chinese people.

Foreign brands carry a symbolic meaning of modernity and prestige associated with modern and worldly lifestyles (Zhou & Hui, 2003) that meet the desire, particularly of Chinese women, to give birth to the long-suppressed desire to wear fashionable clothes and

cosmetics (Barnes, 2009; Hopkins, 2007). Moreover, the phenomenon of ethnocentrism pushes consumers to prefer products from their own country as in the case of Poland, where, from a cultural perspective, national pride and entity influence people's attitudes and consumer purchasing behaviour (Huddleston et al., 2001; Kubacki & Skinner, 2006; Siemieniako et al., 2011).

However, for both product categories with less involvement, such as shampoo, and some perfumes, country of origin is not one of the key attributes that influence consumer choice in some cultural contexts such as Lebanon and Brazil, confirming that from a cultural perspective, country of origin takes on different meanings in relation to the product, cultural context, and country appeal. Finally, related to this result, in this theme we can see that culture plays an important role in consumer preferences and purchase process in different countries.

3.2 Theme B: COO and country perception in relation to cosmetic products

The second theme encompasses studies that have linked COO concepts to consumers' perceptions of a given country. A study by Baran (2018) conducted in Poland and based on a web panel of 1012 Polish internet users, showed that more than 30% respondents when thinking about features such as safety of using and low price of a cosmetic product refer to Poland. When they refer to the naturalness of cosmetic products, they refer not only to Poland, but also to Finland. When instead they think of prestige, they associate this characteristic with cosmetic products from France. They also associate France with high prices, along with the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the USA. However, with smaller percentages, high quality of ingredients (24.5%) and effectiveness (24.9%) are associated with Germany, pleasure of using (18.6%) with France, mediocrity (27.7%) with Israel and innovativeness (18.0%) with United States of America (Baran, 2018). In addition, another study conducted in Lithuania with a sample of 1262 cosmetic consumers identified three groups of country-of-origin based on their attractiveness. Specifically, France and Germany were classified as attractive country-of-origin, Italy and Lithuania as neutral country-of-origin and finally Russia, Poland and China as unattractive country-of-origin (Pilelienèa et al, 2014).

Finally, Cheah and colleagues (2020), with a sample of 200 undergraduate business students in a large university in Australia, showed that regarding Australian, Italian, Korean, and Chinese-branded perfumes, no country-of-origin of these perfumes is a means of achieving status. However, among the various perfumes, Australian perfumes have been considered reliable and belonging to the emerging markets of their industry (Cheah et al., 2020).

Regarding this second theme, we can note that with regard to the perceptions of the various countries, French origin has its attractiveness in the cosmetic industry. Moreover, a form of patriotism also emerges in studies belonging to this second theme when we consider that Polish consumers perceive cosmetics from Poland as safe to use and when Australian consumers consider perfumes made in Australia as reliable and up-to-date.

From a cultural point of view, regarding the ethnocentrism of Polish consumers the same reflections indicated in the previous theme are valid, while that found in Australian consumers confirms the results of previous studies in which it is shown that they tend to purchase local products with high frequency, especially if they belong to categories of high symbolic impact, as cosmetics are (Strizhakova & Coulter, 2015).

3.3 Theme C: COO and marketing strategies for cosmetic companies

The third theme refers to the marketing strategies adopted across firms to show the COO. In particular, a study conducted in Brazil with a sample of two companies, a Brazil domestic company (Natura Cosméticos) and a France-owned company (L'Occitane au Brésil) identified six tools that companies can use to communicate brand values using the concept of country image associated with the country of origin (Suter et al., 2018). Specifically, the six tools refer to the country's natural resource properties, cultural resources (e.g., related to lifestyles), employee training on the importance of the Country Image for the brand, textual elements referring to the country (such as language and typical expressions), visual elements (e.g., images of the country, flag, landscapes and typical symbols, use of the country's name on staff uniforms) and sensory experiences (e.g. listening to country music on the website and in stores, in-store scents and essences, and packaging that evokes the country by touch).

Another study refers to the country-of-origin image using the Brazilian company Natura Cosméticos as a sample as well (Sutter et al., 2015). The study shows that the company leverages the country-of-origin image when implementing its international differentiation strategy.

Population, economy and politics, sports and arts, nature and lifestyle are the five elements that represent Brazil's image and Natura makes use of different nuances. In particular, the company chooses to base its strategy on themes related to nature, relationships and the friendliness of the country and the Brazilian people while avoiding stereotypes such as soccer, sensuality, samba and the beach (Sutter et al., 2015). Finally, a further study with a sample of seven professionals representing French cosmetics companies that operate internationally (France, USA, China, Panama and Spain), showed that the country of origin is communicated through labels, symbols, commercial discourse and strategies that emphasize the French origin of the products, which represents a real added value (Rebufet et al., 2015).

In addition, the study points out that communication based on these elements is more widely used by small and medium-sized businesses than larger ones. This is because small and medium-sized companies use logos that contain graphic elements evoking France (for example, a stylized Eiffel Tower) more freely than larger companies with an international character, which are often limited to displaying only a few elements such as the name of the city under the brand name (Rebufet et al., 2015). From this third theme it emerges that COO communication represents a valid item in the marketing strategies not only of large multinational companies, but also of small companies that want to open up paths in international markets.

4. Conclusions

This study aims to provide a comprehensive view regarding the impact of COO in the cosmetics industry in relation to products from different countries and cultural contexts through a systematic literature review. We can see that it is a topic not very studied, but for our analysis twenty studies were collected and classified into three themes: COO and purchase behavior related to cosmetic products (Theme A), COO and country perception in relation to cosmetic products (Theme B), COO and marketing strategies for cosmetics companies(Theme C).

Among the main results, it emerges that COO has a higher value when attributed to cosmetic products with higher emotional value, such as perfumes (Kalicharan, 2014; Montanari et al., 2018; Cheah et al., 2020), and a lower value for cosmetic products with lower emotional value, such as shampoo (Zbib et al., 2010). Furthermore, we can see that cosmetic products from France and Korea have great appeal in many cultural contexts and that in some cultures patriotism often leads consumers to prefer products from their own country (as in Poland).

This means that the COO is linked to the culture of a people, its history and its traditions that affect the purchasing behaviour of consumers. As a matter of fact, consumers choose the products they want both on the basis of the product's characteristics, such as quality and price, and on the basis of its symbolic value. The former is the case of Polish consumers who base their purchases more on the perceived quality than on the origin of the product. However, the strong ethnocentrism belonging to their culture pushes them towards quality products made in their country (Huddleston et al., 2001).

The second is the case of Chinese and other East Asian consumers, who tend to prefer foreign products with a strong symbolic value, such as French brand cosmetics, in order to feel more integrated into society (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). It also emerges that COO communication is a viable marketing strategy for companies from countries with strong cosmetic traditions.

Since the results of this study show how culture influences consumption choices in relation to the origin of products, they are of value not only to scholars of Cross-Cultural Management and Marketing, but also to managers of cosmetics companieswho intend to use the country of origin and the image of the country to communicate the company brand. However, our review also has limitations. First, this study is limited to analyzing peer-reviewed journal articles in a preferential manner, with the exception of only one book chapter that is strongly aligned with other research criteria. In addition, all selected studies were in English.

Therefore, it would be interesting for other authors to conduct a review including other studies, for example submitted to conferences and written in languages other than English. However, although our study is based on a replicable research protocol it is appropriate for other researchers to evaluate a random sample of the coded articles to verify their validity (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Despite these limitations, the originality of this study fills a gap in the literature related to COO and the cosmetics industry by also analyzing the phenomenon integrating a cross cultural perspective. In addition, our study points to multiple opportunities for future research without claiming to be exhaustive. Regarding theme A, for further future studies it would be interesting to study the influence of patriotism in other cultural contexts such as Italy (or other Western European countries) and also how the 'Made in' influences the purchasing process of foreign consumers in relation to cosmetic products.

Further quantitative studies could consider the frequency and willingness to purchase products from one's home country by measuring patriotism through specific variables and questionnaires (Schatz et al., 1999; Davidov, 2009). In this way, patriotism could be used as a mediator between the perception of COO and the actual purchase of products by the end consumer.

On the other hand, with regard to theme B, it would be interesting to discover how, contrary to the studies examined, French consumers perceive cosmetic products from other countries. In this case, both qualitative studies could help to explore the phenomenon more,

and quantitative studies could confirm hypotheses by using the COO of cosmetic products as a moderator or mediator for some psychological variables, such as materialism (Richins & Dawson, 1992; Griffin et al., 2004; Kilbourne et al., 2005) and face (Ho, 1976; Hwang, 1987; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Liao & Wang, 2009). Studies of this kind could play on the role of the perception of a given country (such as France for its elegance and Italy for its 'Italian style') plays when considering a given product category, cosmetics in our case, and purchase choices.

Moreover, regarding theme C, it would be interesting to conduct a qualitative study both for a Korean company and for SMEs in other countries where small entrepreneurship is strongly present, such as Italy. Furthermore, it would be interesting to conduct quantitative studies on samples of multiple companies to build theoretical models related to COO communication in different countries. These theoretical models could contain objective variables to explain different marketing strategies related to COO, such as storytelling and sales staff expertise in the process of communicating and selling products within stores.

Finally, further studies could investigate the misuse of the COO, as in the case of 'Italian Sounding' (Francioni & Albanesi, 2017) associated with cosmetic products. In this way, the negative effect it might have in the long term with respect to the perception of certain products in both richer and poorer countries or, simply in different cultural contexts could be assessed. In fact, studies of this kind could not only give further explanations to the ethical problems related to this unfair phenomenon, but also shed light on the cultural differences in different countries.

In addition, further studies could address the emotional component related to COO (Septianto et al., 2020) by analyzing the moderating effect of COO in situations where consumer purchasing behaviour is analyzed with reference to cosmetics from high and low appeal countries. Finally, from a practical point of view, this study also offers important insights for managers of cosmetics companieswho want to develop international trade by using the COO as a tool on which to base a communication strategy, both on the side of promotion and sales in their physical stores. In this vein, an integrated marketing strategy could be useful to effectively communicate the COO through symbols that remind the culture of the specific country. Nevertheless, it is advisable to communicate the elements of the COO in a dynamic and proactive way, in line with the demands of new markets.

Very often, companies tend to use COO-related artifacts in a passive manner, for example by using 'made in' lettering and images such as the flag. Although these elements have the ability to inform about the origin of the product, they have low informational power towards customers in young and dynamic markets (Checchinato et al., 2013). For companies engaged in selling products in new foreign markets that want to leverage the COO, it is important to actively explain the value and characteristics of their country. In this sense, when basing communication on the COO, brand image should not be neglected, but a type of communication capable of integrating both aspects should be implemented. In addition, the tool of storytelling could help to proactively communicate the value of the COO by linking it to products and the brand.

Furthermore, it would be important to leverage the store windows, the internal environment of the stores and the sales staff, which play an important role in attracting consumers to come in and be accompanied in their shopping experience. In this sense, greater involvement of sales staff in telling the product story based on the COO's assurances and, at the same time, the brand would help to entertain the customer and positively

influence the buying behaviour. Moreover, the tool of storytelling could help to proactively communicate the value of the COO by linking it to products and the brand. Furthermore, it would be important to leverage the store windows, the internal environment of the stores and the sales staff, which play an important role in attracting consumers to come in and be accompanied in their shopping experience. In this sense, greater involvement of sales staff in telling the product story based on the COO's assurances and, at the same time, the brand would help to entertain the customer and positively influence his or her buying behaviour.

In light of the above and further linking practice with theory, future studies could use high-appeal cosmetic stores, such as those selling French products, in various cultural contexts (e.g., Asian or European) as a research sample. In doing so, they could further confirm the best practices discussed in this paper and enrich the literature with new evidence.

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FACTORS AFFECTING COUPLES' INTERACTIONS DURING COVID-19 IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

COVID-19 has made a substantial and irreversible impact on almost all areas of countries around the world and Sri Lanka is no exception. With the restrictions vested upon public as a result of COVID-19 disease, more and more couples claim to have a decrease in their relationship happiness and interaction. Further research in this would ensure to reduce the damage the pandemic would have on couples. Hence, the objectives of this study were to investigate motivational factors affecting couples' interactions, to investigate stress factors affecting couples' interactions, to investigate the level of couples' interactions, to investigate resources available for spouses and to analyse whether resource availability, moderates the relationship between motivational factors/stressors and the level of couples' interactions. Data was collected from over 300 participants of a convenience sample using an online survey. The couples were adults of 25 years or older, residing in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Statistical analysis was performed to identify moderator effect of resource availability on the level of couples' interactions. In conclusion the study emphasised that motivational factors such as family approval and social prestige and stressors such as financial strain and occupational status contribute towards the interaction of couples and they are moderated by resources available to these couples such as cultural beliefs and availability of family support respectively. The study concludes with recommendations of ways to overcome the issues brought upon by COVID-19 on couples' interaction.

Keywords: Interaction of Spouses; Motivation Factors; Stressors; Covid-19; Sri Lanka.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 or the Corona Virus disease has become one of the most dangerous pandemics in the century causing a vast amount of deaths globally. Many countries are fighting the disease with active vaccine programs and, Sri Lanka has been named as one of the most efficient countries in fighting COVID-19 with the efficient vaccination program. Even with the lengthy lockdown periods enforced by the Sri Lankan government, the virus has become more dangerous with evolving variants of the COVID-19 being discovered regularly.

The impact the pandemic and the lockdown has brought upon couples cannot be ignored as the disruption of daily activities and the isolation at home causes many couples to interact differently to their normal behaviors. At the beginning of the pandemic all parties were concerned mainly of battling the disease and reducing death rates where no consideration was given for harmony at home fronts or couple interactions.

With couples being isolated for lengthy periods of times due to the lockdowns and working from home arrangements, the daily interactions start requiring further attention. It is indeed important to understand the factors that motivate positive interactions between couples and the negative stressors which repudiate their interactions in order to understand the level of interaction and their mental well-being. According to Pietromonac and Overall (2020, p.3) "external stressors related to the pandemic will likely increase interpersonal conflict within relationships, the extent of which may be moderated by pre-existing relationship quality and satisfaction; characteristics; and vulnerabilities". Many couples depend upon each other for mental support during the pandemic as mortalities and financial difficulties are caused by COVID-19. Many stressors such as uncertainties, occupational threats, duties arising from external family members and children would create a negative impact on the level couples interact with each other. Similarly having community and family approval with social prestige and cultural beliefs would motivate couples to interact positively with each other. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the factors that motivate and cause stressors for the level of interaction among Sri Lankan couples during the COVID-19 lockdown. With the intention of investigating that, the below objectives were derived.

2. Objectives

- To investigate motivational factors affecting couples' interactions.
- To investigate stress factors affecting couples' interactions.
- To investigate the level of couples' interactions.
- To investigate resources available for spouses.
- To analyze whether resource availability, moderates the relationship between motivational factors/stressors and the level of couples' interactions.

This article draws from relevant literature across similar topics to identify how the motivational factors and stress factors affect couples' interactions, the various resources available for these spouses and the way these recourses moderate the interaction between the couples. The conceptual framework was created based up on models of various human behavior and methods these families would function.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Level of Couples' Interaction

With the objective of determining the factors that affect the interactions of couples, this literature review will inspect previous studies that have been conducted on this area. Couples interaction determines the success of their marriage and the satisfaction in the relationship. Khalatbari et.al (2013) identifies marital satisfaction found through couple's interaction as a key factor in determining the assessing happiness and stability in a successful marriage". Zainah et.al (2012) speaks of how the interaction of couples can be beneficial and detrimental to the success of a marriage. Farahmand et al (2014) points out that the level of interaction between couples contribute to the quality of their relationship. Copen et. al. (2012) mentions that to keep a stable marriage and a solid relationship couples must identify factors that bring significant marital satisfaction when they interact. Many studies have conducted on marriage satisfaction on couples but, the effect of Covid-19 has on the level of interaction among couples have not been identified, especially for Asian or Sri Lankan couples.

Covid-19 has made a significant impact on all couples irrespective of their geographical where about and, the level they interact will determine the satisfaction and future of their relationship. During a crisis environment such as the current pandemic, conflicts among couples will be inevitable. Many researchers have agreed that couples with harmonious interaction between each other demonstrate marital success. (Ellison, Burdette, Wilcox, & 2010; Mahoney, 2010). Thus, couples' interactions should bring a meaning of life to cultivate matrimonial harmony (Mohammad, 2010).

In the following sections variables of motivational factors, stress factors and resources available for spouses are reviewed in relation to the interaction of couples and propose our hypotheses of the study.

The conceptual model developed for the study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 − Conceptual model
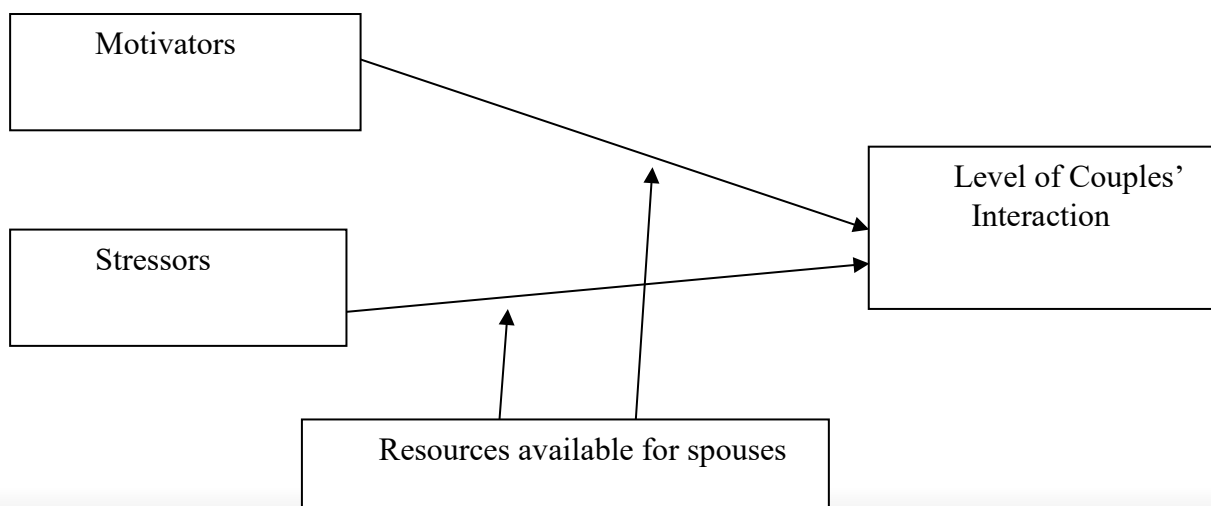
3.2 Motivational Factors

Billingsley et al. (2005, p. 7), identified nine themes "love, sex, relationship permanence, compatibility in personality, common interests, decision-making, intimacy, communication, and religion" that are motivators of couples' interaction which brings marital satisfaction. According to Hawkins (1968, p.2) "marital satisfaction is a sense of happiness, satisfaction, and joy experienced by the husband or wife when they consider all aspects of their marriage".

Kamaly et. al. (2014) states that couples' interaction is motivated by physical and psychological requirements and, properly motivated interaction will lead to satisfactory relationships. Rahmani (2011) states that factors such as interpersonal, psychological, interaction, spiritual-religious, and sexual factors also motivate couples' interaction.

According to Zainah et. al (2012) a key motivational factor on couples' interaction can be seen as demographic factor which includes couple's education, age of marriage age, age gap between the couple, length of marriage. Zanjani et.al (2014) adds more to this list with factors such as the economic situation of the couple, employability of the couple and the number of children.

When the age is considered it was identified by Yazdanpanah et.al (2015) that older the couple is, the more motivated they are to interact with each other compared to younger couples who resented the isolation and social distancing. Sayadpour (2005) has also pointed out how having a good income, possessing a good education and satisfied employment can motivate couples to interact more positively. Karimi et.al. (2010) brings out the importance of having good interpersonal connections and understanding among couples. Maghsoodi et. Al (2011) tallies it with psychological attributes such as forgiveness and support for each other which he claims as motivators for couples' interactions.

Pourmarzi et.al (2013) further reiterates how motivational factors affect couples' interactions and identifies them as good listening skills, better conflict resolving abilities and proper discussion methods. Abbaszadeh et.al. (2011) has proved that having common religious beliefs and cultural factors motivate couples' interactions more. Negligence in sexual desires has caused many rifts among couples' interactions and according to Sahabi et. al. (2012) having a good sexual relationship is a positive motivational factor for couples' interaction.4

Based on the above reviewed literature, it is hypothesized:

H1: *Motivational Factors influence couples' interaction*.

3.3 Stress Factors

Cohan et al., (2009, p.514) states that "During a flu outbreak, about 10–30% of the general public reported major fears of contracting the disease". It is a well-known fact that COVID-19 has brought numerous stressors on couples' interaction which has a negative effect on their relationships. American Psychological Association (2020) has done a recent study on the stressors caused by COVID-19 pandemic and they claim that "many individuals in the United States are experiencing heightened levels of stress as a result of the pandemic". Such stressors seem to affect the interaction of couples all around the world. "COVID-19 type of pandemic related stressors on couples makes it hard to know which impacts may

be time limited and which will be longer term" (Karney et al., 2005, p.27). According to Neff & Karney (2004, p. 143) "external stressors can spill over to affect the quality of couples' interactions and perceptions of the relationship and partner". In these environments' partners may feel isolated in their relationship with the minimal interaction taking place between them. One of the key stress factors many couples faced with COVID-19 pandemic was the fear of your loved ones getting infected or worse, their death. Another cause for the stress among couples was the uncertainty of the end of the pandemic. A study by De Sousa et al., (2013) has found that couples showed low interaction when there is gender preference in children expressed by either of the spouses. Many couples claimed it to cause stress and also claimed to interact less when alcohol abuse exists in the household which again was a stress causing factor. According to Khezri et al., (2020) lack of support from partners act as a stressor which negates the interaction between couples especially during the lockdown period of COVID-19. It is certainly worthwhile to identify the stressors that affect the interaction of couples during the COVID-19 to identify how they would react in a similar scenario in future compared to how they normally interact.

Based on the above reviewed literature, it is hypothesized:

H2: *Stress factors influences couples' interactions*.

3.4 Resources available for spouses

Government lockdowns which took place as a COVID-19 control measure brought no choice for couples but to stay at home for lengthy periods of time. Most daily routines were disrupted and everyone except essential workers had to work from home. If a family member is diagnosed with the COVID-19, the situation became stressful with strict medical, quarantine and health guidelines to follow. This was a significant disruption to the daily routine of families all around the world. Doom & Cicchetti, (2018, p.1446) states that "the extent to which this severe adversity will impact couples will largely depend on other related factors in their lives". These other related factors can be identified as various resources that are available for the couples when they are interacting during the COVID-19. Some resources may motivate their interaction while other resources would increase stress factors.

A significant resource that motivates couples' interaction during COVID-19 can be identified as cultural beliefs the couple hold. With the isolation taking place with COVID-19 lockdown many couples have given more importance to their cultural beliefs and made time for interaction with each other as a couple and a family. The religious and cultural values have contributed to this motivation for these couples to interact more. Fraenkel & Cho (2020, p.859) states that "it has also provided a chance for families to reconsider the ratio of togetherness and autonomy going forward". Sri Lankan culture encourages couples to always stand by each other through sickness and health. This cultural belief extends to all the relatives of the other spouse too. With the COVID-19 infections and the threat of death couples are more and more motivated to interact with each other to resolve these health and social issues arising. With the new normal way of living COVID-19 pandemic has brought, many families have the children studying at home using online methods while parents work from home. The new routines have created more interaction among couples and the cultural beliefs of supporting the children and spouse plays a major role in motivating these interactions. Fraenkel (2019) points out the importance of cultural values

couples hold which motivates the level of their interaction, especially during a time like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Walsh (2009) has mentioned how the cultural values held by a person may affect the interaction of their spouse positively.

Based on the above reviewed literature, it is hypothesized:

H3*: Resources available for spouses moderates the relationship between motivational factors and the couples' interactions.*

Many couples find that one of the reasons that influence stressors in their interactions can be seen as the family support they receive. Lockdowns taking place in the country with travel sanctions within districts cause close relatives to stay away from couples. As a result, the normal support that was extended may not be provided. Working from home while taking care of the children would be an added burden for most couples and family support would have been an excellent resource to cope with this. Lack of such support would certainly increase the stress and as a result mitigate the interactions between the couple.

In a research done on Asian couples by Ho (1987) identified that one of the main causes of stress among couples was having unnecessary influence from relatives. Even though the extended family considered it as offering support, the couples claimed it as a stress factor which, influence their own interaction and harmony. Thus, not having family support may also negate the stressors for some couples during COVID-19. In most Asian countries including Sri Lanka women are employed and frequently child care is provided by the extended family, especially the mother-in-law (Freedman et al., 1994). The conflicts with regards to the upbringing of children between the extended family and couples cause stress which leads to their distance from each other (Chien, 1996). Hence the unavailability of such family supports and minding the child bearing by the couple themselves might reduce the stress factor and encourage more interaction among couples during COVID-19 lockdown.

Based on the above reviewed literature, it is hypothesised:

H4*: Resources available for spouses moderates the relationship between stress factors and the couples' interactions.*

With the above literature review, it can be seen that the resources available for couples that affect their interactions on motivational factors and stressors during COVID-19 includes family resources and cultural beliefs.

4. Method

As per the discussion done above many motivational factors and stress factors affect the couples' interaction during COVID-19 pandemic and, resources such as cultural beliefs and family support play a significant role in affecting those factors.

4.1 Measures

To measure the Motivational factors which affect couples' interaction, a 03-item measure was used, which can be seen in Appendix 1. These measures were taken using the questionnaire by Deguglielmo (1973), named 'The Inventory of Marital Adjustment: The Development of An Instrument for Measuring Financial Adjustment, Style of Life and Interpersonal Relationships'. These items were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from always (1) to never (5).

To measure the Stress factors which affect couples' interaction, 09-item measure was used, which is shown in Appendix 2. Five (05) of these measures were taken using the questionnaire by Hansen (1978), named 'Marital adjustment, idealization, and conventionalization'. Four (04) of the measures were from a questionnaire created by the author. These items are on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from always-agree (4) to disagree frequently (1).

To measure the Resources available for spouses, 11-item measure was used, which are shown in Appendix 3. These measures were taken using the questionnaire by Deguglielmo (1973), named 'The Development of an Instrument for Measuring Financial Adjustment'. These items were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from always (1) to never (5).

To measure the level of interaction of couples, 14-item measure was used, which are shown in Appendix 4. These measures were taken using the questionnaire by Haynes (1992), named 'The Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire for Older Persons, Psychological Assessment'. These items were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from always (1) to never (5).

4.2 Population and sample

The total population of Sri Lanka is 21.41 million people and out of which 43% falls in to the ages 25-54 years old and 54-60 years old of the population is 6% (worldpopulationreview.com 14/08/21). Taking that into account the total number of 25-60 years old in Sri Lanka is 10 million. The total population in the Western Province is 1.9 million and the total 25-60 years old adds up to 959,131. Obtaining a 95% confidence level with only a 5% chance of the sample results differing from the true population average, confidence interval of the margin of error is calculated by $1/\sqrt{N}$. Here N is considered as the number of participants or sample size (Niles, 2006). Therefore, the survey done with 300 participants justifies the total population of the study.

4.3 Participants

The 301 participants were adult males and females of age 25-60 residing in the Western Province. The participants took 26 minutes on average to finish the survey questionnaire. English, which is one of the national languages of Sri Lanka, was used in the survey questionnaire. Initial introduction was given to the respondents and an in-depth explanation was followed prior to them taking the survey. All respondent participated voluntarily and their identity was kept anonymous.

4.4 Method of data collection

The duration of the survey collection was 12th March to 12th June 2021. This was a period Sri Lankan government had imposed a partial lockdown. During this period travel restrictions were in place and majority worked form home. Schools and Universities were fully closed and children of all ages were restricted to home. Questionnaire was uploaded on google forms and the 25-60-year-old adult respondents were identified. Their consent was obtained from an initial email and the link to the google form was shared afterwards.

4.5 Method of data analysis

Validity and reliability of the measures were evaluated. Principal component factor analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Factor analysis yielded one factor each for motivators and stressors. Factor analysis yielded two factors for resources available for spouses; these were named as cultural beliefs and family resources. Factor analysis yielded one factor for couples' interactions. The fit measures were given in Table 1. Results of these factor analysis were shown in Appendix 1 to 4. Moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS program developed by Hayes (2013). Indirect effects were assessed based on 5,000 bootstrapped samples using bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the size and significance of the effects.

Table 1 − Fit measures

	Cronbach's alpha	Explained variation	Eigenvalue	AVE	Construct reliability
Motivators	.869	79.317	2.379	.793	.920
Stressors	.958	74.735	6.726	.748	.964
Couples' interactions	.973	77.299	9.276	.773	.976
Resources available for spouses:	.931	77.921	-	-	-
Family resources	.947	47.619	6.563	2.008	.946
Cultural pressure	.914	30.303	.714	.749	.923

5. Results

Since resources available for spouses yielded two factors, we analyzed four separate models. The results of these models are as follows.

Results relating to motivators and couples' interactions moderated by family resources are shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, the effect of motivators (IV) on couples' interactions is not significant (p > .05). The effect of family resources (M) on couples' interactions is significant (B = -.7997, p < .001). The effect of interaction on couples' level of interactions is also significant (B = .1573, p < .01). Relationships between motivators (IV) and couples' interactions are significant for all low (b = .2752, p < .05), average (b = .3815, p < .001), and high (b = .4879, p < .001) values of family resources (M). Overall,

family resources (M) moderates the relationship between motivators (IV) and couples' interactions. Figure 2 shows this relationship figuratively.

Table 2 − Motivators and couples' interactions moderated by family resources

	Couple's interactions (DV) B(SE)		
Motivators (IV)	-.0821 (.2036)		
Family resources (M)	-.7997 (.1749)***		
Interaction (IVxM)	.1573 (.0511)**		
R^2	.0785		
F (df1, df2)	8.4051 (3,295)***		
ΔR^2	.0295		
ΔF(df1, df2)	9.4803 (1,295)**		
Conditional effects:			
	-SD	Mean	+SD
Family resources (M)	2.2714	2.9479	3.6244
Effect (*t*)	.2752 (2.2097)*	.3815 (3.3493)***	.4879 (4.3064)***

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; standard errors = SE. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Figure 2 − Moderation Graph- motivators and couples' interactions moderated by family resources
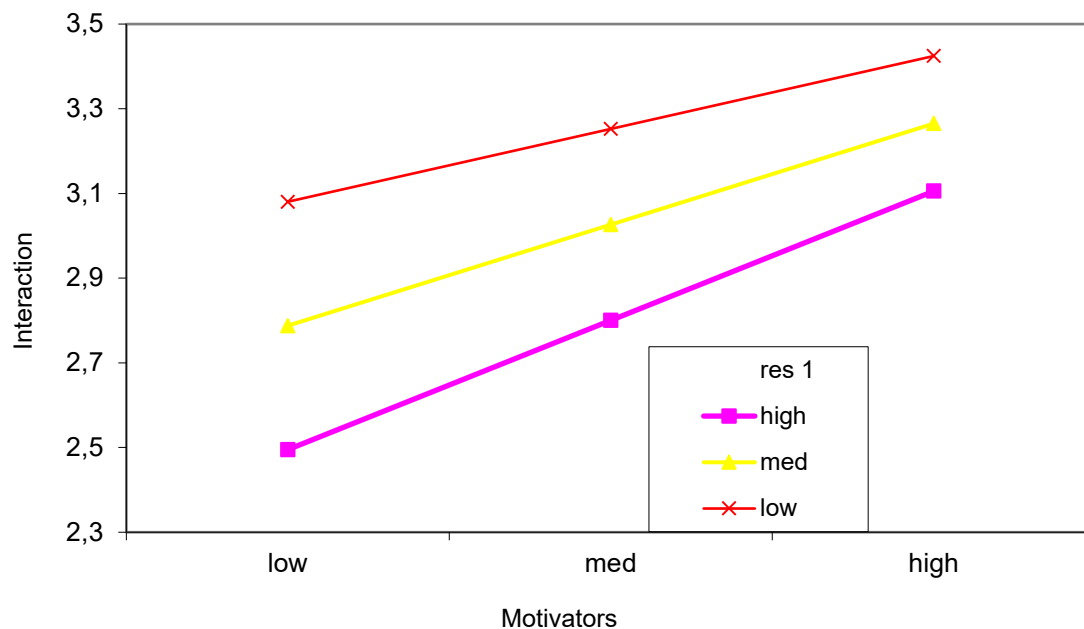
Analysis showed that motivators and couples' interactions are not moderated by culture pressure. Further, the results showed that stressors and couples' interactions are not moderated by family resources. Results relating to stressors and couples' interactions

moderated by culture pressure are shown in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, the effect of Stressors (IV) on couples' interactions is not significant ($p > .05$). The effect of culture pressure (M) on couples' interactions is significant (B = -.4129, $p < .05$). The effect of interaction on couples' level of interactions is also significant (B = .1202, $p < .05$). Relationships between Stressors (IV) and couples' interactions are significant for all low ($b = .4823$, $p < .001$), average ($b = .5600$, $p < .001$), and high ($b = .6378$, $p < .001$) values of culture pressure (M). Overall, culture pressure (M) moderates the relationship between stressors (IV) and couples' interactions. Figure 3 shows this relationship figuratively.

Table 3 − Stressors and couples' interactions moderated by culture pressure

	Couples' Interactions (DV) B(SE)		
Stressors (IV)	.1852 (.1793)		
Culture pressure (M)	-.4129 (.1805)*		
Interaction (IVxM)	.1202 (.0486)*		
R^2	.2490		
F (df1, df2)	32.7061 (3, 295)***		
ΔR^2	.0155		
ΔF(df1, df2)	6.1050 (1, 295)*		
Conditional effects:			
	-SD	Mean	+SD
Culture pressure (M)	2.4717	3.1186	3.7655
Effect (*t*)	.4823 (5.0442)***	.5600 (6.3033)***	.6378 (6.8669)***

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; standard errors = SE. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. *$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Figure 3 − Moderation Graph- stressors and couples' interactions moderated by culture pressure
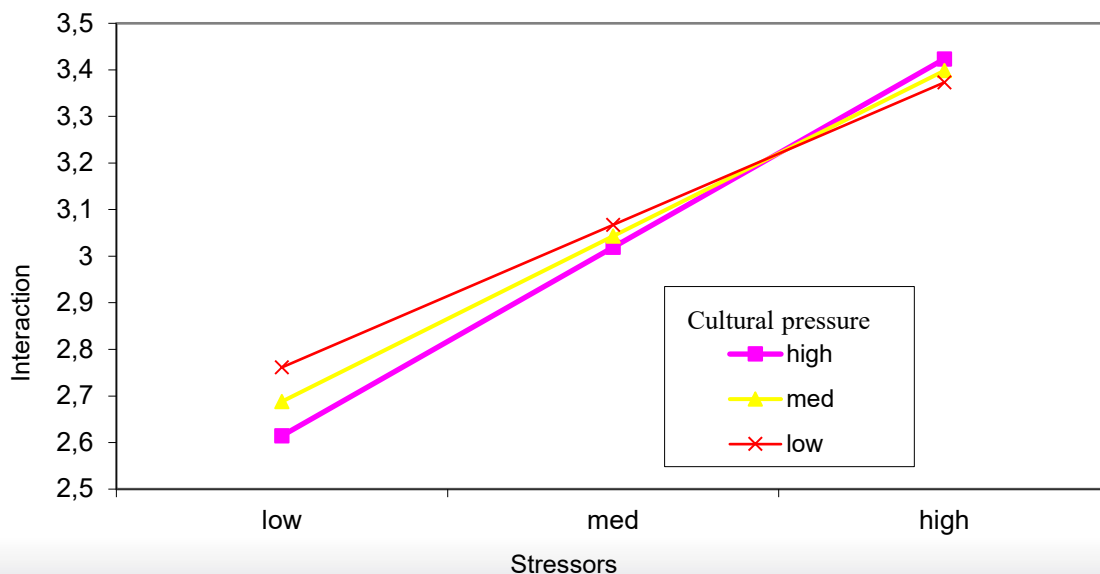
6. Discussion of Results

This research examined how motivational factors and stressors affect couples' interaction during the lockdown periods which took place in Sri Lanka due to COVID-19 pandemic. The results observed how the resources available for couples such as family support and their cultural beliefs moderated the interaction. The findings of the research and these results will be a valuable addition to the literature on future pandemic studies. According to a study on Rahmani et.al (2011) motivational factors which influenced couples' interaction included their personality factors such as understanding of each other and maturity, economic factors as well as compatibility factors such as love and sexual fulfilment. In the current research it was reaffirmed when the couples agreed that the factors which motivate their interaction included demographic factors, personal factors, psychological factors and sexual factors. In this research it was identified that demographic factors is an important influencer in motivating couples interaction. A study done by Wagheiy et.al (2009) on couples reaffirms this in a similar manner. The findings of this study reaffirm a study of Abbaszadeh et.al (2008) where it is identified how couples are motivated to interact with each other when factors such as communication and intimacy are present.

A study done by Holt-Lunstad et al. (2020) identifies the stressors which cause a rift in couples' interaction. Sterle et.al. (2018) has also identified how stressors can affect couples' interaction. The findings of this research also identified such stressors which limit couples' interaction which includes uncertainty, fear of your loved ones getting infected and not knowing the end result of the pandemic.

The research reaffirmed the findings of Mikulincer & Shaver (2007) and Pietromonaco & Overall (2020) which prove that cultural beliefs held by couples motivate their interaction and strengthen it during pandemic scenarios. The research found how the cultural beliefs motivated the couples' interaction and the similar findings were seen in a study done by Mortazavi et.al (2014). According to that study the cultural beliefs included the belief of forgiving and forgetting, understanding each other and attachment held for the societal recognition. This was similar to the factors expressed by the research participants. A study done by Wilson (2011) identified how couples' interaction level depends up on support factors extended by the cultural beliefs. Another study by Ritu et.al (2012) affirmed that cultural support as well as, family support plays two major roles in couples' interaction.

A large portion of the participants confirmed that not having family support caused stressors in their interaction during COVID-19. The findings of Bodenmann (2005) and Falconier et al. (2015) reaffirms that couples with larger family support systems are more comfortable in coping with stressful situations. A similar study done by Balzarini et al., (2020) on stressors during COVID-19 illness verifies that stressors increase with the lack of family support. In this research it was established that family support will play a huge role in minimizing stressors and if not available it increases the stressors. Thus, this research outcome affirms that the motivational factors and stressors which affect a couples' interaction are moderated by cultural beliefs and family support.

7. Conclusion

COVID-19 has added unforgettable memories and experiences which will be remembered throughout the lifetime of everyone who went through the pandemic. Apart from the global

crisis it brought up on economies and many industries the impact caused on couples or marital spouses is certainly not insignificant. The research was conducted on married couples in Sri Lanka who were locked down for periods of time due to government regulations during COVID-19 outbreak. The main objectives of the research include investigating motivational factors and stress factors affecting a couples interactions, investigating the resources available for spouses and analyzing whether such resources such as cultural beliefs and family support, would moderate the relationship between motivational factors/stressors and the level of couples' interactions. A conceptual model was developed and variables such as motivational factors, stressors and resources available for spouses were reviewed in relation to the couples' interaction.

The data found in the research further identified that factors such as education, age of marriage, length of marriage, economic situation, employability, number of children, good income, good listening skills, better conflict resolving abilities and good sexual relationship act as motivational factors in the level of couples' interaction. Similarly, stressors such as fear of your loved ones getting infected or their death, uncertainty of the end of the pandemic, lack of support from partner also play a role in affecting the level of couples' interaction during COVID-19. They were further affirmed in comparison to the literature review.

With the analysis of literature review it was identified that the resources available for couples' interaction that affect their motivational factors and stressors during COVID-19 includes cultural beliefs and family support. Four hypotheses were established which were H1: Motivational Factors influence the couples' interaction, H2: Stress factors influences the couples' interactions, H3: Resources available for spouses moderates the relationship between motivational factors and the couples' interactions and H4: Resources available for spouses moderates the relationship between stress factors and the couples' interactions.

The data collection was conducted by an online survey from over 300 participants. The questionnaire collected data from adults of the age 25 – 60 residing in the Western Province. Factor analysis yielded one factor each for motivators and stressors. Factor analysis yielded two factors for resources available for spouses; these were named as cultural beliefs and family resources. Factor analysis yielded one factor for couples' interactions. Results relating to the motivational factors and couples' interaction moderated by cultural beliefs conclude that cultural belies moderates, the relationship between motivational factors and level of couples' interaction. Results relating to the stressors and couples' interaction moderated by family support conclude that support extended by families moderate, the relationship between stress factors and level of couples' interaction.

COVID-19 has brought various unknowns to the lives of people. Identifying the issues faced by marital couples during the pandemic and understanding factors that influence their level of interaction during an extreme scenario like the pandemic would most certainly be beneficial for studies on couples and their behaviors as well as for making recommendations for future.

8. Recommendations

This study recommends that future research focuses on policy decisions which affect couples that can be implemented or amended during extensive lockdown periods. Policies which restrict families being together and hold them apart for lengthy periods of time

should have more empathetic considerations. Travel restrictions imposed by locally and internationally halt, interactions between couples who live apart. The effects of relationships and couples' interactions should be given due consideration by future policy makers.

Many interactions of couples require actual presence of the other person and not simple virtual interactions. As the study identified, having extended family support affects the stressors of couples' interaction. Thus, modes of communication must be found for families to extend their support for these couples. Couples' who are older and geographically isolated require more such family support in order to engage with their interactions.

This study has outlined how COVID-19 has impacted couples' interactions and the motivational factors and stressors that contribute to it. Many areas of Sri Lanka including the economy, education and health sector has suffered a significant damage due to the pandemic but identifying the impact on relationships and behaviors of couples may assist in future rectifications. This can be seen as an opportunity to educate couples on behaviors to adopt and habits to refrain from, if and when a similar crisis takes place.

This study makes the following recommendations to couples with regards to couples' interaction during COVID-19.

- Make yourself a priority. Before taking care of your spouse and children one must ensure the safety, health and well-being of ones' self. This includes physical as well as mental wellness.
- Arrange an individual working space. Even if both are working, couples must try to find their own working area at home which is not disturbed with noises and other distractions.
- Make plans for the household chores. Divide and share the work between the couple.
- Be grateful for what you have and appreciate each other and the things you are blessed with.
- Be cheerful and happy. Encourage and practice humor and compassion with each other.
- Communicate effectively. Whether it is an issue or a simple chore, good interaction includes clear communication without having to guess what other person thinks.
- Keep in touch with the rest of the world. Isolation physically should not stop from being in touch virtually with friends and families which will encourage remaining sociable.
- Minimize social media. Being virtually connected to the world should have limits and being addicted to social media platforms or games should be avoided.
- Find together time. Even during watching television or listening to radio, make time for couple interaction. Daily allocate a time for the talking and fun.
- Maintain a routine. Even during lockdown, the time to wake up and going to bed should be consistent and following a routine time table will ease daily duties and chores.
- Make future plans. Giving priority to the family and relationship and discussing about the future will encourage better interaction.
- Start new hobbies. Finding time to allocate for personal growth and leisure activities would benefit couples.

– Schedule house maintenance. Gardening, painting, repairing the house together will be an excellent way for couples to unite during lockdown.

9. Limitations and Future Research

As in all researches this study has its' limitations too. The participants were mainly females even if the researches tried to obtain equal participation. Language was another limitation as the survey was limited to adults who are versatile in English with online facility. This survey was carried out during a partial lockdown period. Thus, many took part in the survey while eagerly waiting for the country to open up. Also the sample can be seen limited in representing every married couple in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, future research can be conducted with a larger and diverse sample. The same sample and findings can be used for a Qualitative research as well. Future researchers are encouraged to identify the policies that affected the couples in their interactions due to COVID-19. More studies can be done to find the ways the couples overcame the stressors and how they increased their motivational factors to assist in their interactions.

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LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTRE (FMC), IDI-ABA, ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of leadership styles on employees' performance in the Federal Medical Centre, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. It specifically examined the effect of leadership styles - transformational, transactional and democratic dimensions of leadership styles on employees' performance. A survey research design was used, with one thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven (1,727) medical staff from twenty-nine (29) departments making up the study's population. A sample size of three hundred and fourteen (314) was estimated and selected via a convenient sampling technique. The information was gathered from the respondents using a structured questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and covariance base structural equation modelling (CB-SEM). The findings showed that transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership styles all had a significant impact on employee performance, according to the findings.

1. Introduction

Employee performance is defined as how effectively and efficiently a person accomplishes assignments and the attitude with which the employee completes the tasks assigned (Sila, 2014). The technique, outcome, application, and accomplishments of an individual determine job performance (Gridwichai, Kulwanich, Piromkam, & Kwanmuangvanich, 2020). Ali, Elmi and Mohammed (2013) keep in mind that there are various factors (adequate remuneration of employees, motivation, conducive working environment, employee benefit, etc.) that may influence employee's performance in an organisation. Furthermore, studies have indicated that leadership styles, which refer to the leadership styles employed by the leader and the impact they have on the performance level of the organisation's workforce, are at the top of the list of factors influencing employee performance (Yasir, Imran, Irshad, Mohamad, & Khan, 2016).

Leadership is characterised as a method through which leaders can influence their subordinates' behaviour in order to attain corporate goals. (Reid & Dold, 2016). It is an essential aspect in the formulation and realisation of organisational goal (Balemlay, 2020). Rathore, Abdul Khaliq and Aslam (2017) opined that organisations are expected to have adequate knowledge of the leadership styles that can play crucial roles in increasing employee performance. As a result, there is little doubt that the character of an organisation's labour force, as well as its useful ability to lead this labor force toward the achievement of the organization's objectives, is critical to its success in both organizational management and business operations (Von Krogh, Nonaka, & Rechsteiner, 2012).

Deribe (2016) defines three types of leadership: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership, according to Warrilow (2012), is "leadership that promotes positive change for followers by looking out for one another's best interests and acting in the best interests of the group." Organizational management is another name for transactional leadership, which focuses on supervisory, organizational and group performance responsibilities (Moses, 2018). It can be defined as a leadership style that uses rewards and sanctions to persuade followers to obey orders (Adeniji et al., 2020). When managers use the laissez-faire leadership style, sometimes known as the "hands-off" style, they give employees little or no direction (Gray & Williams, 2012). Laissez-faire leadership, according to Gopal and Chowdhury (2014), is a distinct form of leadership in which people are totally accountable for setting their own goals, making decisions, and resolving problems.

Individual and organizational performance can be steered in the proper direction by using the right leadership style (Kanwal, Lodhi, & Kashif, 2019). Beneficial leadership styles result in positive work outcomes, whereas negative/dark leadership styles endanger an organization's growth and existence (Drescher & Drescher, 2017). The leadership styles adopted by leaders to influence their followers are regarded to have a positive or negative impact on work results (i.e., employees in a workplace) (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). As a result, having the right kind of leaders in place to enhance employee performance, efficiency, and productivity is highly encouraged in the workplace (Mussolino & Calabr, 2014).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The inability of health managers managing the health sector to improve health worker morale and institute job performance are not unrelated to Nigeria's awful health conditions

(Durowade, Kadiri, Durowade, Sanni, Ojuolape, & Omokanye, 2020). A large proportion of healthcare managers in Nigeria display a lack of awareness of the morale-boosting demands of the health personnel under their supervision due to inadequate leadership skills (Onwe, Abah, & Nwokwu, 2015). This poor leadership style leads to work dissatisfaction and a lack of commitment to the Nigerian health system's objectives. However, Nigeria has emerged as a serious health issues exporter, with a large number of qualified health-care providers (doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals) leaving the country in search of lucrative opportunities. This reality has played a significant role in the Nigerian health indices' bleak outlook (Onwe et al., 2015).

Literature review undertaken on the subject matter revealed that research on leadership styles and employee performance in the healthcare sector are limited. However, the study by Abasilim (2019), Durowade et al. (2020), Girei (2015) and Onuegbu and Okeke (2018) adopted previous and validated survey scales. The shortcomings of their studies were that the authors violated the assumptions of the statistical analysis they used raising the question of whether their findings were accurate enough to make appropriate recommendations. As a result of these shortcomings, there is need to conduct more accurate studies that takes into consideration choosing the appropriate statistical approach based on the type of data collected to produce reliable results for prediction purposes. Therefore, the study examined the effect of leadership styles on employee job performance employing validated psychometric scales and appropriate statistical approach to ensure the results are reliable and generalizable.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to look into the effect of leadership style on employees' performance in the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State. However, the following specific objectives were pursued to achieve a broad goal:

(i) Examine the effect of transformational leadership style on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.
(ii) Investigate the effect of transactional leadership style on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.
(iii) Determine the effect of democratic leadership style on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta. Determine the impact

1.3 Research Questions

The effect of leadership styles on employees' performance raises several research questions. Therefore, the following research questions were used as a guide in achieving the objectives of the study:

(i) What significant effect does the transformational leadership style has on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta?
(ii) How does the transactional leadership style significantly affect employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta?
(iii) To what extent does the democratic leadership style significantly affect employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the general objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were developed, stated in the null forms, and were tested to achieve the specific objectives:

H_{01}: *The transformational leadership style does not have a significant positive effect on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.*

H_{02}: *The transactional leadership style does not have a significant positive effect on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.*

H_{03}: *The democratic leadership style does not have a significant positive effect on employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.*

2.   Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Leadership Style

Mullins (2000) defined leadership style as "the method a manager chooses to behave with employees and how leadership tasks are carried out." According to Scholl (2000), a leader's leadership style is the pattern of behavior he or she uses to control group members, make decisions on the mission plan, and ensure that group activity runs smoothly. According to Clark (2000), leadership style refers to how people are instructed, programme are implemented, and people are motivated. The collection of features, skills, talents, and behaviors that leaders utilize while dealing with their followers is referred to as leadership style (Jeremy, Melinde, & Ciller, 2011).

2.2 Types of Leadership Styles

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership
According to Williams, Ricciardi, and Blackbourn (2007), this form of leadership cultivates trust, loyalty, and respect among employees. This leadership style has several benefits for businesses, including sustaining employee commitment (Dunn, Dastoor, & Sims, 2012); increasing productivity (Eunyoung, 2007); and improving employee morale (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This type of leadership enables employees to go beyond what is expected of them (Andrews, Richard, Robinson, Celano, & Hallaron, 2012). It can also make organizational reforms permanent (Bass & Avolio, 1994). As a result, the literature on leadership management attests to the fact that this leadership style is potentially important for a company's success.

2.2.2 Transactional Leadership
Transactional leadership clarifies norms and standards to safeguard their employees' status quo. Leaders who employ this style also fix faults and provide careful monitoring to achieve success (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Transactional leadership is described as taking a proactive approach, favouring stability, avoiding mistakes, and focusing on quick gains (Forster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005). This leadership style helps followers take a preventative approach to their jobs (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Research shows that this leadership method may help develop a trust-based connection between leaders and followers (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). This leadership style encourages followers

to interact with one another, resulting in a successful relationship (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The influence of transactional leadership style on organizational success has been well documented (Bass et al., 2003). As a result, understanding the transactional leadership style is essential and cannot be overlooked in the present research.

2.2.3 Democratic Leadership

Democratic leaders frequently include other members of their team in decision-making, however they ultimately make a final decision. As a result, by incorporating others, it increases job satisfaction and helps people develop their talents. Employees would also have a sense of control over their own fate, motivating them to work hard for reasons other than monetary gain (Mullins, 1988). This method, on the other hand, may take a bit longer to complete, but it often yields better results. When quality takes precedence over time to market or productivity, democratic or participatory leadership is the best choice Mullins (1998).

2.3 The Concept of Employee Performance

According to Miebi (2014), employee performance is determined by the workers' desire and readiness to accomplish their jobs. Kunze, Boehm, and Bruch (2013) also stated that to achieve a level of performance, employers must ensure that employee tasks are completed on time to meet the organisation's target. Employers can help improve employee's performance by monitoring and keeping track of their work. Furthermore, an incentive system based on employee performance should be developed. The system's goal is to encourage people to work harder on their jobs. Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) highlight several aspects that contribute to high employee performance. They include a harmonious work environment, equipment availability, effective performance feedback, reward for high performance, standard operating procedures, adequate knowledge and skills, and an excellent attitude to work. According to Mmakwe and Ojiabo (2018), efficient performance depends on employees' talents, intellectual capability, and job resources. As a result, employers must offer proper working circumstances to ensure that employees' performance reaches the minimum criteria.

2.4 Theoretical Review

2.4.1 Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) is built on the presumption that a leader has a small group of followers charged with specific initiatives, leading to improved work satisfaction, higher morale, lower turnover, and more stable performance. LMX is described by Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) as the strength of a leader-member relationship. According to Dwertmann and Boehm (2016) who studied 1,253 participants, a disability may influence the quality of the leader-member dyadic connection. When compared to other theories, this theory stands out since it concentrates on the leader-follower relationship's exchange (Northouse, 2016). Previous strategies, on the other hand, focused on only one person in the connection.

2.5 Empirical Review

Wilson (2017) investigated leadership styles and staff job performance at several secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. To elicit data, the interview approach was combined with

the delivery of a questionnaire. Secondary data for the study was collected using the documentary approach. A total of 210 questionnaires with a total of 21 questions were distributed. Tables and percentage frequency were used to show and analyse the primary data. The secondary data was analysed using content analysis. The outcomes of the study revealed ten varied leadership styles used by other secondary school principals in the area, demonstrating that different leadership styles had a considerable impact on school personnel work performance. Furthermore, the findings revealed that principals struggled with leadership.

Abodunde, Ayo-Oyebiyi, and Unachukwu (2017) researched on managers' leadership styles and their influence on employee job satisfaction in insurance organisations. The sample included 135 workers from 15 Nigerian Stock Exchange-listed insurance businesses. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and an oral interview, and the data were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and linear regression. The results demonstrated that transformational leadership style (t = 3.388; *p-value* = 0.282) had a significant influence on employee job satisfaction at the 1% level, but transactional leadership style (t = 0.557; *p-value* = 0.048) had no such impact. As a result, the study revealed that transformational leadership style was a major predictor of work satisfaction among employees. Following that, the report recommended that Nigerian insurance businesses adopted a transformational leadership style in order to dramatically boost employee work satisfaction, citing a strong positive association.

Idowu (2020) studied the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in private colleges in the states of Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun in South-Western Nigeria. The researcher chose ten universities among 36 private institutions in South-West Nigeria using a purposive sample approach. Respondents were surveyed using the multifactor leadership questionnaire. To assess the influence of autocratic leadership style, the researcher devised their own set of questions. The information gathered were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis. The study's four hypotheses were investigated using linear regression and Pearson correlation. Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership were the three most frequent leadership styles that had a significant beneficial impact on employee performance, according to the findings of the study. The autocratic leadership style, on the other hand, had no discernible positive impact on staff performance.

At the Nigeria Institute for Trypanosomiasis Research in Kaduna State, Mamza, Abdullahi, and Usman (2020) investigated the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. Respondents were sampled using a structured questionnaire and the random sampling approach. The questionnaires were delivered to the respondents in a total of two hundred and thirty (230) copies. The partial least squares method SmartPLS version 2 was used to analyse data using a structural equation model. The findings revealed that leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire had a significant impact on employee performance. To increase employee performance in Kaduna State, it was proposed that the Nigeria Institute for Trypanosomiasis Research used transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Donoma, Tanzania, Matiko and Mbuti (2021) investigated leadership styles and staff engagement in government hospitals. A simple random sampling approach was used to select 120 employees from a total of 889. Data was collected using a standardized questionnaire and then analyzed using regression analysis. The findings found no link

between employee commitment and the following leadership styles: task-oriented, people-oriented, status-oriented, or laissez-faire.

In Ekiti State, Southwest Nigeria, Durowade, Kadiri, Durowade, Sanni, Ojuolape, and Omokanye (2020) investigated leadership styles vs health professionals' job satisfaction in tertiary hospitals. The research was conducted in a cross-sectional manner. Respondents were chosen using a multistage sampling process. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings found that a laissez-faire leadership style was associated with lower work satisfaction. Job satisfaction was negatively correlated with the age of the leader and the length of tenure of the heads of units. Employee age and contingent compensation were discovered to be important predictors of work satisfaction.

Sabbah, Ibrahim, Khamis, Bakhour, Sabbah, Droubi, and Sabbah (2020) researched the association of leadership styles and nurses' well-being in healthcare settings. The research was a cross-sectional study that conducted in 2017 and included a random sample of two hundred and fifty (250) nurses from eight hospitals. The survey contained questions about socio-demographic and health-related factors, as well as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X Short Form and the Short Form Health Survey-12 V2 (SF-12v2). The findings showed that managers utilized a mixture of transformational leadership and a lot of transactional leadership. From time to time, the managers took a laissez-faire approach. Male nurses regarded their superiors as more transformational than female nurses. Except for the Social Functioning category, all SF-12v2 scale scores were statistically linked to transformational leadership style. The Vitality scale scores were linked to transactional leadership style. People who considered their manager's leadership style was laissez-faire had poorer physical and emotional roles, as well as a worse mental health summary score.

Musinguzi, Namale, Rutebemberwa, Dahal, Nahirya-Ntege, and Kekitiinwa (2018) investigated the link between leadership style and motivation, job satisfaction, and teamwork among Ugandan health workers. The study was a cross-sectional study conducted in November 2015. Data was collected from 564 health workers from 228 health facilities using a standardized questionnaire. Pearson correlation and multivariable logistic regression were used to analyze the data. Transformational leaders were favored by Ugandan health professionals above transactional or laissez-faire leaders, according to the data. Transformational leadership was linked to increased motivation, job satisfaction, and teamwork. Transactional leadership was found to be favorably associated with job satisfaction and teamwork.

In the Federal Medical Centre in Niger State, Mawoli and Mohammed (2013) examined the impact of leadership styles on staff performance. From a total population of 1,400 FMC employees, an 82-person sample was selected. The respondents were chosen using a stratified random sampling procedure. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data, which was then evaluated through regression analysis. Hence various heads of units, divisions, and departments have been discovered to adopt autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles to achieve varying degrees of work performance. Democratic leadership had a considerable impact on health-care workers, but authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles had little or no impact.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

After evaluating current literature on the variables, the study constructed a conceptual framework to investigate the research hypotheses that have been provided. The concept used transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership styles as independent variables to explain employee performance as the dependent variable. The conceptual framework is represented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

Figure 1 − Conceptual Framework of Leadership Style and Employees' Performance
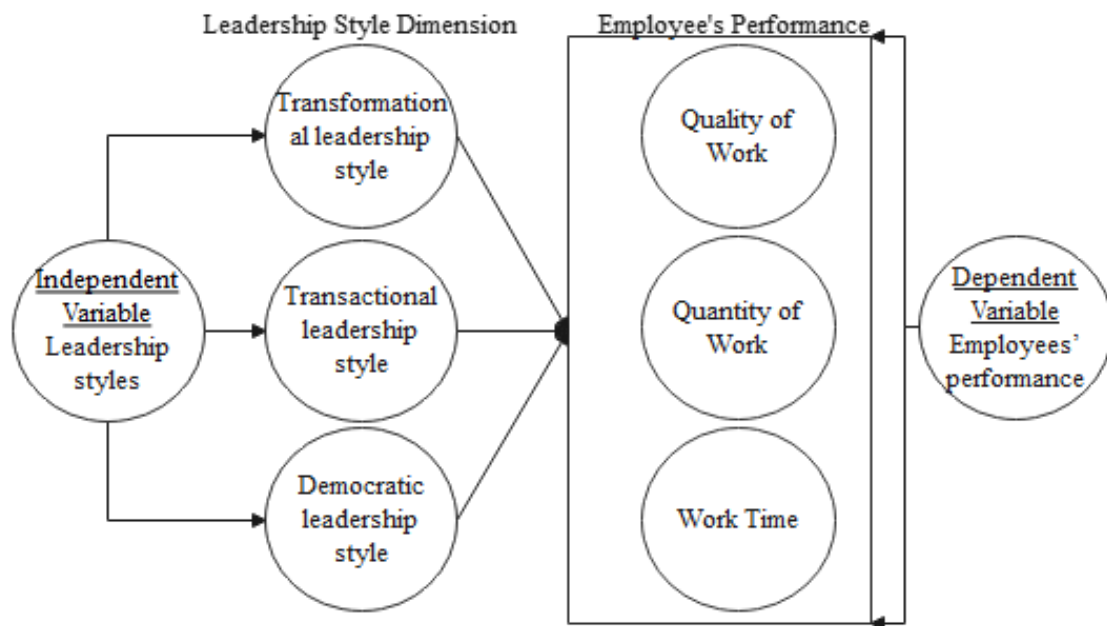
Source: Author

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a survey research design because it involved collecting data from a sample of participants/respondents in a systematic manner. The survey method was used to quickly and cheaply describe the opinions of a large number of respondents on specific topics (Goel, Obeng, & Rothschild, 2016).

3.2 Population of Study

The population of study comprised 1,727 staff from 29 departments (22 clinical and 7 non-clinical department) in the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State as presented in Table 1. The choice of FMC was because it was a tertiary health facility under the purview of the Federal Ministry of Health with large attendance of patients within and outside Ogun State.

Table 1 − Distribution of Personnel According to Department

S/N	Clinical department	Number of Staff
1	Anaesthesia	Not specified
2	Catering	39
3	Community medicine and primary care	30
4	Dental services	19
5	Ear, Nose, and Throat (Otorhinolaryngology)	4
6	Family medicine	49
7	Health records	109
8	Medical library	10
9	Medicine	Not specified
10	Nursing services	497
11	Obstetrics and Gynaecology	67
12	Ophthalmology	13
13	Orthopaedics and Trauma	Not specified
14	Paediatrics	25
15	Pain and Palliative medicine	9
16	Pathology	Not specified
17	Pharmaceutical services	34
18	Physiotherapy	22
19	Psychiatric	7
20	Radiology	44
21	Social work	8
22	Surgery	19
	TOTAL	1,005
S/N	Non-clinical department	
1	Administrative	380
2	Finance and supplies	162
3	Information and communication technology	Not specified
4	Internal audit	33
5	Public relations	Not specified
6	Security	Not specified
7	Works and maintenance	147
	TOTAL	722

Source: FMC Official Website (2022)

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of 241 (based on the indicator/latent ratio) assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.35$), the statistical power of 0.8, and the probability of error level of 0.05) was obtained using a sample size calculator for structural equation models via power analysis. The choice of this calculator was because it was specifically designed to calculate sample size for structural equation models. Also, it considered effect size, statistical power, and the probability of error level. The sample size is increased by 30% to 314 to provide for non-response bias.

However, the study adopted the proportionate and convenient sampling technique to determine the exact number of staffs selected from each department as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Personnel by Proportion

S/N	Clinical Department	No. of Staff	Sample Size
1	Catering	39	7
2	Community medicine and primary care	30	5
3	Dental services	19	3
4	Ear, Nose, and Throat (Otorhinolaryngology)	4	1
5	Family medicine	49	9
6	Health records	109	20
7	Medical library	10	2
8	Nursing services	497	90
9	Obstetrics and Gynaecology	67	12
10	Ophthalmology	13	2
11	Paediatrics	25	5
12	Pain and Palliative medicine	9	2
13	Pharmaceutical services	34	6
14	Physiotherapy	22	4
15	Psychiatric	7	2
16	Radiology	44	8
17	Social work	8	2
18	Surgery	19	3
	TOTAL	1,005	183
S/N	**Non-clinical Department**		
1	Administrative	380	69
2	Finance and supplies	162	29
3	Internal audit	33	6
4	Works and maintenance	147	27
	TOTAL	722	131

Source: Author's Computation (2022)

3.4 Research Instruments

The demographics of the questionnaire included gender, age, and year of service, as well as four measures with confirmed validity and reliability:

Transformational leadership style was assessed using a nine-item scale adapted from Zheng, Cao, and Tjosvold's research (2011). A sample item is, "My supervisor has the ability to make everyone around me enthusiastic about assignments." The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Transactional leadership style was measured by a five-items scale adopted from the study of Felfe and Schyns (2002). A sample item is, "My leader clearly formulates expectations and standards." The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Democratic leadership style was measured through a four-items survey scale adopted from the study of Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008). A sample item is, "My supervisor involves me when making vital decisions." The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Employee job performance was measured using a six-item survey scale adopted from the study of Kock (2017). A sample item is, "My performance in my current job is excellent." The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data is analyzed using R software for Windows (R Core Team, 2020) version 4.0.3. A p-value of less than 0.05 and two-tailed testing are used to determine a

statistically significant result. The relationship between the variables is evaluated using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). When compared to regression analysis, which does not account for measurement error, CB-SEM provides a more robust statistical analysis of testing hypotheses (Ramlall, 2016)

4. Results

Three hundred and fourteen copies of questionnaires were administered to respondents and 306 copies were returned. However, during data cleaning process, four copies were found incompletely filled for data analysis and therefore were excluded. Thus, giving a total of 302 copies that were used for analysis. This gave a response rate of 96%. Missing data was also imputed using the MICE (Multiple Imputation through Chained Equations) approach.

Furthermore, the result on demographic characteristics of respondents listed in Table 3 revealed that majority of them were females (55%). The finding implied that female respondents dominated the study. Also, the majority (59%) were married and were between the ages of 31 and 40 years (44%). All of them were well-educated and have spent between 11 and 15 years working in the hospitals (42%).

Table 3 − Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents ($n = 302$)

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	137	45.36
Female	165	54.64
Age (years)		
Less than 30	21	6.95
31 – 40	134	44.37
41 – 50	124	41.06
Above 50	23	7.62
Marital status		
Single	121	40.07
Married	177	58.61
Divorced	4	1.32
Education		
O' Level	29	9.60
NCE/OND	97	32.12
B.Sc./HND	148	49.01
M.Sc./Ph.D.	28	9.27
Length of service (Years)		
Less than 1	4	1.32
1 – 5	23	7.62
6 – 10	58	19.21
11 – 15	126	41.72
Above 15	91	30.13

Source: Field survey (2022)

4.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model's goal is to characterize how well observed indicators work as measurement instruments for unseen variables. As a result, the study took a two-step strategy, starting with a measurement model and then moving on to a confirmatory model to test the hypotheses proposed by Anderson and Gerbing's (1988).

4.1.1 Goodness-of-Fit Indexes

Listed in Table 4 are the confirmatory factor analysis goodness-of-fit statistics results to determine the model's measurement fit. The goodness-of-fit indices are examined using the absolute and relative fit indices, which were revealed to be consistent with the accepted thresholds (Gunzler, Perzynski, & Carle, 2021).

Table 4 − Goodness-of-Fit Indexes

Fit indices	Absolute indices					Relative indices	
	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
Thresholds	< 3	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08	< 0.08	> 0.90	> 0.90
Actual value	1.835	0.932	0.907	0.059	0.041	0.916	0.908

Note: Note: χ^2/df is the proportion of degrees of freedom to Chi-square.; GFI is Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI is the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; SRMR is Standardised Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; Normed Fit Index; CFI is the Comparative Fit Index.
Source: Author's Computation (2022)

4.1.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity measures whether the indicators reflect their corresponding factors effectively. The result in Table 5 revealed that the survey scales used in the study indicated good construct reliabilities as the standardised factor loading estimate values ranged from 0.704 to 0.910, exceeding 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The estimation of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values revealed that the factors had alpha values that ranged from 0.786 to 0.877, showing that internal consistency is adequate (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In addition, the *p*-values for each item were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Convergent validity criterion was also met as all the average variance extracted (AVE) were above 0.50 (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2012).

4.1.3 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity assesses whether two variables are statistically distinct. To investigate the dimensionality of the constructs, the square root of their Average Variance Retrieved (AVEs) was extracted (Gefen & Staub, 2005). The off-diagonal correlation values were lower than the square root of the AVEs, indicating unique discriminant validity, as seen in Table 6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5 − Assessment Results of Reflective Measurement Model

Factor	Items	Standardised Factor Loading Estimates	Significant at 5%	AVE	Composite Reliability ρc	Cronbach's alpha A
TRANSF	TRANSF1	0.872	Yes	0.641	0.914	0.786
	TRANSF2	0.775	Yes			
	TRANSF3	0.763	Yes			
	TRANSF4	0.721	Yes			
	TRANSF5	0.854	Yes			
	TRANSF6	0.811	Yes			
	TRANSF7	0.704	Yes			
	TRANSF8	0.807	Yes			
	TRANSF9	0.866	Yes			
TRANSA	TRANSA1	0.715	Yes	0.647	0.901	0.815
	TRANSA2	0.809	Yes			
	TRANSA3	0.910	Yes			
	TRANSA4	0.814	Yes			
	TRANSA5	0.761	Yes			
DM	DM1	0.887	Yes	0.675	0.892	0.792
	DM2	0.819	Yes			
	DM3	0.774	Yes			
	DM4	0.803	Yes			
EP	EP1	0.712	Yes	0.602	0.819	0.877
	EP2	0.817	Yes			
	EP3	0.795	Yes			
	EP4	0.899	Yes			
	EP5	0.851	Yes			
	EP6	0.714	Yes			

Note: TRANSF = Transformational leadership style; TRANSA = Transactional leadership style; DM = Democratic leadership style; EP = Employee Performance; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.
Source: Author's Computation (2022)

Table 6 − Discriminant Validity

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
TRANSF	3.941	0.926	**0.801**			
TRANSA	3.979	0.925	0.025	**0.804**		
DM	3.027	0.894	0.436	0.022	**0.822**	
EP	3.891	0.895	0.043	0.059	0.270	**0.776**

Note: Diagonal Elements are Square Root of AVE and Off-Diagonal Elements are Correlations.
Source: Author's Computation (2022)

The results in Table 7 and Figure 2 revealed that transformational leadership style (β = 0.677, p = 0.001) had a significant positive influence on employees' performance; hence, hypothesis one was not supported. Transactional leadership style (β = 0.714, p = 0.001) had a significant positive influenced on employees' performance; thus, hypothesis two was also not supported. Lastly, democratic leadership style (β = 0.803, p = 0.001) had a significant positive influence on employees' performance; therefore, hypothesis three was supported.

Table 7 − Structural Model Estimates (Test of Hypotheses)

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	Estimate	Critical Ratio	p-value	Remark
H₁	TRANSF -> EP	0.677	13.512	0.001	Rejected
H₂	TRANSA -> EP	0.714	10.118	0.001	Rejected
H₃	DM -> EP	0.803	7.358	0.001	Rejected

Source: Author's Computation (2022)

Figure 2 − Structural Model of Leadership Style and Employees' Performance
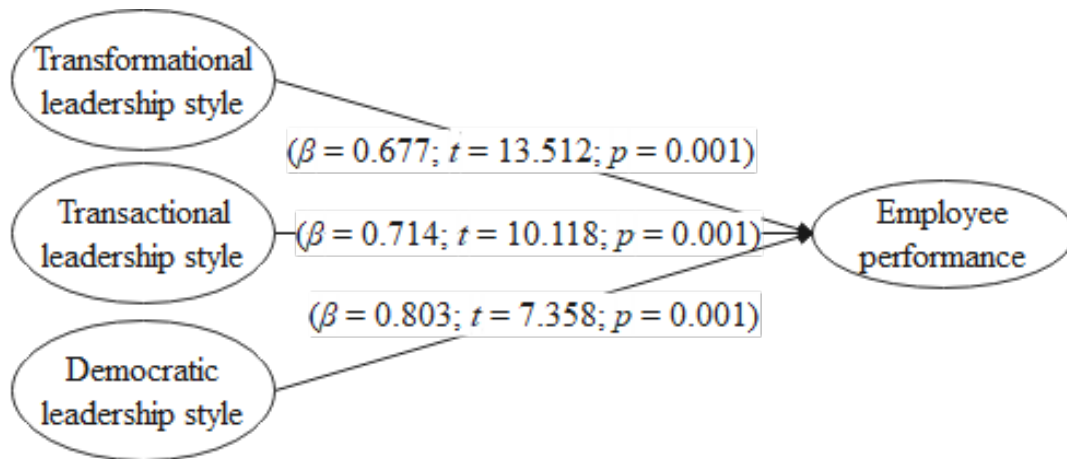
5. Discussion of Findings

The results of the analysis of empirical data from a sample of 302 respondents were noteworthy and fascinating. These empirical findings backed up two of the study's hypotheses. Furthermore, the study model's overall explanatory power was rather strong, with an R2 of 67 percent for worker productivity, implying that the three leadership styles used in the study, transformational, transactional, and democratic, explained 67 percent of the variance in employee performance.

To begin, the results revealed that transformational leadership style (= 0.677, p = 0.001) had a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style in which leaders and followers interact in such a way that they boost each other's motivation and morale. According to the findings, the greater the degree of staff performance, the more transformational leadership style is used by hospital leaders. In addition, if individuals at the helms of affair adopt this leadership style, their staff would work towards achieving the hospital's goals. Corroborating this finding, Dunn et al. (2012) argued that this leadership style enhanced performance in an organization. The discovery is in line with the result of previous studies (Girei, 2015; Abodunde et al., 2017; Al Khajeh & Fenn, 2020) while it is not in line with the finding of Obiwuru et al., 2011).

Secondly, the result revealed that transformational leadership style ($\beta = 0.714$, $p = 0.001$), had a positive and significant influence on employees' performance. The finding implied that the more leaders at the hospital exhibit transactional leadership style, the higher the level of employees' performance. Also, the result indicated that if individuals at

the helms of affair adopt this leadership style, their staff would work towards achieving the hospital's goals. Thus, the finding is in line with the result of previous studies (Awolusi, 2015; Ohemeng, Amoaks-Asiedu, & Darko, 2018) while it is not in line with the finding of Abodunde et al. (2017) and Al Khajeh and Fenn (2020).

Finally, the result revealed that democratic leadership style ($\beta = 0.803$, $p = 0.001$) had a significant positive influence on employees' performance. The discovery implied that the more leaders at the hospital embrace the democratic leadership style, the higher the level of employees' performance. Thus, the finding is in line with the result of previous studies (Basit, Sebastian, & Hassan, 2017; Ohemeng et al., 2018).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the study concluded that leadership styles influenced employees' performance at the FMC, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Therefore, it is recommended that the management of FMC should adopt and encourage transformation leadership style by listening to their employees' concern and always motivate them. The management should encourage transactional leadership style by taking appropriate action before issues escalate, set work standards, and ensure that they are met. Lastly, the authorities of FMC should encourage democratic leadership style by inviting employees of the hospital to contribute to the decision-making process.

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EDUCATION AS AN ANALYSIS OF POVERTY STATUS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The lives of many South Africans have been profoundly influenced by the policies of the racially oppressive apartheid government that ruled the country from 1947 to 1994. The provision of basic services under the apartheid government was very poor, particularly for the greater Black majority living in rural homelands. As a result, the country has seen underdevelopment in human capital of the overwhelming majority of the population in rural areas, resulting in low levels of well-being and high levels of poverty and inequality that have persisted to this day. Using secondary data sets from the Living Conditions Survey (LCS) 2014/2015 conducted by Statistics South Africa, this research aims to analyse the role of education on the economic well-being status of households in Limpopo Province of South Africa. The official absolute income poverty line of R10 680 (lower bound) per capita per annum in 2021 prices were used. In order to establish the relationship between education, socio-economic factors and the poverty status of an individual or a household, a binary regression model was used. The results obtained revealed that lower educational attainment is associated with a higher prevalence of household poverty (low well-being status). Additionally, findings indicate that age, marital status and household status have a direct impact on well-being.

1. Introduction

Human well-being is a multifaceted subject spanning decades and geographies due to its capability to inculcate varied academic subjects (Camfieled *et al.*, 2018). The existing well-being literature, however, has mainly considered subjective self-reported well-being at individual-level using indicators (Webster *et al.*, 2021; Conger, Conger & Martin, 2010). Linked to lack of or lower well-being is lack of educational attainment; this is supported by various research in the literature (Gebresilassie, 2014:134; Ferrante, 2009; Cunado & de Garcia, 2012). According to Bloom *et al.*, (2005), Palmer, Wedgwood, Hayman, King and Thin (2007), Thomson (2008) and Badat and Sayed (2014), education could be seen as a tool that would lead to changes in both rural and urban communities. Various research over the past few years focused on the importance of education in a developing society (Zwane, 2020; Naveed & Sutoris, 2020; Wanka, 2014), however, there has been a paucity of studies examining the relationship between education and well-being within a South African context.

As one of the primary determinants of individual well-being, the influence of education has produced some interesting results. In general, the evidence regarding the relationship between economic well-being and educational attainment is relatively ambiguous (Ferrante, 2009; Cunado & de Garcia, 2012). Research by Botha and Booysen (2014:163) and Kahneman and Krueger (2006:2) likewise argued that there is a positive association between educational attainment and well-being. The focus of this study is on education as an indicator of economic well-being status within households in Limpopo province, South Africa.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Literature

2.1 Educational attainment and well-being in South Africa

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa has continued to invest billions of funds into the education system and the provision of other basic services. Despite the persistent efforts from the government in making education accessible to everyone, rural households across the country more specifically are still characterised by low levels of well-being and low educational attainment rates. In addition, majority of these households are based in the more rural provinces notably; Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga (Rhodes & Mckenzie, 2018). Limpopo Province is one of the poorest and most rural provinces in the country. Poor households within the province are characterised by low well-being status, low levels of education, difficult and time-consuming and lack of access to; health care services, transportation and few opportunities for lucrative employment (Stats SA, 2016; Wanka, 2014:2). As a result, many households turn out to have very low well-being status in this province.

Education is seen as a key driver in poverty reduction and to achieve social justice in South Africa (Wanka, 2014:18). The OECD's "How's life? Report (2017) proclaim that people's achievement prospects are widely linked to the various dimensions of well-being. It further exposes the disparity in the quality of life, life expectancy and happiness when education is taken into consideration. According to OECD (2017), educational attainment is one of South Africa's weakness that contributes to the well-being status of its citizens.

A study done by Wanka (2014), using the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) showed that households headed by well-educated persons had a lower portability of poverty. Evidence from other countries can also be seen in a research conducted by Childs

(2018), which showed that employment status and education had a huge effect on the well-being status of Australian youth. Binder and Coad (2011:275) found that there is a positive association between education and happiness at lower quantiles but a negative on in the upper quantiles. Further suggesting that majority of people who are happy have a higher educational attainment as opposed to those with lower educational attainment.

2.2 The influence of education on well-being status

As one of the primary determinants of individual well-being, the influence of education has produced some interesting results. In general, the evidence regarding the relationship between economic well-being and educational attainment is relatively ambiguous (Ferrante, 2009; Cunado & de Garcia, 2012). Research by Botha and Booysen (2014:163) and Kahneman and Krueger (2006:2) also argued that there is a positive association between educational attainment and well-being. Previous studies on the relationship between well-being and education many mainly focused on developed countries, where education has found to be a major determinant of well-being. With respect to rural provinces in developing countries such as Limpopo, evident research on the link between education and well-being is less common (Botha & Booysen, 2014).

Despite the substantial body of knowledge examining the correlates of educational attainment and its bearing on well-being, the interactions between how household well-being and education relate to each other have received unexpectedly little attention. Survey data as well as reports from both South African and international studies on education and well-being continue to reveal that, education and well-being are somehow positively correlated. Walker (2014:418) argued that education is a useful tool that should be prioritised to advance economic growth and reduce inequality in South Africa. Chen (2011:117) endeavoured to determine the impact of education on happiness in four Asian countries using data from the East Asian Social Survey (EASS). Chen (2011) finds that individuals who received more education are associated with happiness due to having access to having better life conditions; these conditions are related to well-being.

Geda, de Jong, Kimenyi and Mwabu (2005:10) conducted a study using the 1994 Welfare Monitoring Survey in Kenya and found educational attainment to be a significant determinant of poverty in Kenyan households. The results further indicated that the lack of secondary education increased the probability of the house being poor. In their theoretical paper, Joboku et al., (2021), reported that Technical and Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) colleges were seen as great tools to increase human capital and alleviate poverty of the Nigerian population. Although some studies argue that income is more essential in enhancing well-being and happiness (for example Easterlin, 1974; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2001:119 & Kushlev, Dunn, & Lucas 2015:483), recent research agrees that absolute income plays a crucial role in enhancing one's well-being (Chen, 2011:118; Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005; Ball & Chernova, 2008). This arise since education is regarded as one of the significant investments in human capital, and educational attainment is highly correlated with absolute income (Chen, 2011:118).

3. Data and Methods

3.1 Data description

The data for this research was obtained from the Living Conditions Survey (LCS) 2014/2015, conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) during the period 13 October 2014 to 25 October 2015 and embargoed until January 2017 after which it was accessible to the public. The LCS is one of Stats SA's common periodic survey conducted every five years with the aim of collecting data that depicts South Africa's households living conditions and extent of poverty. Furthermore, the 2014/2015 LCS is the most recent survey conducted by Stats SA. The LCS data were chosen for the present study because they are representative of the national and provincial level economic activities that are aligned to the objectives of the study. The LCS was conducted with specific objectives in mind, one of which was to provide relevant statistical information on household consumption and poverty levels and patterns (Stats SA, 2017).

3.2 Population and sampling

The information contained in the LCS was collected from 23 380 households across South Africa over a period of 12 months. When collecting the data, the survey used a combination of the diary and recall methods wherein households were required to answer a variety of questions from the questionnaire developed and administered by Stats SA over a four-week period to document household daily acquisitions.

The LCS study population consisted of all households across South Africa, with 30 818 households sampled to take part in the survey. Out of these, the sample realisation constituted of 27 527 (83,65%) (Stats SA, 2017:61). However, due to some of the sampled households being out of scope and being unoccupied; only 23 380 households participated in the study. This study will focus only on the households from the Limpopo Province. The response rate for Limpopo Province was at 95.6%, with 2 882 households (11 611 persons) participating in the survey (Stats SA, 2017:62). The survey sample was comprised of all domestic households, holiday homes and households on workers' residences. Institutions such as prisons, hospitals, dormitories for scholars, old age homes and student accommodation were excluded from the study sample (Stats SA, 2017:4). The study sample also omitted boarding houses, hotels, lodges and guesthouses.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data and all association information for this study was were obtained from Stats SA and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 26. The statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel, SPSS and STATISTICA computer programs.

4. Objective method used to measure well-being

The most vital step in measuring well-being is determining the method of measurement and principles that guides the measurement. Objective poverty measures are based on a poverty definition wherein people are considered poor if their income or expenditure is below a specific level (below the poverty line); or non-poor if it falls above the set poverty line. The poverty line is used a standard to determine or track the poverty status of an individual or household.

The economic well-being analysis in this study is based on the absolute poverty measure. The official absolute poverty lines are the starting point of analysis and are constructed using the Cost-of-Basic-Needs (CBN) approach through which well-being is linked to the consumption of goods and services. These poverty lines are money-metric based and are used to indicate the threshold on which poor and non-poor individuals can be distinguished. In South Africa, the most and frequent used poverty income poverty lines are the Lower Bound Poverty Line (LBPL) and Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL) developed by Stats SA (Stats SA, 2018:3). Changes in living costs require an annual review and update of the poverty line to preserve the relevance and integrity of the poverty line (Stats SA, 2019:3). Consequently, this study employs the "lower-bound" and "upper-bound" poverty lines which amount to R890 x12 = R10 680 per capita per annum and R1 335 x 12 = R16 020 per capita respectively (in 2021 prices). The per annum amounts are used to predict those consuming below or above the threshold. Households are considered poor if their income or expenditure is below the poverty line; or non-poor if it falls above the set poverty line. Consistent with similar studies within the South African context, this study used the lower bound poverty line of R10 680 per capita per annum. Table 1 below presents the list of inflation-adjusted poverty lines developed by Stats SA between 2006 to 2021.

Table 1 − Stats SA inflation adjusted poverty lines from 2006 to 2021 (per person per month in rands)

Year	Food Poverty line	Lower bound poverty line	Upper bound poverty line
2006	219	370	575
2007	237	396	613
2008	274	447	682
2009	318	456	709
2010	320	466	733
2011	335	501	779
2012	366	541	834
2013	386	572	883
2014	417	613	942
2015 (April)	441	647	992
2016 (April)	498	714	1 077
2017 (April)	531	758	1 138
2018 (April)	547	785	1 183
2019 (April)	561	810	1 227
2020 (April)	585	840	1 268
2021 (April)	624	890	1 335

Source: Stats SA (2021)

4.1 Logistic regression

In carrying out empirical analysis on the impact of educational attainment on the economic well-being status, most studies used the binary logistic regression mode for instance (Endeshaw & Adugnaw, 2019:32; Michael *et al.*, 2019). The binary logistic regression model is suitable in this case because the dependent variable which is economic well-being proxied by poverty is binary in nature and takes two values; poor or non-poor.

Logistic regression is a popular mathematical modelling procedure used in the analysis of data to describe the relationship of several independent variable to a dichotomous dependent variable (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2010:5; Field, 2012:761). It is one of the most widely used statistical procedures in fields such as medical statistics, credit rating, social statistics and econometric and similar areas (Hilbe, 2015:ix). The logistic regression model is a branch of the Generalised Linear Models (GLMs). GLMs are an extension of classical linear models, and all probability models are considered part of GLMs. Logit and probit models are widely used members of the family of GLMs (Cakmakyapan & Goktas, 2013:1). There are only two categories (dichotomy) of the response variable in binary logit and probit models. The occurrence and non-occurrence of these events are the groups of the dependent variables.

The primary reason why the logistical model is so popular is that the logistic function f(z) is intended to represent a probability that always ranges from 0 to 1. Therefore, the logistic model is designed to ensure that any variable outcome that we predict is always a certain number between 0 and 1 (i.e. poor and non-poor in this study). Binary logistic regression is useful in the analysis where the prediction of the outcome variables is based on two categorical outcomes (Field, 2012:761).

Logistic regression is based on the principle of expressing multiple linear regression equation in logarithmic terms (referred to as logit) (Field, 2012:762). The logistic regression model predicts the likelihood of an event occurring for a given person based on the observations of whether the event did occur for that given person.

4.2 Binomial Logit Model for binary data

The logit model is a binomial type of distribution that has two possible outcomes (i.e. they have binary response variables). The outcome variables are classically represented by "success" and "failure" outcomes by 1 and 0 often referred as the Bernoulli trial named after well-known mathematician Jacob Bernoulli. A Bernoulli trial has probabilities $P(Y = 1) = n$ and $P(Y = 0) = 1 - \pi$, for which $E(Y) = \pi$. This is the special case of the binomial distribution with $n = I$. The probability mass function is expressed as:

$$f(y; \pi) = \pi^y (1 - \pi)[\frac{\pi}{1 - \pi})]y$$

$$= (1 - \pi) \exp [y (\log \frac{\pi}{1} - \pi)]$$

When working with GLMs for binary data, we let Y denote a binary response variable, such as the result of a medical treatment (success, failure). Each observation has one of two outcomes, denoted by 1 and 0, which we treat as a binomial variate for a single Bernoulli trial.

The mean $E(Y) = P(Y = 1)$. We denote $P(Y = 1)$ by $\pi(x)$, reflecting its dependence on values x = (x1,....., xp) of explanatory variables. The variance of Y is:

$$var(Y) = \pi(x)[1 - \pi(x)]$$

which is the binomial variance for $n = 1$. Among various binary models, the logit model has been popular in estimating poverty. Dudek and Lisicka (2013) argue that the binary logit model is suitable when dealing with dichotomous variables such as poverty. In

addition, Cameron and Trivedi (2005) as well as Hardin Hilbe (2007) recommend the logit model when assessing poverty. In table 2 the explanatory variables for the binary regression model are reported.

Table 2 - List of explanatory variables for the binary regression model

Explanatory Variables	Explanation of variable
Age	*Age of household head*
Gender	*Gender classification of household head* Male dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Female dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes
Education	*Educational attainment of household head* Matric education dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Post Matric education dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes
Household size	*Size of the household* Less than or equal to 3: 0=No, 1=Yes 4 to 6: 0=No, 1=Yes 7 to 9: 0=No, 1=Yes More than 9 0=No, 1=Yes
Marital status	*Marital status of household head* Married dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Living with partner dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Never Married dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Widower dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Separated dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes Divorced dummy: 0=No, 1=Yes

Source: Author's own compilation

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

The secondary data for this study were analyzed and then summarized using descriptive statistics. For the present study, descriptive statistics include frequency tables and cross-tabulations for the predominant nominal data. The data were downloaded, ordered, and the percentage results were calculated using Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 and exported to Microsoft Excel. The descriptive statistics function of SPSS was used to conduct the descriptive analysis of the data.

According to the LCS, the sample included all the residents of the household who were at least one year(s) of age. The age distribution indicates that majority of the participants were between 1 and 18 years of age. The age profile of participants was deemed acceptable as families (households) usually have more children than elderly people. This result is in sync with the population age structure in South Africa where up to 58% of the nearly 54 million people in the country are aged between 18 and 50 years (Index Mundi, 2015:1). Furthermore, the age group 18 – 50 years of age are the most economically active group in many countries (Population Reference Bureau, 2015:1), they are most likely to participate in most surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa.

The gender composition of the sample was 45.20% for males and 54.80% for females. One of the main sex distribution indicators is the sex ratio. It shows the number of males

per 100 females. If it is above 100, it shows the predominance of males over females, and vice versa. According to Stats SA, the sex representativeness of South Africa during the 2011 Census was 95 (88 for Limpopo Province). In addition, the Census showed Limpopo alongside Eastern Cape were the most affected provinces by inter-provincial migration in terms of outmigration (Stats SA, 2012:19). This study submits that males are still, in certain circumstances, more likely to be the breadwinners and the sample distribution was representative. However, contrary to findings above, the LCS reported that there were more male-headed households (58,64%) compared to those headed by females (41,36%), accounting for two-fifths of households in the LCS 2014/2015. In addition, the LCS found a greater gender parity in Coloured and Black households where there was close 50/50 split (58,88% versus 41,12% and 57,21% against 42,70% respectively) (Stats SA, 2017:10). Using cross-sectional survey data of Debre Berhan town in Ethiopia; Endeshaw and Adugnaw (2019:32-33) found that female household headship has been on the rise in many African developing countries.

With regards to educational attainment of the sampled respondents, Figure 1 indicates that most of the respondents had attended some form of schooling (62.4%), 9,9% had completed Matric/Grade 12 and 3.7% had some form of matric certificate. Approximately, 22.1% of the sample had not attended any form schooling. A very low fraction of the respondents had some form of post matric qualification. While it would be fascinating to find out how educational attainment affects the well-being status, several key issues still need to be addressed. One significant argument relates to what exactly is education, how to measure educational attainment and whether educational qualifications are key indicators of educational level.

Figure 1- Educational attainment background of respondents
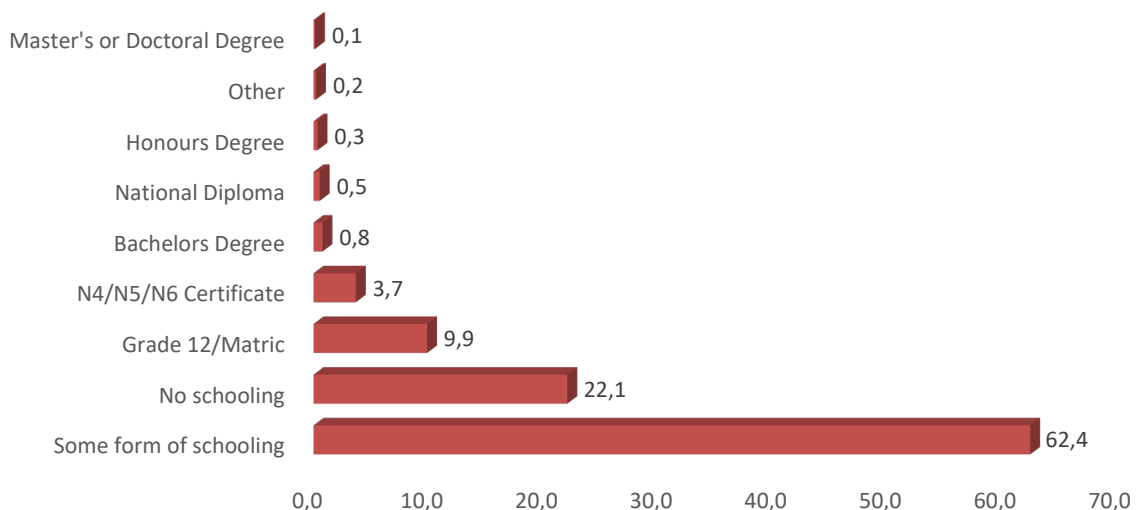
In this scenario, answers are needed concerning why some holders of very high qualifications have a relatively low economic well-being status, as indicated in the literature (Howell & Howell, 2008:536). There are people who possess very advanced qualifications, but their well-being and prosperity do not correlate to their educational level. Conversely, some people do not have any educational qualifications, but their quality of life (QoL) is better than those with advanced post-matric qualifications.

For instance, within the African setup, the attainment of true education was traditionally understood to mean the ability of a person to navigate through the various domains of life such as the economical side (for example, providing for one's family), respecting the elderly from your community (the social side), and adherence to one's culture and beliefs, among many aspects (Mararike, 2001:63). Those who have been able to achieve these qualities were happy and successful in life. However, with the growing acceptance of modernization and the hedonism it entails, the acquisition of educational qualifications has become the prevailing indicator of education.

5.1.1 Reasons for not attending an educational institution

With regards to reasons for not attending an educational institution by the sampled respondents, Table 3 indicates that the vast majority (48%) of the household heads perceived themselves to be too old to further their education. Approximately, 17% of the respondents indicated that they were too busy to attend an educational institution. Some reasons for not pursuing further education are purely affected by gender. Much of these reasons are based on family commitments and lack of funds.

Table 1 - Main reasons given by household heads for not attending an education institution

Reason for not attending an educational institution	Sex of each household head		Total
	Male	Female	
Too old	41,8%	53,3%	48,0%
Has completed education/satisfied with his/her level of education	3,8%	1,7%	2,7%
Difficulties to get to school (transport)	0,4%	0,8%	0,5%
No money for fees/text books/school uniform	10,7%	8,6%	9,5%
He or she is working at home or business/job	23,1%	11,8%	17,0%
Do not have time/too busy	2,9%	1,4%	2,1%
Family commitment (e.g. child minding, pregnancy)	2,2%	9,9%	6,3%
Education is useless or not interesting	0,3%	0,9%	0,6%
Unable to perform at school	4,6%	3,4%	3,4%
Illness/Injury	1.2%	1,3%	1,2%
other, specify	1,7%	10,1%	1,4%
Not applicable/Unspecified	7,6%	6,0%	6,8%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

5.2   *Regression analysis*

Regression analysis was employed as a means of testing the contribution of certain socio-economic factors in determining economic well-being status (using poverty as a proxy). Using stepwise logistic regression, socio-economic factors, which were the independent variables, were regressed against the dependent variable, i.e. economic well-being status. The binary logistic regression model was used to provide an indication of the relative intensity of each independent variable in predicting economic well-being.

We restrict the analysis to the Lower Bound Poverty Line (LBPL) line, as this reflect deprivation more acutely relative to the Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL) measure and is by far the most commonly used poverty line in various South African studies (for example: Rogan, 2014:1348; Ardington *et al.,* 2006; Bhorat & van der Westhuizen, 2008; Hoogeveen & Özler, 2006; Leibbrandt *et al.*, 2006). But in analyses not reported here, the results generally hold when the UBPL is used. We classify an individual as poor if they belong to a household with a real monthly per capita income below a given poverty line. Though there are arguments on (especially gender-related) intra-household bargaining which suggest that household resources may not be equally shared (Iversen, 2003), we adopt the simplifying assumption that individual welfare is a function of aggregate household income, a convention not unusual in the literature (see e.g. Klasen *et al.*, 2015).

5.2.1 Treatment of data during regression analysis

In addition to the abovementioned, the study recognised that the data representing the variables to be tested were in the form of categorical data. All the independent variables as well as the dependent variable were categorical data. In entering the data into the regression models, dummy variables were created for all categorical variables. Categorical variables such as gender, employment status, educational status and poverty status were entered into the regression models dichotomously (coded 0-1) since only two categories were recognised for each of them in this study.

Education variable was categorised into three categories (less than matric, matric, post-matric) with certificate/diploma, honours combined with masters' and doctoral degrees as post-matric. Less than matric category was used as a reference group in the analysis. For better analysis and due to the small sample size of those post matric qualifications; certificate/diploma, honours, were combined with masters' and doctoral degrees as post-matric.

In the analysis age variable was treated as a continuous variable whereas marital status was categorised into six categories (married, living with partner, never married, widower, separated and divorced) with married group being our reference group in the model. Household size was categorised into four categories; namely, less than or equal to three, 4 to 6, 7 to 9 and more than 9 persons per family. A new variable, (poverty incidence) was computed and used to represent the economic well-being status variable in the regression analysis for all households in Limpopo.

5.3   *Results of the regression analysis*

The binary logistic regression was used to capture how education impacts the economic well-being status (proxied through poverty status) of the respondents in Limpopo Province. The results obtained from the binary regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 − Binary Logistic Regression Results using 4 predictor variables

	Odds Ratio	SE	P-value	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	
				Lower	Upper
Male					
Intercept	0.0929	0.0709	0.002*	0.0207	0.4153
Age	0.9731	0.0055	0.000***	0.9623	0.9840
Marital Status					
Married	Reference				
Living with partner	10.6743	8.4351	0.003*	2.2682	50.2326
Never married	14.6438	10.6364	0.000***	3.5268	60.8024
Widower	14.3254	14.0165	0.007*	2.1050	97.4881
Separated	11.8730	10.4412	0.005*	2.1184	66.5451
Divorced	22.3180	22.1160	0.002*	3.2000	155.6516
Education					
Less than Matric	Reference				
Matric	0.3930	0.1168	0.002*	0.2194	0.7039
Post Matric	0.3754	0.1386	0.008*	0.1820	0.7742
Household Size					
Less than or equal to 3	Reference				
4 to 6	1.3399	0.2890	0.175(ns)	0.8778	2.0451
7 to 9	3.2852	1.2171	0.001**	1.5893	6.7907
More than 9	2.6634	2.0433	0.202(ns)	0.5921	11.9807
Female					
Intercept	1.2098	1.2098	0.724(ns)	.42035	3.4822
Age	0.9757	0.0045	0.000***	0.9668	0.9847
Marital Status					
Married	Reference				
Living with partner	2.2861	1.6742	0.259(ns)	0.5442	9.6041
Never married	1.3621	0.6579	0.522(ns)	0.5285	3.5105
Widower	0.1695	0.1919	0.117(ns)	0.0184	1.5602
Separated	0.8105	0.9878	0.863(ns)	0.0743	8.8330
Divorced	1.0033	0.9544	0.997(ns)	0.1554	6.4745
Education					
Less than Matric	Reference				
Matric	0.3816	0.1266	0.004*	0.1991	0.7313
Post Matric	0.1787	0.0714	0.000***	0.0816	0.3914
Household Size					
Less than or equal to 3	Reference				
4 to 6	2.6814	0.4569	0.000***	1.9200	3.7446
7 to 9	5.2151	1.8789	0.000***	2.5739	10.5667
More than 9	10.2924	8.4562	0.005*	2.0567	51.5063

*Significant at 0.05 level

The results in Table 4 provides the classification of the binary regression estimates based on the LBPL of R10 680 per annum of households under study based on the LCS data sets. The analysis focused on the set of explanatory variables that were found in the literature to have significant impact on poverty status of households in Limpopo. In order to determine the effect of the explanatory variables on the likelihood of an individual or household being poor in using the LBPL, binary logistic regression was run for the Limpopo Province data sets. It is evident that most of the explanatory variables are statistically significant at 5%, with expected signs. The theoretical deduction based on the expectation of the results suggests that, the people with lower educational attainment in Limpopo are prone to poverty incidence. This is consistent with previous research which found similar results. Wanka (2014:61-62) noted that people living in developing countries are affected by high poverty rates which makes it difficult for most citizens to advance or complete their schooling.

The overall findings indicate that the explanatory variables chosen for this study were significantly associated with lower well-being status for both males and female headed households. The findings are to a large extent in line with what has been reported in other studies. According to Nwosu and Ndinda (2018:1), female headed households are ideally associated with high poverty levels compared to their male counterparts. In the past few decades, South Africa has witnessed a sharp increase in female headed households. Buvinic and Gupta (1997) outlined three critical underlying issues that mitigate the presence of poverty incidence in female-headed households; females have significant less economic opportunities compared to men, female-headed families have a higher dependency ratio that their counterparts and lastly, a woman is more likely to be the main breadwinner in a female-headed household.

Milazzo and van de Walle (2017) in their findings reported that sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region witnessed a sharp increase in the prevalence of female-headed households. Some of the reasons for this trend include labour migration by male heads, resulting in left-behind female heads (mostly spouses of male labour migrants), and female labour migration which results in (even if transitory) female household headship. According to Posel *et al.,* (2017:2), the vast majority of labour migration in South Africa's recent past has been men as they search for better employment opportunities whilst females predominantly remain home to take care of the family.

In terms of the control variables featured exclusively using the LBPL line, poverty incidence is significantly higher among those who are old of age, living in large household size and have low educational attainment. According to Ralston *et al.,* (2016:1), majority of South Africans who are 50 years of age and above and living in rural areas are facing complex socio-economic problems such as high poverty rates, unemployment, heath issues and low social status. The results of this research confirm this complex problem with regards to the poverty and well-being status of households in Limpopo as discussed below:

The first and significant explanatory variable under study was the educational attainment of the household head. The odds ratios on education reflects the prime role that human capital plays in determining and alleviating poverty. In fact, education is an important dimension of poverty itself, when poverty is broadly defined to include shortage of capabilities and knowledge deprivation. It has important effects on the poor children's chance to escape from poverty in their adult age and plays a catalytic role for those who are most likely to be poor.

The results showed that educational attainment (matric and post matric) of the household head is statistically associated with being poor. The odds of being a poor male with matric is 0.39 less than the odds of being a poor male with less than matric. The regression coefficient for MHHs with post matric qualification (OR=0.37) was not significantly affected by poverty incidence when compared to the reference group. Similar results are reported for FHHs whereby the regression coefficient of those with matric (OR= 0.37) were not found to be associated with poverty. Remarkably, FHHs with a post matric qualification had a very low association with poverty incidence (OR=0.17); suggesting that educated females are less prove to poverty incidence when compared with those with less than matric. These findings imply that a higher level of education provides greater opportunities for a better job and, subsequently, a higher income as depicted in the literature under section 2.5.4. The regression estimates reveal that both Male Headed Households (MHHs) and Female Headed Households (FHHs) are equally affected by poverty incidence when educational attainment is low, with men reporting only a slightly higher score. These findings confirmed the conclusions of other studies, such as Hondai *et al.* (2005) Sarwar *et al.* (2011); Bigsten *et al.* (2003) and Widyanti *et al.* (2009). More so, this finding is consistent with previous research by Wanka (2014:61-62), who found that people with lower educational attainment in Limpopo were associated with high levels of poverty. Todaro (1977) in his research contended that in developing countries (such as South Africa), high levels of poverty make it problematic for most citizens to either complete or advance their educational attainment due lack of affordability of direct and indirect costs related to schooling.

With reference to age, Table 4 reveals some important facts about household headship and poverty incidence disparities and similarities between FHHs and MHHs in South Africa when age is considered. The results show that for both genders, a one-year increase in age of the household head is associated with a higher chance of poverty incidence. The 0.97 odds ratio with regards to the age imply that both genders were significantly associated with poverty. The literature revealed that there is an upward trajectory in overall happiness and well-being as age goes up. On average, the elder generation are happier and less prone to poverty incidence than their under-educated counterparts from earlier age ages to mid-30s (Nikolav & Rusakov, 2016:826-830).

The third explanatory variable theorised to have a significant impact on poverty was the household size. Household size is a continuous variable and refers to the total number of Household members who live in the same home during the survey period for six months or more. As theoretically expected, an increase in household size is associated with poverty incidence for both MHHs and FHHs. MHHs with household size of 7 to 9 was found to have a significant (OR= 3.28) prevalence of poverty status of households in Limpopo. The odds-ratio indicated that male-headed households in this study are likely to be poor about 3.28 times when compared with the reference group (those with less than or equal to 3 members per household), which implies that male-headed households have a higher chance of being poor as household size increases. These findings support the findings reported in various past research wherein household size has been reported to have an influence on the poverty status. Endeshaw and Adugnaw (2019:32) found that household size as being positively related with poverty by assuming that family size increases, obviously the probability of having economically non-active members or children and doddering ages is higher, then household resource per head decreases.

Interestingly, FHHs with a household size of more than 9 persons had a higher chance of poverty incidence (10.29 times) when compared to those with a smaller household size.

This is significantly higher even when compared to their male counterparts. FHHs with households sized of 4 to 6 and 7 to 9 were also significantly associated with being poor with the odds ratios of 2.68 and 5.29 respectively. These findings are very crucial in a developing country like South Africa where the female headship has been on the rise in the previous three decades. The literature established that FHHs are more likely to be poor than MHHs due to them having a higher dependency ratio as compared to those headed by men. Thus, in a predominantly rural province such as Limpopo, it is expected that large households will demonstrate a higher chance of poverty incidence than those with a smaller household size.

With regards to the marital status explanatory variable; the findings of the binary logistic regression revealed that the odds of poverty incidence of unmarried (living with partner, never married, widower, separated and divorced) MHHs was more likely to be occur compared their counterparts (FHHs). More precisely, the odds ratio indicates that males living with partners are 10.67 times likely to be poor than those who are married (i.e. the reference group). The probability of divorced MHHs being poor were the highest with the odds ratio of 22.31, thereby showing that divorced males are linked to higher poverty incidence. The results in Table 4 further suggest that MHHs whose head is either unmarried or widower has a statistically significant chance of being poor (OR=14.54 & OR=14.32) when likened to those who are married.

Surprisingly, the marital status of FHHs has not been shown to have a substantial effect on poverty relative to their male counterparts. The odds ratio values of FHHs of those who are widows and separated were 0.16 and 0.81 respectively when compared to the reference group (married) whilst those were divorced recorded 1.00 odds ratio implying that they were less likely to be poor. The odds ratio of those Living with Partner were 2.2 times when compared to the reference group. It can therefore be taken that marital status of FHHs in Limpopo do not necessarily cause higher poverty incidence when compared with those who are married, more so when compared to their male counterparts. These findings hold true for many typical South African families where unmarried persons do not have the liberty to share household's expenses with their partners. The literature revealed that marital status enhanced quality of life, happiness, and less distress among spouses (Lehman *et al.*, 2016:170). Consistent with previous research, marital status has been found to play a crucial role in the financial well-being of couples (DeMaris, 2018:337).

6. Conclusions

Does educational attainment affect the economic well-being status of households? Many authors have attempted to answer this question using subjective well-being measuring methods which are generally considered very subjective and not a true reflection of poverty status. This paper adopted an objective approach to measure well-being status. Overall, determination of the association between educational attainment and well-being is a complex phenomenon. This study contributes at the same time to the literature on measuring well-being and responds to the growing field of economic development by means of highlighting the role of education in alleviating poverty within the context of a rural province of a developing country. This paper suggests a practicable way to disentangle the effects of the various socio-economic problems on poverty incidence. However, three interesting findings are drawn from the study. (1) People with lower educational attainment in Limpopo province are prone to poverty incidence. (2) Education, marital status and household size are significantly associated with lower well-being status for both males and female headed households. (3) The results show that for both genders,

a one-year increase in age of the household head is associated with a higher chance of poverty incidence.

6.1 Using recent data in future studies

Future studies on poverty alleviation and educational attainment is recommended with more up-to-date or recent data, especially considering that community surveys are amongst the most demanding type of surveys run by statistical agencies both for those implementing the survey and the households that are sampled to participate. The 2014/15 LCS datasets used in this study is the most recent data collected by Stats SA, policy-making institutions should strive and allocate budget for the collection of much more recent data.

6.2 Addressing the gap between policy and practice and addressing corruption

South Africa is not lacking in policy; the problem lies in the implementation of policies. Different policies formulated by various government structures aimed at reducing poverty as a result of low educational attainment included: The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP), Education and Capacity Development and The National Ant-Corruption Strategy 2020-2030. South Africa need to implement the objectives of the National Development Plan 2030 which entails creating a South Africa that is free from corruption, a country that values integrity, transparency and accountability, respect for the rule of law and zero tolerance to corruption. Furthermore, South Africa should also implement the findings of the National Anti-corruption Strategy 2020-2030 policy document, which is aimed at eliminating corruption from all spheres of government as well as the private sector.

6.3 Improved funding for the education sector in rural provinces

The South African government should properly fund the education sector in line with the guidelines provided by UNESCO. Notably, more funding is required to adequately equip the rural-based schools to enable them to have state of arts equipment and facilities for learning in line with the technology of the twenty-first century. Section 29 of the South African Constitution enshrines the right to education and defines the positive responsibilities of the state in this respect. Policy makers are obliged to make this a reality for all South Africans. Jiboku *et el*., (2021), reported similar findings in a study that focused on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Nigeria.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

As this paper has shown, educational attainment is a viable strategy for South Africa to achieve much needed sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation. More scholarly attention and research could concentrate on coordination and implementation (or lack of) of policies and programs of the South African government with those of other poverty focused institutions such as the OECD including other multinational corporations which claim to be involved in poverty alleviation. The impact of these poverty intervention programmes should be thoroughly investigated and findings need to be reported in a scholarly journals and government publications.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors of this research.

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LEADERSHIP CHANGE AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT:AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE IN A UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Lack of employee commitment may be a critical threat to organizational survival and growth. Private Christian mission owned universities seem to be grappling with survival and growth threats associated with a lack of employee commitment, which is likely to be causing inefficient daily operations, delay tasks completion, fostering customer dissatisfaction, and sabotaging revenue generation initiatives. The study examined the extent to which transformational and transactional leadership styles influence employee commitment in a Nigerian private Christian mission university. Survey research design was used for the study. The target population was 774 full-time employees of the University. The sample size of 89 respondents consisted of faculty and non-teaching staff and was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were employed as data collection instruments. The study employed proportional and simple random sampling methods to allocate and distribute the questionnaires to respondents. Correlation coefficient and simple regression analysis were used to analyse data. The findings suggested that transformational and transactional leadership styles significantly affected employee commitment. The findings implied that the social and economic exchange relationship fostered by transformational and transactional leadership behaviours in organizations promote employee emotional attachment and inspires them to be dedicated to its goals. The study recommended that organizations' leaders should consciously create work environments that promote employee trust, responsible, and productivity behaviours.

1. Introduction

Lack of employee commitment may be a critical threat to an organization's survival and growth. It is likely to hinder efficient daily operations, task completion, foster customer dissatisfaction, and rupture the organizational bottom line. Perhaps, the 21st-century role of human resource managers to motivate and retain a productive workforce is increasingly complex. The globalization of the workforce may have created difficulties for managers in attracting and retaining talented employees and fostering an enabling organizational climate where employees can make meaningful contributions to organizational goals as long-term competitive resources. Employee commitment is believed to be a vital resource for achieving corporate objectives considering that employees may be instrumental to the efficient and effective combination of the organization's resources in its quest to improve organizational effectiveness (Gberevbie, Joshua, Excellence-Oluye, & Oyeyemi, 2017; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011; Ugochukwu & Egwuatu, 2021; Zareiea & Navimipour, 2016).

Employee commitment is conceptualized as an employee's passionate affection for the organization expressed in his devotion to help it achieve its objectives continually (Ongori, 2007). Expressed differently, it is a prevailing devoted relationship between employees and an organization reflected in employees' resolve to identify with the mission and vision of the organization they serve by productively remaining in its employment (Karami, Farokhzadian, & Foroughameri, 2017; Loor-Zambrano, Santos-Roldán, & Palacios-Florencio, 2022). According to Sharma, et al. (2021), employee commitment refers to the intention to behave beneficially to the organization, which may be demonstrated by going beyond the call of duty to show that they are proud to work for the organization.

Perhaps, the prevailing functional environment of organizations is very dynamic. Potentially, internal and external forces such as strategic vision, technological changes, globalization, expanding customer expectations, economic, political, and regulatory conditions may create an unstable business environment. The continuous environmental changes may be responsible for constant operational reviews and changes in organizational structure, processes, management team, and leadership style changes.

Interestingly, despite the belief that employees are a vital organizational resource to accomplish organizational effectiveness, many public and private organizations appear to ignore employee work-related attitudinal responses when contemplating and implementing management team changes and the aftermath of the change in leadership style. According to Cook, Hunsaker, Coffey (2001, p.491), leadership is the act of providing direction and energizing others by obtaining their voluntary commitment to the vision of an organization. It is a process by which a person at the helm of affairs of an organization influences subordinates to accomplish organizational objectives and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Acar, 2012).

However, leadership style is described as the behaviour used by a leader to motivate the subordinates to strive to achieve the organization's objectives (Mwaura, Thinguri, & Mwangi, 2014). The leadership literature presents a plethora of leadership styles which includes transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership seeks to encourage employees to develop their full potentials, moralities, and motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011).

Transactional leadership style refers to behaviors where the leader rewards employees for high effort and good performance or sanction them if their work results are unsatisfactory (Bass, 1985). Thus, incentive structures are used to increase employees' attainment of organizational goals in a transactional leadership setting.

The scholarly claim that organizational effectiveness may be an outcome of the link between employee commitment and leadership styles has elicited several empirical studies. Generally, the contexts of most studies were in typical business organizations including some of the few studies conducted in Nigeria (Acar, 2012; Asgari, 2014; Alemayehu & Batisa, 2020; Awoyemi, 2018; Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe, 2013; Ugochukwu & Egwuatu, 2021). Besides, studies based on Nigerian higher education institutions are rare, and the few did not focus on private universities, especially universities operated by religious organizations (Nweke, Okoye, & Dike-Aghanya, 2021). Considering the presence of ecclesiastical footprints in the work environment of universities run by religious organizations and the increasing roles and significance of private universities to national manpower development, private universities will be a veritable setting for new insights on the link between employee commitment and leadership styles. Johns (2006) avers that context affects organizational behavior and the neglect of contextual influence can affect research outcomes. Also, scholars seem to have unresolved tension on the leadership style and employee commitment link arising from the conflicting findings of extant studies (Alemayehu & Batisa, 2020: Mclaggan, 2013).

Thus, this paper's objective is to examine what is the extent to which transformational and transactional leadership styles affect employee commitment in a private Christian mission university. It also aims to fill the seeming contextual neglect of ecclesiastical-owned private universities in extant studies and empirically account for the likely implications of a leadership change on organizational employee commitment. Additionally, we respond to the need for more studies to resolve the ongoing scholarly tension on the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment.

Hence, the following research questions guide the study:

RQ1. *What is the effect of idealized influence on affective commitment in in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ2. *What is the effect of inspirational motivation on continuance commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ3. *What is the effect of contingent reward on affective commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ4. *What is the effect of management by exception on continuance commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

The subsequent sections of this article review the concepts of employee commitment, transformational and transactional leadership styles. Also, the theoretical basis of the study is explained. Next, is a review of prior empirical studies on the relationship between employee commitment and leadership styles. Afterwards, the research method and data analysis process are explained. Thereafter, the result of our findings is presented and

discussed. Finally, the study's conclusions, contributions, implications and suggestions for future research are presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Employee Commitment*

Research shows that employee commitment has been conceptualised from diverse perspectives. Akanbi & Itiola (2013) considered employee commitment as the level to which employees associate with their organization and contribute to organizational efforts to achieve stipulated goals and objectives. This viewpoint aligns with Mensah, Akuoko & Ellis (2016), who stated that employee commitment is the level to which an employee is proud to be identified as an employee of an organization and the amount of enthusiasm exhibited in fulfilling his job roles. Moreover, Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang (2008) consider employee commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization.

Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal (2011) explained the characteristics of employee commitment as an explicit aspiration to retain organizational affiliation, association with the aims and achievements of the organization. It includes employee loyalty and a disposition to exercise significant effort towards attaining corporate purposes. Akintayo (2010) avers that employee commitment is the extent to which workers feel dedicated to serving the interest of their employers. Ongori (2007) points out that employee commitment is the emotional attachment or loyalty employees have for the organization. As conceptualized by these authors, employee commitment suggests that it involves demonstrated employee loyalty and engrossment in accomplishing assigned tasks towards achieving organizational objectives.

Perhaps Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997) advanced the most comprehensive concept of employee commitment and upheld by Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonova (2012). He used a three-dimensional approach to define employee commitment. In their view, employee commitment has affective, normative, and continuance elements. The affective aspect of employee commitment refers to a passionate attachment to and membership of an organization. Affective commitment is perceived from an employee's unreserved willingness to remain in the organization's employment and devotion to achieving its goals. According to Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova, normative commitment is apparent when employees keep their employment with an organization out of a sense of moral duty and obligation. This mindset is born out of the employee's belief that the organization expects him to be loyal, probably because the organization has invested so much in him. Furthering their discourse on the concept of employee commitment, Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova avers that continuance commitment is a cognitive attachment of an employee to an organization because of the individual's perceived costs associated with resigning his membership of the organization. The foregoing suggests that an organization may face three variants of employee commitment to manage.

Employee commitment is believed to facilitate service quality improvement because it engenders employee satisfaction, loyalty, responsible and productive behaviors (Yilmaz & Çokluk-Bökeoğlu, 2008). It can propel employees to undertake voluntary actions necessary for organizational life and entrench high standard systems. Besides, employee commitment may encourage organizational citizenship behavior leading to innovations

with competitive advantages (Park, Christie & Sype, 2014). Moreover, it can enhance knowledge sharing among employees to facilitate adaptation to changing business environments for long-term success (Demirel & Goc, 2013). In the same vein, Visagie & Steyn (2011) declared that employee commitment is critical to the success of organizational change initiatives because of employees' passionate involvement with the organization. Consequently, because of the bond employees experience with their organization, the challenges associated with high rate of employee turnover may be reduced. A committed employee is usually loyal and concerned about the organization's future, making extra efforts to achieve organizational growth.

2.2. Leadership Styles

The organizational leadership literature suggests that leadership is a critical factor that determines the success or failure of an organization. According to Rivai (2017), leadership style is the behavioural disposition of leaders towards subordinates to influence them to contribute to efforts to achieve organizational effectiveness meaningfully. It entails the art of inspiring people to bring about beneficial changes in organizations and helps employees to be responsive to the leaders' directives and expectations (DuBrin, 2019; Nurani, Samdin, Nasrul, & Sukotjo, 2021)). Moreover, the literature presents several leadership styles which impact organizational success**.** Transformational and transactional leadership styles feature prominently in the literature as organizational leadership paradigms with significant potential to influence employee commitment and organizational outcomes.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is conceptualised as a leadership style that seeks to encourage employees to develop their full potentials, moralities, and motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011). It implies that the leader inspires subordinates to change their perception, behaviour, morals, ideas, interests, and values to embrace selflessness and be devoted to surpassing prescribed organizational goals in their job roles. Similarly, Bass & Riggio (2006), cited in Fok-Yew (2015), explained that transformational leadership involves a leadership disposition to constantly stimulate and inspire underlings to achieve exceptional outcomes and, in the process, develop their leadership abilities. It suggests that transformational leadership encourages changes regarding how organizational goals are accomplished. According to Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai (2011), transformational leadership entails clear vision articulation, linking individual and collective interests, and providing subordinates with necessary props to achieve organizational goals.

There are four significant characteristics associated with transformational leadership. They are intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Nweke, Okoye, & Dike-Aghanya, 2021). A leader is deemed intellectually stimulating if his disposition impresses and encourages subordinates to attempt novel and creative work approaches. It implies the extent to which a leader inspires associates to challenge prevailing assumptions and engage in risk-taking actions (Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai, 2011). Leadership behaviour characterised by attentive coaching or mentoring aimed at developing subordinates' potentials and enabling self-actualisation is referred to as individualised consideration. It promotes practices that link employee achievement and growth needs with organizational strategy and goals by

assigning more responsibilities (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004). Idealised influence refers to a leader perceived as charismatic, confident, ethical, mission-oriented, trustworthy, respectable, and exemplary behaviourally (Lee, et al., 2011). Inspirational and motivating leaders are deemed to be skilful at articulating organizational vision in ways that motivate employees to buy into the vision and strengthen their resolve to achieve superior outcomes. Inspirational motivation implies that leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by injecting meaning and challenge into their followers' tasks (Silva & Mendis, 2017).

In sum, transformational leaders exert considerable efforts to inspire and motivate their employees by creating vivid pictures of achievable goals. They are perceived as outstanding role models, and their followers emulate most of their actions. Moreover, they activate self-confidence in their followers, empowering them to strive for extraordinary performance in their tasks (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2014). Transformational leadership is considered a leadership model with the potential to foster more significant follower commitment than other models.

2.2.2 Transactional Leadership

According to Aga (2016), transactional leadership is characterised by an exchange practice predicated on fulfilling contractual obligations. It involves setting objectives, monitoring, and controlling outcomes. In a transactional leadership context, the leader and follower agree on what roles and tasks the follower must accomplish. The bargain can include the material or psychological rewards the leader will provide the follower for completing the agreed tasks. Humphreys (2001) noted that a reward system is a prominent characteristic of transactional leadership. The reward system acts as an incentive for employees to achieve organizational goals. Transactional leaders are prone to appeal to the self-interest of their workers as a means to stir them towards the pursuit and achievement of set goals. Leaders who employ the transactional leadership model help their subordinates to take cognizance of their responsibilities and the prescribed goals to achieve. Also, they motivate their followers by developing their self-confidence about attaining expected levels of performance (Lo, Ramayah, Min, & Songan, 2010).

Transactional leadership is described in terms of two characteristics: the use of contingent rewards and management by exception (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). They described contingent reward as the leader's reward to bestow the subordinate once the latter has achieved the predetermined goals. According to Rawung, Wuryaningrant, & Elvinita, (2015), exception management is a leader's corrective or evaluative response to employees on the job mistakes. Thus, transactional leadership emphasises the task-related exchange of actions and rewards between followers and leaders. Udayanga (2020) suggests that transactional leadership involves two significant dimensions, namely task orientation and people orientation. He describes task-oriented leaders as persons with minor concerns for employee growth or personal satisfaction. They seem to have a penchant for assigning specific tasks, specifying procedures, scheduling work and clarifying expectations, encouraging hard work, emphasising deadlines, driving full capacity utilisation, and closely supervising employees. Conversely, people-oriented transactional leadership is characterised by a leadership orientation that creates an environment of emotional support, warmth, friendliness, and trust.

Through the contingent reward mechanisms, transactional leaders can elicit from employees a significant level of commitment, loyalty, organizational involvement, and productivity (Awoyemi, 2018; Garg & Ramjee, 2013, Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Silva & Mendis, 2017). The leader's commitment to fulfilling reward promises such as enhanced pay, recognition, promotion, bonuses, etc., can facilitate the leader's organizational goals. Additionally, management by exception enables leaders to monitor and control the quality of job outputs. In times of relative goal stability, transactional leadership appears to be more expedient at securing employee commitment (Aga, 2016).

Based on the above, transactional leadership is perceived as a leadership model involving commensurate employee loyalty and productivity in response to incentives. The reward is based on predetermined expectations agreed to between leaders and followers. The individual work-related desires of employees are satisfied in the form of recognition, pay increase, promotion, and bonuses.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory
The social exchange theory professes that a mutual bond is activated as persons who incur obligations reciprocate in social interaction (Blau, 1964; Mugizi, Bakkabulindi, & Bisaso, 2015). The concept of social exchange theory suggests that when employers and employees interact, there is a tangible or intangible social exchange that may be more rewarding or costly to either of the parties. The organization management literature avers that one of the characteristics of organizations is being a social system comprising people with a defined purpose to which all members subscribe. Norms and rules regulate the behavior of organizational members. As organizations make and enforce human resource management-related rules and practices, employees respond with behaviors that impact corporate purposes (Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2013). Thus, organizations can motivate employees to achieve organizational goals through leadership styles that recognize employees' social exchange-related aspirations.

Doubtlessly, employees play essential roles in the actualization of organizational purposes, and there are ensuing social exchanges emanating from their roles. From the standpoint of employee workplace-related behavioral research, social exchange theory offers a paradigm to evaluate and understand how leadership styles can influence employee attitude as organizations seek to achieve their objectives. Geetha & Mampilly (2012) suggest that HRM practices serve as organizations' commitment to employees, reciprocated with positive work attitudes such as loyalty and trust.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Leadership Style and Employee Commitment
Leadership styles and employee commitment has been a subject of interest in the leadership and management literature. Researchers within diverse contexts have empirically explored it. Many studies reported a positive relationship, while others found the relationship negative.

Abasilim, Gberevbie, & Osibanjo (2019) examined the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment. The study used correlation and regression analysis to analyse the surveyed data sourced from 97 employees of the Lagos State Civil Service Commission. The authors reported a positive relationship between leadership

styles and employee commitment. Specifically, the report revealed that the association between transformational leadership style and employee commitment is significantly positive. However, transactional leadership style is negatively related to employees' commitment and is insignificant.

Ugochukwu & Egwuatu (2021) used Pearson Product moment correlation to assess how leadership style affects employee commitment in the banking sector of Anambra State, Nigeria. The data used for the study was sourced through structured questionnaires administered to 507 employees. The study's outcome showed a significant positive relationship between transactional leadership style and affective commitment, while the connection between transformational leadership and continuance commitment was significantly positive.

Dariush, Choobdar, Valadkhani, & Mehrali (2016) studied the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment dimensions. Their study was based on a sample of 223 employees of a government agency in Tehran, Iran. The multi-factorial leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were deployed as data collection tools. At the same time, structural equation modeling and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze data. The results showed that transformational leadership was positively related to affective, normative, and continuance commitments. Similarly, the results indicated that transactional leadership is positively and significantly associated with continuance and normative commitments.

Jekelle (2021) explored how leadership styles affect employee commitment. A cross-sectional survey was conducted of 151 employees at a public sector agency in Abuja, Nigeria. The research engaged a quantitative approach to collect data using a questionnaire and analyzed the data with simple regression analysis. The author reported a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment. Similarly, the result of the association for transactional leadership was positive.

Alemayehu & Batisa (2020) analyzed surveyed data of 136 employees of three transport companies from the Wolita and Dawro zones of Ethiopia using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and simple regression analysis. The study's objective was to determine the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and the three dimensions of employee commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). The researchers reported that transformational leadership significantly affected affective and normative commitment, but not continuance commitment. Besides, the effect was more substantial on affective commitment. Also, transactional leadership positively impacted affective, continuance, and normative commitments individually.

Chully & Sandhya (2016) used correlation and simple regression as statistical tools to analyze data from a sample of 308 faculty members of Bangalore-based higher education institutions. The authors aimed at determining how the perceived transformational leadership behavior of departmental heads impact members of faculty's affective commitment. The study showed a significant positive relationship between perceived transformational leadership and affective commitment.

Nurani, Samdin, Nasrul, & Sukotjo (2021) empirically examined the effect of leadership style on employee commitment and employee performance using an Indonesian institution as context. The sample consisted of 94 respondents, and SEM Smart PLS was engaged to analyze the data. The study's outcome showed that leadership style positively and significantly affected employee commitment. It implies that organizational leadership is a significant factor in fostering and sustaining employee commitment.

Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe (2013) undertook a study to ascertain the impact of the respective dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee commitment. The authors employed correlation coefficient and simple regressions to examine data derived from their survey of 80 employees of 10 Nigerian banks through the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ). The authors reported an insignificant positive relationship between transformational leadership styles and employee commitment, while the link between transactional leadership and employee commitment was significantly positive. They noted that Nigerian bank employees are more responsive to transactional leadership in their commitment than to the transformational leadership approach.

Shurbagi (2014) showed that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment is a strong and positive one. The study's outcome was based on regression analyzed data sourced from a sample of 227 Libya's national oil corporation employees using the multi-factor leadership (MLQ) and organizational commitment questionnaires (OCQ). The study also revealed that idealized influence and normative commitment recorded the highest correlation among the various dimensions of transformational leadership and employee commitment. Comparatively, intellectual stimulation and affective commitment recorded the weakest relationship.

Wiza & Hlanganipai (2014) employed surveyed data of 160 university academic staff of South African-based institutions to investigate the effect of leadership styles on employees' commitment. The data were analyzed using Spearman correlation analysis. The study's findings revealed that affective and continuance employee commitment dimensions were significantly and positively impacted by transformational leadership style. Conversely, normative commitment was significantly and positively affected by transactional leadership style.

Garg & Ramjee (2013) employed the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) to collect data from 197 employees of selected South African public agencies. Their study examined the relationship between leadership style and employee commitment using the two-tailed Pearson analysis to make inferences from the data collected. Garg and Ramjee showed that the effect of transformational leadership on affective, normative, and continuance commitment is weak positively and significantly so. However, transactional leadership had a weak but significant positive correlation with normative commitment.

Overall, findings from available empirical literature suggest that leadership styles significantly influence the various dimensions of employee commitment:

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design, Sample, and Data Collection

The study employed a survey research design to establish a causal relationship between variables. The study's population consisted of 440 faculty and 334 non-teaching staff of a private university in the South West of Nigeria. The sample size of 89 was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula on sample size determination with a 10% level of precision. The Yamane sample calculation is a way to determine the sample size for a study. It is an ideal method to use for survey research and when the population is finite (Uakarn, Chaokromthong, & Sintao, 2021). The Yamane sample size states that:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2} \qquad (1)$$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Population = 774

e = Allowable error = 0.10

Hence,　　$\dfrac{774}{1 + 774\,(0.10)^2}$

n = 88.56

n = 89 respondents

Primary data was generated using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and the Multifactor Leadership Style Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Both questionnaires were adopted because they have been widely used and recommended for their sound psychometric properties (Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe, 2013; Shurbagi, 2014). The results of prior evaluative studies (Cronbach alpha and confirmatory factor analysis) of both research instruments were used to assess the reliability and validity of both instruments. The OCQ's composite Cronbach alpha was 0.91. At the same time, the construct validity, namely RMR, GFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA, indicated models fit (Jonathan, 2020). The composite Cronbach alpha of the MLQ was 0.82, and the validity indices showed models fit (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008; Ugu & Okojie, 2016). Consequently, Ugu & Okojie (2016) avers thus: *"…in sum, the MLQ (Form 5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1997), has proven successful in adequately capturing the full leadership factor constructs of transformational and transactional leadership theory… the coefficient alpha of reliability were generally significant and above the minimum target of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), and the correlation of the construct showed that the instrument was robust, reliable and valid for assessing the leadership style in Nigeria."*

Both questionnaires employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1= strongly disagree; to 5= strongly agree) to measure the study's variables. Employee commitment was measured using two elements of the OCQ (affective and continuance) commitment, respectively. Transformational leadership was measured through two dimensions of the leadership approach (idealized influence and inspirational motivation), while transactional leadership was measured through contingent reward and management by exception. Three indicators of the respective measuring instruments adopted were utilised to gauge respondents' perceptions of each of the study's variables. Table 1 shows the sources of the constructs and indicators.

Table 1 − Sources of constructs and indicators

Variables	Construct	Source
Employee commitment	Affective commitment continuance commitment	Adopted from Meyer & Allen (1997)
Transformational leadership	Idealized influence inspirational motivation	Adopted from Bass & Avolio (1997)
Transactional leadership	Contingent reward management by exception	Adopted from Bass & Avolio (1997)

The study adopted proportional and simple random sampling technique in the selection of respondents. The faculty and non-teaching staff of a private university in the South West

of Nigeria were classified as distinct groups, according to the University's employee classification. Subsequent to the stratification of the target population, simple random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample from the respective groups. The proportionate size of their respective population was the bases for the distribution of the research instrument to each employee category (Kassa &Raju, 2014; Kothari 2010). Table 2 shows the proportionate allocation of the data collection instrument.

Table 2 − Proportional Distribution of Research Questionnaire

S/N	Employee Group	Number	Proportion %	Allocated Questionnaire
1.	Faculty	440	57[*]	51[*]
2.	Non-teaching	334	43[**]	38[**]
Total		774	100	89

[*] 440/774 x 100 = 57%.   [*] 57/100 x 89 = 51.
[**] 334/774 x 100 = 43%.   [**] 43/100 x 89 = 38.

The researcher personally administered the survey instruments to 51 teaching and 38 non-teaching employees of a private university in the South West of Nigeria using proportional and simple random sampling methods. The field survey lasted for a period of two months and the response rate was 85% (76 returned questionnaires). Table 3 shows respondent's demographic data.

Table 3 − The Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	51	67.1
Female	25	32.9
Age		
21-30	8	10.5
31-40	14	18.4
41-50	36	47.4
51-60	17	22.4
61 and above	1	1.3
Respondents' highest education		
PhD	47	61.8
Masters	19	25.0
PGD	3	4.0
BSc/HND	7	9.2
Respondents' educational background		
Business Administration	11	14.5
Sciences	19	25.0
Humanities/Arts	9	11.8
Engineering	15	19.7
Social Sciences	22	29.0
Respondents' length of employment (years)		
1-5	12	15.8
6-10	18	23.7
11-15	27	35.5
16-20	19	25.0

3.2 Data Analysis Method

The dependent variable for this study was employee commitment measured as affective and continuance commitment. Independent variables were transformational (idealized influence and inspirational motivation) and transactional (contingent reward and management by exception) leadership styles. Based on the study's objectives, the collected data was analysed with simple linear regression to determine the level of influence independent variables have on dependent variables. The fitness test of the regression model was conducted with SPSS 23.0. The model fitness was estimated using the coefficient of determination, which helped explain how closely the predictor variables explain the variations in the dependent variable. A p-value of 5 percent significance level was determined as a basis for deciding on the directional relationship of independent and dependent variables.

3.3 Model Specification

$Y = f(x)$
Y is the dependent variable, i.e., Employee Commitment
Hence $Y = (y_1, y_2)$

X is the independent variable i.e. transformational leadership and transactional leadership
Hence $X = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4)$

Where:
y_1 = Affective Commitment (AC)
y_2 = Continuance Commitment (CC)
x_1 = Idealized Influence (IF)
x_2 = Inspirational Motivation (IM)
x_3 = Contingent Reward (CR)
x_4 = Management by Exception (ME)
a_0 = is the intercept or constant in the equation
β_1 = regression co-efficient of x_1
β_2 = regression co-efficient of x_2
β_3 = regression co-efficient of x_3
β_4 = regression co-efficient of x_4
ei = error term

Expressed in its functional form:

$$AC = a_0 + \beta_1 IF + ei \qquad\qquad\qquad (i)$$
$$CC = a_0 + \beta_2 IM + ei \qquad\qquad\qquad (ii)$$
$$AC = a_0 + \beta_3 CR + ei \qquad\qquad\qquad (iii)$$
$$CC = a_0 + \beta_4 ME + ei \qquad\qquad\qquad (iv)$$

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Idealized Influence and Affective Commitment
The result in Table 4 (R-squared = 0.905) emanating from the model summary of the relationship between idealized influence and employees' affective commitment indicated that variations in the perceived idealized influence of leadership accounted for 90.5 percent

of the observable changes in affective employees' commitment. It connotes a very high-level positive correlation (R= 0.952) between this approach to leadership and its outcome on employee commitment level. From the analysis of the variance result (Table 5), it was seen that the estimated model of affective commitment was found to be statistically significant (F-statistics= 2163.9; P-value = 0.00) at 1 percent and thus provides statistical validation for the result of the relationship between idealized influence and affective employee commitment.

The analysis of the coefficient estimates of the relationship between idealized influence and affective commitment in Table 6 portrayed a significant direct impact of this element of transformational leadership style on employees' affective commitment. The detailed analysis of the effect of idealized influence on employees' affective commitment (Beta = 0.952; T-statistics= 46.5; P-value =0.000) showed that 95.2 percent of affective employees' commitment was traceable to idealized influence. The result demonstrated that transformational leadership style influences employees' commitment level towards actualizing organizational objectives.

Table 4 − Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.952[a]	.905	.905	.387

a. Predictor: (constant), idealized influence

Table 5 − ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	324.571	1	324.571	2163.884	.000[b]
Residual	33.899	226	.150		
Total	358.469	227			

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment
b. Predictor: (constant, idealized influence

Table 6 − Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.439	.083		-5.314	.000
Idealized influence	1.102	.024	.952	46.518	.000

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

4.1.2 Inspirational Motivation and Continuance Commitment

The result of the model summary (R-Square=0.633) in Table 7 showed that 63.3 percent of the changes in continuance commitment as a gauge of employees' commitment was attributed to inspirational motivation as a measure of transformational leadership style. The correlation (R=0.795) implied a significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation and continuance commitment.

The ANOVA result (Table 8) indicated that the estimated model of continuance commitment was statistically significant (F-statistic=389.4; P-value<0.01) at a 1 percent significance level. The result implied a significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation as a dimension of transformational leadership style and continuance commitment as a measure of employees' commitment. The analysis of the coefficients (Table 9) showed a positive impact of (T-statistics =19.733; Beta coefficient =0.795; P-value= 0.000) 79.5 percent of inspirational motivation on continuance commitment. Hence, through the inspirational motivation of employees, the evel of employees' continuance commitment is significantly enhanced. The result showed that transformational leadership style could be considered a significant factor that boosts employees' workplace commitment.

Table 7 – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.795[a]	.633	.631	.773

a. Predictor: (constant), inspirational motivation

Table 8 – ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	232.684	1	232.684	389.391	.000[b]
	Residual	135.048	226	.598		
	Total	367.732	227			

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment
b. Predictor: (constant, inspirational motivation

Table 9 – Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.270	.210		-6.034	.000
	Inspirational motivation	1.109	.056	.795	19.733	.000

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment

4.1.3 Contingency Reward and Affective Commitment

The model result in Table 10 showed a strong correlation between contingency reward and affective commitment. It is further seen that 89.8 percent of the changes in affective commitment were traceable to contingency reward. The ANOVA (Table 11) result showed that the strong correlation between contingency reward and affective commitment is statistically valid at a 1 percent level of significance (F-statistic =1997.1; P-value =0.000). The analysis of the coefficient results in Table 12 showed a significant impact of 94.8 percent of contingency reward on affective commitment (Beta coefficient = 0.948; t-statistics = 44.68; P-value<0.01). Hence, utilizing more contingency rewards as a leadership style will significantly enhance affective commitment in an organization.

Table 10 − Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948[a]	.898	.898	.402

a. Predictor: (constant), contingency reward

Table 11 − ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	322.027	1	322.027	1997.074	.000[b]
	Residual	36.442	226	.161		
	Total	358.469	227			

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment
b. Predictor: (constant), contingency reward

Table 12 − Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.305	.083		-3.669	.000
	Contingency reward	1.030	.023	.948	44.689	.000

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

4.1.4 Management by Exception and Continuance Commitment

The model summary results in Table 13 indicated a strong positive relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment. The result of the correlation coefficient (R=0.813) showed the existence of a strong correlation between management by exception and continuance commitment.

The statistical significance of the model (F-statistics = 441.6; P-value<0.01) at 1 percent level of significance in Table 14 suggested that the strong positive relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment was statistically confirmed. The coefficient estimates of the relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment are shown in Table 15. The result indicated a significant impact of 81.3 percent change in continuance commitment that was attributable to management by exception (Beta coefficient = 0.813; T-statistic = 21.0; P-value <0.01) at significant level of 1 percent. The result, therefore, suggested that management by exception could be considered a significant leadership style that affects the continuance commitment of employees in an organization.

Table 13 − Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.813[a]	.661	.660	.742

a. Predictor: (constant), management by exception

Table 14 − ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	243.236	1	243.236	441.551	.000[b]
1	Residual	124.496	226	.551		
	Total	367.732	227			

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment
b. Predictor: (constant, management by exception

Table 15 − Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.719	.173		-4.166	.000
	Management by exception	.927	.044	.813	21.013	.000

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment

4.2 Discussion

The regression results showed that idealized influence and inspirational motivation, which are elements of transformational leadership, have a significant positive effect on affective and continuance employee commitments. It reflects empirical persuasions that when subordinates perceive a leader as a role model and a source of motivation, employees tend to be emotionally attached to the organization and are inspired to give their devotion to its goals. It implies that infusing challenges and meaning into job roles would ultimately improve organizational effectiveness due to enhanced employee productivity and lower absenteeism and turnover rates. The literature on leadership styles suggests that transformational leadership styles affect employee commitment levels with implications on organizational outcomes.

This study's result is consistent with Wiza & Hlanganipai (2014), whose findings revealed that affective and continuance employee commitment was significantly and positively impacted by transformational leadership style. Similarly, Jekelle (2021) reported a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee commitment. Nevertheless, to some extent, this study's result was inconsistent with the findings of Alemayehu & Batisa (2020). They reported that transformational leadership positively affected affective commitment but negatively related to continuance commitment. The divergence in outcomes may be attributed to contextual and methodological factors.

Furthermore, the analysed data for this study indicated that contingent reward is positively related to affective commitment and significantly so. Also, the result showed that management by exception has a significant positive relationship with continuance commitment. This finding implies that transactional leadership facilitates positive work attitudes and high performance by provoking employees to set and realize diverse work targets, such as timely and efficient task completion, promotion, and salary upgrade. Besides, the result suggests that the social and economic exchange relationship fostered by transactional leadership behaviours such as the leader's clarification of the role and task

requirements for subordinates as well as the performance criteria and the rewards upon accomplishing desired goals, promotes employees' emotional attachment to the organization.

The findings agree with Xenikou (2017), which showed that employee affective identification with an organization is influenced by evaluating the resources and rewards that the organization offers to its employees through the transactional style of leadership. Ugochukwu & Egwuatu (2021) and Alemayehu & Batisa (2020) also demonstrated a positive link between transactional leadership and employee commitment. However, the findings of Abasilim et al. (2019) showed that transactional leadership style is negatively related to employees' commitment and is insignificant. Possible reasons for their differing results may be the study's settings, methodological approach, and population characteristics. Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe (2013) demonstrated that Nigerian bank employees are more responsive to transactional leadership in their commitment than to the transformational leadership approach.

5. Conclusion

We investigated the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment by examining sampled data of a higher education institution in Nigeria. The result suggested that leadership style is positively related to employee commitment, particularly transformational and transactional leadership styles. The overall findings indicated that transformational and transactional leadership are complementary leadership approaches facilitating organizational effectiveness. While transformational leadership behaviours activate self-confidence in employees, empowering them to strive for extraordinary performance in their tasks, transactional leadership helps to clarify employee roles, task requirements, performance criteria, and the rewards upon accomplishing desired goals. These leadership attributes promote employees' emotional attachment to the organization leading to more positive work attitudes, extra effort, and higher employee performance.

The current study provides fresh insights into the literature on employee workplace behaviour and the leadership paradigm. It contextually demonstrated that transformational and transactional leadership styles encourage employees to identify with an organization emotionally, fostering long-term positive work behaviours. The study's finding helped resolve the prevailing tension on the leadership style and employee commitment link arising from the conflicting results of extant studies by reinforcing empirical convictions that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables. Also, the result demonstrated that change in leadership style associated with changes in an organization's leadership can significantly affect employees' devotion to the organization. Besides, the study's outcome reaffirmed the social exchange theoretical postulations, which argued that a mutual bond is activated when persons who incur obligations reciprocate in social interaction.

The ensuing recommendation from this study's findings is that organizational leaders should make conscious efforts to establish human resource policies and practices that foster employee trust, responsible, and productive behaviours. The agreed exchanges between the organization's leaders and subordinates should be fairly implemented as a means to establish employee emotional attachment to the organization.

While this study has provided new insights into the nexus of leadership style and employee commitment, future studies should address its limitations. First, limiting the contextual scope to one ecclesiastical-owned university may constrain a general application of the findings. Therefore, future studies may consider using several church-owned universities as context. In the same vein, future studies may benefit from comparative studies between church-owned and government-owned universities regarding leadership styles and employee commitment relationships. Second, the study focused on two out of the three perceived dimensions of employee commitment and two out of the four professed dimensions of transformational leadership. Therefore, interpretation of the result may be limited to the relationships regarding the examined dimensions.

Consequently, future studies may consider a comprehensive model involving all dimensions of employee commitment, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership. Finally, we used a survey approach for the data collected that was analyzed to determine the directional relationship between the variables. The response bias associated with the questionnaire as a data collection instrument possibly limited the general application of the findings. However, the reliability and validity assessment of the data collection instrument mitigated the occurrence of response bias.

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ENTERPRISE SUCCESS: DOES ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION MATTER IN NIGERIAN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES?

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Abstract

Developed and developing countries have demonstrated commitment toward nationwide enterprise culture. Success in entrepreneurship depends on many factors, including entrepreneurship education (EE). In Nigeria, research studies on factors affecting the success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are devoid of a comprehensive theoretical framework. Many SMEs owners are interested in discovering these critical success factors. The bulk of research on EE concentrates on its effect on entrepreneurial intentions (EI). The efficacy of EE in enterprise success (ES) is still uncertain. This study surveyed randomly selected 325 SMEs operating in Lagos using adapted research instruments adapted from previous studies. Correlations and multiple regression analysis were applied to analyze the data. The analysis revealed the non-significant relationship between most personal business demographics and the ES. However, the contribution of EE to ES was statistically significant. The study's findings revealed that EE is the prime driver of ES. EE positively affects ES significantly. The implication is that a well-designed and implemented EE program will enhance business success. Therefore, entrepreneurs need to acquire knowledge relating to business management and the identification and exploitation of investment opportunities.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the development of sustained applications and solutions that collectively address grand challenges to improve the world (Markman, Waldron, Gianiodis and Espina 2019). Consequently, entrepreneurship is regarded as the backbone of any economy. As stated by Co and Mitchell (2006), employment generation and revitalization of the economy are achievable through the rediscovery of entrepreneurs who take risks, break new grounds and innovate. Hence, entrepreneurship worldwide remains a priority if not in actions but in words (De Carolis and Litzkey, 2019).

Maliranta and Nurrai (2019) maintained that early business dynamics research has shown that entrepreneurship activities have a sustained impact on economic growth. Entrepreneurial activities are crucial for sustainable economic development in several aspects. First new businesses have an impact on job creation. Second, a dynamic process of creating new ventures ensures economic welfare and augments efficiency and productivity. Third, new firms act as the engine for promoting innovation and realizing business ideas. Fourth, the revitalization of depressed neighbors and communities is attainable through new venture creation. Fifth, business owners' economic and non-economic lives improve by creating new businesses. Sixth, youth unemployment and poverty can be reduced through new venture creations. (Ghavidel, Farjadi, and Mohammadpour,2011; De Carolis and Litzkey, 2019; Maliranta and Nurrai 2019 and Lawal, Akingbade, and Williams, 2017).

The idea of unemployment and poverty were alien to Nigeria in the eighties. Therefore, the successive government did not consider the menace of unemployment, poverty, and recession in the agricultural market as issues of concern (Ojeifo, 2013). Recently, poverty and unemployment have become Nigeria's significant challenges and have maintained a rising trend. Nigeria remains the only member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) among the world's poorest countries and has high rates of unemployment in Africa (Ayandike, Emeh and Ukah, 2012). Therefore, Nigeria's unemployment crises are more critical than other developing countries. The World Bank Report (2018) statistics revealed that almost half of the Nigerian population lives below the international poverty line, and unemployment reached its peak level of 23.1%.

Developed and developing countries have realized the vital contribution of enterprise development to the economy's health. Subsequently, they have demonstrated commitment to nationwide enterprise culture (Lawal *et al.*, 2017; SBS, 2003 Alarape, 2008). Globally, governments at various levels provide policy and institutional support to stimulate, support, and sustain entrepreneurship development. Furthermore, government efforts focus on improving collaboration with international organizations such as International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), etc., to strengthen entrepreneurship skills and competence of the nation's industrialists for enterprise success (Alarape, 2008). In addition, the growing importance of entrepreneurship for sustainable economic progression, innovation, and job creation has concerned decision-makers and researchers. (Amreen *et al.* 2019).

Enterprise success (ES) is often defined in terms of economic performance and is sometimes used interchangeably with growth and performance (Katongole, Ahebwa and Kawere,2014; Rahim,2021). ES is influenced by several formal and informal factors (Makhbul, 2011). Personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, such as education, training, and experience, have been demonstrated as predictors of an entrepreneur's success (Genty, Idris and Pihie, 2014). Intrapersonal resources such as formal schooling, formal

entrepreneurial training and education and informal entrepreneurial training and education have been demonstrated as predictors of enterprise success among micro and small entrepreneurs in Uganda (Katongole *et al.*,2014). Formal financial, technology, and strategic partnership support are also considered critical success factors in business ventures (Carrier, Raymond and Eltaief, 2004). Studies conducted in Lebanon also identified environmental factors, psychological and prior experience as the main factors affecting the success of social entrepreneurs. (Raimi, 2019)

Meanwhile, entrepreneurship education (EE) is increasingly becoming an essential strategy for entrepreneurship development because of its perceived impact on enterprise success. EE has developed parallel with that entrepreneurship (Nabi *et al.*, 2017). Entrepreneurship as a course started at Harvard Business School in 1947. Subsequently, entrepreneurship education programs in higher education institutions (HEIs) have grown rapidly globally (Nabi, Linen, Fayolle, Kruege, and Walinsley, 2017; Genty *et al.*, 2014).

Nigeria's government renewed its effort in promoting entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions focused on encouraging the students to develop the required knowledge, skills and motivation for a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship (Ojeifo, 2013). Furthermore, to address unemployment and the high level of poverty in the country, the Nigerian government initiated a program titled "National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS)" in 2004 (Genty *et al.*, 2014). The program was designed to ease the country's wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction goals. In addition, the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) was established in 2004. The aim was to promote and develop efficient and effective micro Nigerian SMEs through an effective entrepreneurship education (EE) that will enhance enterprise success among the SMEs in Nigeria.

EE programs are premised on a range of entrepreneurial outcomes. For example, enhanced job skills and knowledge, stimulation of entrepreneurship intentions (EI), motivation to entrepreneurial success, and ultimately a contribution to sustainable economic growth and development (Ojeifo, 2013; Genty *et al.*, 2014; Nabi *et al.*, 2017).

Generally, assessment of the impact of EE usually focuses on EI. Consequently, the bulk of the research on EE concentrated on its effect on EI. Meanwhile, few studies examine the question of enterprise success (Foyette, 2011; Nabi *et al.*, 2017). EI is the self-acknowledged conviction by a person who intends to establish a new business venture and consciously plans to manage it at some point in the future. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is undoubtedly one of the most extensive models used to demonstrate the efficacy of EE. TPB has three independent constructs: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2002). According to this theory, EI is contingent on the perceived ability to perform entrepreneurial behavior, individual attitude toward becoming an entrepreneur, and the perceived pressure to perform or refrain from that behavior (Nabi *et al.* 2017).

Research studies on the relationship between various factors and the success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are devoid of a comprehensive theoretical framework, and many SMEs owners are interested in discovering critical success factors (Simpson, Tuck, and Bellamy, 2004). TPB has remained a useful framework for the assessment of entrepreneurship development. However, scholars such as Genty *et al.* (2014) and Panda (2002) have demonstrated the significant role of EE and other demographic factors on ES.

The demographic characteristics of small business owners are important for many reasons. Sociologically, they are important determinants of social stratification and the social class to which an individual belongs (Ritzer, 2016). Demographic profiles of entrepreneurs such as age, marital status, sex, religion, and occupation determine access to the scarce resources of the society, in this case income and social status (Giddens, 2016). Empirically, it is uncertain that demographic characteristics affect achievement in all facets of life. The sociological theories only serve as guides to explaining enterprise success. The idea that demographic factors are determinants of success in business is subjective. (Micah, 2022).

In Nigeria, academic research demonstrating the relationship between demographic profiles of small business owners, entrepreneurship education and enterprise success remains nascent, despite the proliferation of studies on entrepreneurship, therefore, there exists a literature gap in entrepreneurship education. Given the foregoing development, a more specific approach is needed to assess the relevance of EE and the demographic characteristics of small business owners in the enterprise success of Nigerian SMEs. A major point of debate is:

RQ1. *How effective are EE and business owners' demographics in achieving enterprise success*?

This paper, therefore, explores whether EE and other demographic variables affect enterprise success. Our objective is grounded on the notion of relevance. There is growing interest in the nature, content and relevance of entrepreneurship development programs. Our study differs from the previous study because we explore how entrepreneurship education and other personal and organizational variables can lead to enterprise success based on human capital theory and the theoretical framework adapted from earlier studies (e.g. Indarti andLangenberg, 2004). The paper integrates the knowledge of the existing studies on EE with the hope of making a substantial contribution to the literature by analyzing and interpreting this relatively neglected area.

2. Literature review

2.1 Conceptual framework

Entrepreneurship Education (EE)
Research shows differences in objectives and meanings associated with the construct, mainly based on educational programs and initiatives (Alberti *et al.* 2004). Furthermore, there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of entrepreneurship education (e.g. Maina, 2014; Alarape, 2008; Alberti *et al.*, 2004). In addition, there is little evidence to indicate whether institutions are teaching relevant skills to future entrepreneurs (e.g. Edelman, Manolova and Brush, 2008). Moreover, there is a need to believe that entrepreneurship education is essential and, if properly delivered, will enhance the probability of start-up.

Traditionally, EE is a course of study that provides students with the knowledge to start a new business venture (Omoniyi and Bongani, 2022). EE refers to education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills (Bae, Qun, Miao and Fiel 2014). It deals with establishing competencies in identifying new business opportunities and addressing

ambiguous decision-making (Martin and Brown, 2013, p. 35). According to them, EE is "any pedagogical program or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which involves developing personal qualities". In conceptualizing EE, it is important to distinguish between education about entrepreneurship and education for entrepreneurship. The former focuses primarily on raising awareness about entrepreneurship, while the latter deals with preparation for setting up a business for potential entrepreneurs and usually focuses on practice and action-oriented learning philosophy (Rauch and Hulsink, 2015).

The term entrepreneurship education is perceived differently depending on the research context- it is generally used in the USA and Canada but less commonly applied in Europe (e.g. Alarape, 2008; Gibb, 1993). On the other hand, it is usually known as enterprise education in the UK (Alarape, 2008). Thus, some researchers clearly distinguished the two constructs (Alarape, 2008; Gibb, 1993). Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing functional management skills and abilities that train individuals to start, manage, and develop a business. In contrast, enterprise education is the advancement of personal enterprising attributes and attitudes that prepare the individual for self-employment.

Entrepreneurship education is the capacity to connect the right quantity, quality and combination of resources consistent with profit making under risks and uncertainty (Ojeifo, 2013). It is a lifelong process (Ojeifo, 2013; Essien, 2006), starting as early as elementary school and progressing through the levels of education, including adult education. However, some experts argue that the emergent body of knowledge in entrepreneurial education was affected by conceptual and contextual consideration, which tends to limit its broader applicability and generalization (e.g. Matlay, 2008; Matlay and Carey, 2006).

Furthermore, the divergent opinions in the field of entrepreneurship polarize the concept leading to the emergence of different theories (Matlay, 2008). Hence, this has led to an oversimplification of the construct and evolution of increasingly complex models of entrepreneurship theory (Matlay, 2008; Matlay, 2005), none of which mirrors the complexity, heterogeneity and intensity of entrepreneurial practice. In other words, these trends negatively influenced the development of and research outcome in entrepreneurship education (Matlay, 2008; Matlay; 2005; Matlay, 2006).

The effective mode of delivery EE on the other hand, has been a subject of debate. According to EE can be delivered based on the goals (Hytti and O'Gorman.2004).EE that focuses on improving the level of understanding entrepreneurship will adopt public outlet techniques such as lectures, seminars, and the media. These techniques are effective for timely dissemination of information to a wide number of target audience. EE directed towards entrepreneurial skills acquisition will utilize industrial training is the greatest option. EE for creation of entrepreneurs requires experimental designs such as role-play or business simulation. (Omoniyi and Bongani, 2022). Irrespective of the methods used educational institutions have a role in entrepreneurial education.

In summary, EE builds the competence of small business owners and eventually enhances their competitive advantage. (Reynoso,2008). EE provides the knowledge (know what), skills (know-how), social skills (know who), appropriate attitudes and motives (know why), and know when. (Katongole *et al.*, 2014). Meanwhile, EE can be learned gradually designed, and implemented through formal and informal entrepreneurial training and education.

Entrepreneurship Success (ES). Success is a subjective concept and differs from one person to another. Definitions of entrepreneurial success depend on the personal ideas of entrepreneurs. Beaver (2002, p.88) once remarked:

> *…… there are very real problems with the term "success" and its various interpretations and perceptions in the small firm sector.*

The propensity to become self-employed through EE may guarantee entrepreneurship success (ES). Entrepreneurship literature is replete with attempts to determine the best measures of success. Researchers either advocate the use of financial and non-financial indicators to measure success (Ahmad, 2013). Recent studies have recommended the use of both financial and non-financial indicators to measure success because measures are complementary and describe the concept comprehensively and clearly. The present study acknowledges the need to measure enterprise success from both financial and non-financial perspectives for effective measurement of entrepreneurial success.

Barreto (2013) considered ES as the success rate of an entrepreneur over a set of firms and during a given period. In differentiating enterprise success from failure, previous research studies associated entrepreneurial success with continued trading, and entrepreneurial failure is linked to unrewarding or ceased trading (Dafna,2008; Watson *et al.*,1998). A successful enterprise is a venture that is not bankrupt or liquidated (Watson, 2007). Conventional theorists challenged this position on the premise that the decision to remain in business is not exclusively based on profitability but could be due to the characteristics of the entrepreneur (Harada, 2002). An enterprise may cease operation due to failure and diversification of resources to pursue more profitable investment opportunities (Katongole *et al.*, 2014).

The indicators of ES adopted include tangible elements such as revenue, personal wealth creation, profitability, sustainability, turnover, customer satisfaction, productivity, number of orders and contracts, number of employees and competitiveness, business ethics, and development of the good image. (Alkusanmi and Rida,2021, Makhbul, 2011, Wiklund, Patzelt and Shepherd, 2009; Walker and Brown, 2004). Meanwhile, Dafna (2008) associated entrepreneurship success with survival by supporting the notion that a successful business is a venture that has been operating effectively for at least three years. For this study, ES is assessed based on a self-reported SMEs scorecard on financial performance relative to competitors. This approach has a wider application and validity (Yang, 2008).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs in Nigeria are heterogeneous. There are found in a wide variety of industries, ranging from the single artisan producing leather, weaving traditional dress "Aso Oke" in the rural areas, the retail shop owners, the cybercafé shops to small sophisticated engineering software firms exporting its product overseas and a medium chemical firm selling its product to multinational pharmaceutical companies. The owner may be poor or rich. The firms may operate in different markets (urban, rural, local, national, and international). The business may embody different skills, capital, sophistication, and growth orientation levels and operate in the formal or informal sector. (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, Adelaja and Abiola 2007).

Over the years, there have been attempts at defining what constitutes a small business. Scholars, experts, and institutions looking for an objective definition of small business have

used a variety of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including legal status, ownership structure, level of technology, number of employees, investment, sales volumes, net worth, profitability, and so on (Lawal and Akingbade,2018; Lawal *et al.* 2017). Statistical definitions of SMEs vary by country. Due to its ease of collection, the most commonly used variable is the number of employees.

In Nigeria, definitions of SMEs have not been stable. However, despite these variations, various definitions adopted by respective agencies provide the necessary framework for administering policy measures to promote this subsector. For this study, MSME is defined as enterprises employing not more than 100 staff with a total investment ceiling of 1 Billion Naira (SMEDAN/FOS 2021).

### 2.2 Theoretical background and hypotheses development

This research is quantitative. Therefore, a helpful framework for examining the effect of EE on ES is the human capital theory popularised by Becker (1993; 2002). The theory was developed in relation to personal and educational investments. The human capital theory is based on the notion that education plays a crucial role in boosting economic growth. Thus, Gilles (2015) argues that the more the investment in education, the better the economy. Subsequently, human capital was widened to include knowledge, skills, competencies, attributes and attitudes (Becker, 2002). Education is the key factor in human capital and remains critical for economic success. Human capital theorists proposed that investment in training and education improves enterprise performance (Zhao *et al.*, 2005). The general human capital of the business owners is achieved through education, training, experience, and specific human capital of self-experience and leadership experience (Becker, 2002). Therefore, it can improve the enterprise's success (Stone, 2008).

> *Although the general proposition of this theory is that education increases performance, from an entrepreneurship perspective, general education has little impact on the entrepreneur's competence. (Morrison, 2000). Only EE affects the entrepreneur's competence because of its efficacy in developing skills and values that help enterprises succeed. (Wikland et al.,2009).*

The main components of SMEs are entrepreneur characteristics, the characteristics of SMEs, and the type of strategy associated with growth (e. g. Indarti and Langenberg, 2004; Storey, 1994). This study's theoretical framework was adapted from previous studies (e.g. Indarti and Langenberg, 2004). However, unlike the contextual component of Indarti and Langenberg, we explored the efficacy of EE as depicted in Figure 1. Furthermore, the justification for each of the variables included in our model is also explained in the next section of this paper.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model
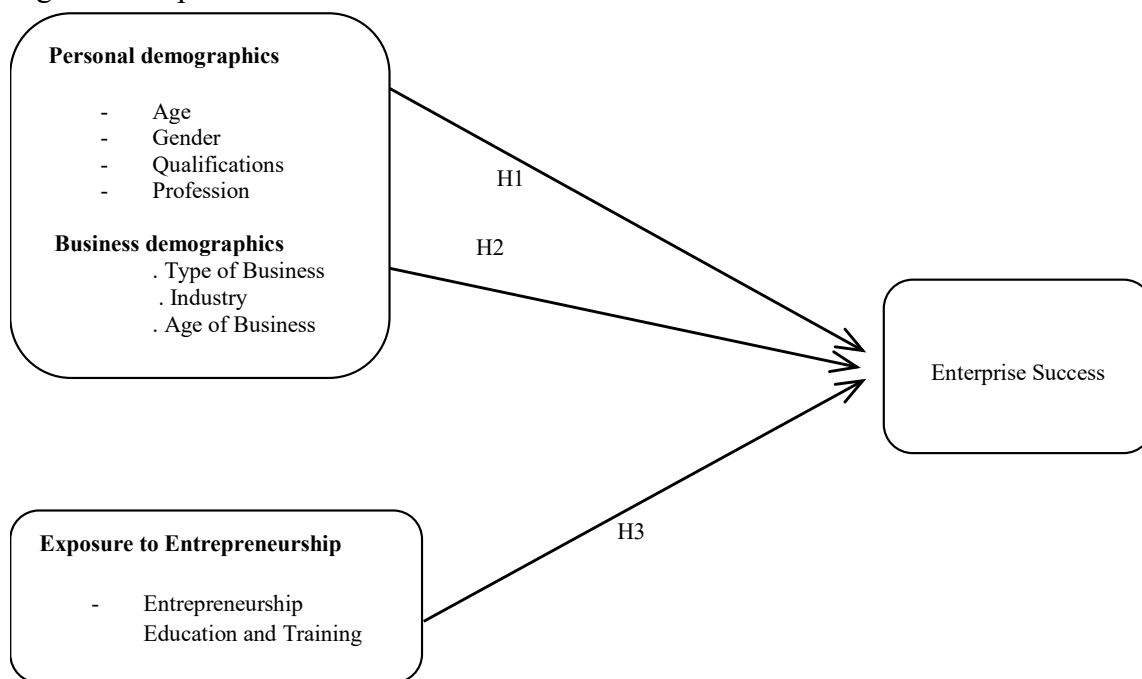
2.3 Personal demographics, organizational demographics and enterprise success

Previous research examined the impact of personal and organizational factors on enterprise success. (e g. Genty et al,2014; Makhbul, 2011 and Indarti and Langenberg, 2004). Results have been mixed. Genty *et al.*, 2014 showed that some demographics are negatively regressed on ES while others are positive. However, the entrepreneur's experience is the most predictor of entrepreneurial success among MSMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. Studies on the relationship between formal education and enterprise success have generated mixed results. However, there is agreement that experiences gained from family business ventures will likely contribute to enterprise success (Katongole *et al.*, 2014). Prior experience is effective if the entrepreneur can learn from such experience. Research findings have demonstrated that novices and experts perceive and exploit opportunities differently (Sarasvathy, 2008), implying that experience is essential but insufficient for enterprise success.

In a similar study, Indarti and Langenberg (2004) found that education significantly affected ES. Other demographics such as age, gender, and previous employment history had little impact on ES. On the other hand, studies by Reynold et al (2000); Kristiansen, Furuhot, and Wahid (2003) found age to influence ES. These studies demonstrated that older entrepreneurs are more successful than younger ones. Progression in age is strongly and positively related to work experience, fostering the development of entrepreneurial skills until diminishing results associated with old age sets in. late commencement of business may imply the absence of the energy and resilience required during the start-up of the business (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2010).

Gender was also found to be one of the predictors of ES. For example, Mazzorol *et al.* (2009) found that females were generally less likely to be founders of successful new businesses than males. In addition, women have been predicted to possess lower levels of human capital with fewer opportunities to develop appropriate experience and

consequently have more difficulty identifying and exploiting investment opportunities (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2010; Martinez, Mora and Vila, 2007:102).

Tkachev and Kolvereid (1999) found that individuals with prior experience had significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions than those without such experience. Business owners with greater previous experience will have higher entrepreneurial quality because the experience would have entailed a learning process that assists in identifying opportunities, reducing initial inefficiency, and improving the capacity to perform various tasks. Previous experience includes work experience, business management experience, and industry-specific experience (Tustin, 2003:88; Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2010). Studies conducted by Mullion et al (2014) extended the education and success interface by examining the value of education for individuals and the population. The findings reveal that not only the individual level of education positively affects enterprise performance, but also a higher educated population also positively influences entrepreneurship success. The implication is that education and higher education policies should be in tandem to each other for entrepreneurship success.

Similarly, studies on SMEs support the suggestion that company demographics such as the size of the firm, age, organizational structure, company's network, and product competitiveness may affect enterprise performance (Panco and Korn, 1999:2). Kristiansen, Furuhot and Wahid (2003) found that age of the business was significantly linked to ES. Some research findings also support this position by demonstrating that the age of an organization may affect the growth and decline of business ventures (Panco and Korn, 1999:2). The challenge of newness makes new SMEs face a greater survival risk than older firms because new firms do not have limited access to external resources in comparison with older firms that have the experience, access, links and reputation (Davila *et al.*, 2003:700).

SMEs exist in a highly competitive environment, with unique and different challenges when compared with larger competitors in the same environment (Van den Berg, 2004:2). Smallness of these ventures is negatively related to survival rates, owing to the limited resources that constitute a fundamental liability (Gruber *et al.*, 2010:194; Davila *et al.*, 2003:700). Meanwhile, business ownership, organizational structure, and strategic choices are factors that may affect growth and survival of SMEs (Gundry and Welsch, 2001:458; Kangasharju, 2000:29). Smallbone, Leig and North (1995) found that SMEs characterized by the combination of ownership and management were likely to develop a high level of commitment to the growth of the business. In addition, Makhbul's study of entrepreneurial success considered the entrepreneur's independence, ability to make decisions and control of the organization as critical determinants of ES.

Based on the above submission, this paper proposes that:

H1: *Personal characteristics of Nigerian small business owners significantly affect enterprise success (ES).*

H2: *Characteristics of the Nigerian small business ventures significantly affect enterprise success (ES).*

2.4 Entrepreneurship Education and Enterprise Success

Previous studies revealed that entrepreneurship education produces self-sufficient enterprising individuals (Indarti and Langenberg, 2004). Moreover, EE increases the formation of new ventures, the likelihood of self-employment, the likelihood of developing new products, and the likelihood of self-employed graduates owning highly technology businesses. (Libecap,2000). Education, training, and experience are the predictors of ES, but experience has significantly predicted ES among MSMEs in Lagos, Nigeria (Genty *et al.* 2014). Similarly, studies conducted by Saganthe, 2007; Van Gelderen *et al.*,2005; Ucbassan *et al.*,2010 also supported the significant impact of EE on ES. Finally, an exploratory study by Makhbul (2011) argued that EE that focused on leadership, human relations, communication, and networking significantly affected ES.

There is an ongoing discussion on the appropriateness of the course content, technology-driven pedagogy, and effectiveness measures (Solomon, 2007). Similarly, earlier discussions on entrepreneurship education had questioned whether entrepreneurship courses were not simply traditional management courses with a new label (e.g. Solomon, 2007; King, 2001). Meanwhile, there is a general agreement that the core management courses offered in traditional business education programs are essential for success in any business endeavor. (Solomon, 2007; Block and Stumpf, 1992). However, there are differences between business principles applied to new ventures and those applied to the large organization (see Solomon, 2007; Davis, Hills and Laforge, 1985). In summary, we propose that:

> **H₃**: *Entrepreneurship training and education (EE) of small business owners significantly affect enterprise success (ES).*

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the effect of EE on ES. Therefore, the survey was considered suitable. Small business owners from Lagos state in southwestern Nigeria were selected. The selection of Lagos was based on the cosmopolitan nature of the State. Lagos state has a diverse population, including foreigners and Nigerians from different tribes. Religious diversity is also rich; the State has many Muslims, Christians, and other faiths. Its small landmark does not encourage exclusive agricultural activities.

According to the 2017 Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) collaborative survey, the number of MSMEs as of 2020 stood at 39,644,385 as against 41,543,028 indicting a decrease of 4.5 percent and Lagos State had the highest number of MSMEs across all classes (SMEDAN and NBS,2017). The State is the commercial nerve Centre of the country. With its vintage position, it has the largest concentration of different industries. The reason for the decrease could be attributed to the negative effect of COVID 19 pandemic in 2020

3.2 Population and sampling plan

Respondents were business owners operating in Lagos. The study population comprised registered business enterprises under the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). As of 2020, the population of SMEs registered with SMEDAN was estimated at 8395 businesses. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula. Four hundred business owners were randomly selected from different Industrial Centers in the State. Enumerators were appointed to distribute the three-section questionnaire. The researchers monitored the process of data collection.326 questionnaires were properly filled and subsequently used for analysis. Respondents were adequately informed about the purpose of the research, and given the opportunity of anonymity, and their responses were treated confidentially.

3.3 Instrumentation

In view of the exploratory nature of the research, existing measurement scales were adapted to gather the requisite data. The scale for measuring entrepreneurship education was adapted from Maresch *et al.* (2015). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – 7. Enterprise success was measured with five-item statements similar to Makhbul (2011). The items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (coded 1 as 1 = total disagreement and 7 = total agreement). The seven-point Likert-type response style was used across the research instrument to preserve consistency and make the administration easy. Part A measured respondents' demographics. Questions included were age, gender, educational attainment, profession, type of industry, type of business, and age. The 5 questions relating to entrepreneurship education were listed in Part B. We measured respondents' exposure to 5 different entrepreneurship education programs: entrepreneurship, small business management, enterprise growth, new venture management, and business organization. Part C contained 5 questions relating to enterprise success. They included financial performance, revenue growth, and return on sales of responding firms relative to competitors.

3.4 Analytical tools

An Exploratory Data Analysis process preceded actual data analysis to verify that the data gathering process satisfies the requirements of normality and linearity (Makhbul, 2011). Correlation analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between EE, other demographic characteristics, and enterprise success. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable and clarify the most significant factors that influence enterprise success.

3.5 Internal reliability of scales

Cronbach reliability test was conducted using IBM SPSS statistics version 19. The internal reliabilities of scales used in the study: EE and ES, were examined and found to be greater than the benchmark of 0.70.

Table 1 − Internal Reliability of Scales

Name of the scale	Indicator	Cronbach alpha	No of items
Entrepreneurship Education (EE)	Exposure to EE programs like EDP, Business Planning	0.888	5
Enterprise Success	Financial performance, revenue growth, ROI etc	0.906	5

Source: Author's Analysis

3.6 Descriptive statistics of variables

Descriptive statistics provide some information concerning the distribution of scores on continuous variables (Skewness and Kurtosis). This information is required since the study's main variables are subjected to parametric statistical techniques. The skewness value provides an indication of the symmetry of the distribution. On the other hand, Kurtosis provides information about the "peakedness" of the distribution (Pallat, 2010).

Table 2 provides the output from the descriptive analysis.

Table 2 − Descriptive Statistics of Entrepreneurship education and Enterprise success **(ES)**

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Stats	Std dev	Stats	Std ers
Entrepreneurship education	325	5	35	22.53	7.35	-0.264	.135	-0.271	.136
Enterprise success	325	5	35	23.50	6.39	-0.467	.270	-0.496	.270

Source: Author's Analysis

From Table 2 presented above, the negative Skewness values of EE (-0.264) and ES (-0.496) indicate moderately skewed data with clustering scores at the high end. The Kurtosis values of EE (-0.271) and ES (-0.496) are below 0. This implies a platykurtic distribution that is relatively flat (Pallat, 2010).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of demographics

Table 3 shows the detail of demographics. The majority of the respondents belonged to 20-40years. 216 of the respondents representing 66.5%, were males, while others were females. The majority of respondents representing 62.5%, belonged to the management-related profession. Similarly, 65% of respondents were graduates. Perhaps, because of the nature of responding SMEs, most firms were sole proprietors (75.4%), followed by the private, partnership, and public companies. Responding firms are primary services 64.6%, manufacturing 13.2%, ICT 13.2%, and have been in existence for more than 5 years.

Table 3 − Demographics Analysis of Respondents

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
Age:		
Below 20	1	.3
20-40	212	65.2
41-60	97	29.8
61 and above	15	4.6
Gender:		
Male	216	66.5
Female	109	33.5
Qualification:		
SSCE:	85	26.2
HSC/GCE	29	8.9
BSc/HND	169	52.0
Profession	17	5.2
MBA	15	4.6
Other	10	3.1
Profession:		
Engineering/Technology/Science-based	122	37.5
Business based	203	62.5
Type of business:		
Sole ownership	245	75.4
Partnership	26	8.0
Private company	52	16.0
Public company	2	.6
Type of industry:		
Management	43	13.2
Services	210	64.6
Agriculture	11	3.4
Property	15	4.6
ICT based	36	11.1
Others	10	3.1
Age of the business:		
1-5years	131	40.3
6-10years	102	31.4
Above 10years	91	28.0

Source: Author's Analysis

4.2 Correlation analysis of demographics, Entrepreneurship Education (EE), and Enterprise Success (ES)

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for demographics, EE and ES. In addition, the correlations among all the study variables are displayed. Based on the table, age, gender, qualifications, profession, type of business, type of industry, and age of the business have meant Xs of 2.39, 1.34, 2.62, 1.62, 1.42, 2.45, 1.88, 22.53, and 23.53

respectively. The respondents' standard deviations SDs are 0.58, 0.473, 1.23, 0.485, 0.76, 1.28, 0.83, 7.35 and 6.39.

The correlations between demographics, EE, and ES, are also displayed in Table 4. Again, it is apparent that some independent variables have a significant relationship with ES. The most significant is EE (0.629), followed by the age of respondents (0.202) and the age of the business (0.117).

Table 4 − Analyses of Mean, Standard deviations, and Correlations among dependent and Independent variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	2.39	0.58	1	-.003	-0.12	0.25	.022	-.003	0.455	.170	.202**
Gender	1.34	0.47		1	-.213	.362	-.165	-.066	.168	-.004	.073
Qualification	2.62	1.23			1	-.133	.197	.107	-.046	.064	.019
Profession	1.62	0.49				1	-.229	-.170	.148	-.024	-.006
Type of business	1.42	0.78					1	.043	.125	.082	.057
Type of industry	2.45	1.28						1	0.061	0.055	0.072
Age of business	1.88	0.83							1	.074	.117**
EE	22.53	7.35								1	.629**
ES	23.50	6.38									1

N= 325
**P<0.01(2-tailed)
*P(<0.05(2-tailed)
Source: Author's Analysis

4.3 Multiple linear regression analysis

To test the study's hypotheses, demographics: age of respondents, profession, gender, qualification types of industry and age of the business were entered into the regression analysis (Model 1). Next, the independent variable of EE was also entered into the regression analysis to determine the contribution of EE to ES (Module 2).

Module 1 showed that demographics explained only 5.8% of the dependent variable (ES) variance. Only the age of respondents had a significant and positive effect (B 0.184, p<0.01), indicating that the age of respondents had a significant effect on ES R2 increased subsequently to 41.5% and was significant when the independent variable of EE was added into the regression. Contribution of EE to ES in the prediction of ES (B = 0.61 p<0.01).

Hypothesis III was therefore confirmed; implying that exposure of small business owners to entrepreneurship education is likely to result in a high level of enterprise success.

Table 5 − Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Age	**0.184***	0.077
Gender	0.105	0.90
Qualification	0.025	-0.06
Profession	-0.015	-0.010
Type of business	0.054	0.012
Type of industry	0.069	0.040
Age of business	0.039	0.047
Entrepreneurship education		**0.610****
R2	0.058	**0.415****

Coefficients above are standardized regression coefficients
*P<0.05, **p<0.01
Source: Author's Analysis

4.4 Discussion of findings

This study proposes that SMEs operate in a strategic environment and for sustainable success, a combination of biography and business culture is essential. (Fissaeha, 2011 and Aremu, 2019). The current study verifies the assumption. The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of demographics and entrepreneurship education on enterprise success. First, we determined the impact of personal factors on ES. In analyzing the impact of personal demographics on ES, Hypothesis I was tested. The results show that the business owners' age was the only determinant factor that significantly affected enterprises' success. The finding corroborated Reynold *et al.* (2000) and Kristiansen, Furuhot, and Wahid's (2003) suggestion that the age of the entrepreneur in the field had significantly predicted entrepreneurial success. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of maturity for entrepreneurship educators and policymakers seeking to enhance enterprise success through EE. Although, studies conducted by Micah (2022) found sex, age, marital status, education, and religion interplay in the biography of SME owners, and these factors differentiate them. However, the difference was not a determinant of enterprise success. Except for religion, other factors did not independently predict the enterprise success.

The second hypothesis predicted a significant relationship between the firm characteristics and ES. However, the hypothesis test did not reveal any impact of these variables. Age, type of business, type of industry, and age of the business have a relatively lower influence on entrepreneurial outcomes. Thus, Hypothesis II is rejected by our findings. This confirms the assertion of Gruber *et al.*, 2010:194; Davila *et al.*, 2004 that smallness nature of SMEs constituted a significant challenge to growth and survival.

Hypothesis III predicted a significant positive impact of EE on ES. The study's findings revealed that EE is the prime driver of ES. Furthermore, EE seems to affect ES significantly positively. This may indicate that a well-designed and implemented EE program will enhance business success. Previous studies have confirmed the efficacy of EE in ES. (Gonozatez-Lopez et al, 2019, Makbul, 2011). For example, Harada (2002) corroborated the findings of this study by suggesting that there was evidence that entrepreneurs' previous experience in the industry, previous knowledge of the market and related business experience positively affect turnover. Similarly, Aldrich and Martinaz

(2001) concluded that a certain amount of prior knowledge is required through training, experience or formal education.

Meanwhile, our results may be useful for institutions responsible for EE programs by offering the idea that could be used to strengthen the lecturing of entrepreneurship in the competitive global environment. Entrepreneurs need to acquire knowledge relating to small business management, business ,planning and feasibility studies, leadership, and new business ventures to succeed. Additionally, the EE should focus on attitude change rather than knowledge acquisition because the effect could be more significant to the business creation process and overcome the perceived barriers to EE.

4.5. Contribution to knowledge

Our study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the positive impact of EE on ES. EE is quite a contemporary and significant phenomenon in Nigeria. This study provides a valuable resource of knowledge and information as studies and literature on the efficacy of EE in Nigeria are scanty. From a human capital theory perspective, the evidence that EE is effective in attaining ES provides the reason to support opportunities for small business owners of all ages to acquire EE. The implication is that it is increasingly important and necessary to promote entrepreneurship competence through entrepreneurship education.EE has never been more important than it is now. Reinforcing EE in institutions will enhance the Nigerian economy's entrepreneurship and dynamism. Indeed, besides contributing to creating new ventures, EE will make young people more employable and more entrepreneurial in the work environment across the social, public, and private sectors (EEC, 2014).

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Management scholars have a growing consensus that EE can increase the quality and quantity of graduate entrepreneurs (Matly, 2006). The main reason for this is the ability of EE to positively influence entrepreneurial intentions and equip nascent entrepreneurs with the required business management skills. Consequently, EE programs encourage Nigerian education institutions to institutionalize an entrepreneurship culture. Empirical studies on EE have concentrated on its impact on entrepreneurial intentions. There is a paucity of conclusive and empirical research linking EE and ES in Nigeria. The present research has demonstrated the significant impact of EE on ES. Hence, effective institutionalization of EE will require exposure of prospective entrepreneurs to a new approach and paradigm of entrepreneurship education that can encourage practices and participation, reciprocity, adaptability and rational selection of business ventures.

5.2 Recommendations

Globally, the importance of EE has been recognized. Early scholars have highlighted the relevance of EE in the post-industrial age from different viewpoints. Some development economists have recently proposed the institutionalization of entrepreneurship culture as a viable means of promoting sustainable development rather than capital accumulation. (Omoniyi and Bongani, 2022).

Finally, the findings of this research present some crucial requirements for EE institutions and entrepreneurship support agencies. The findings of the study suggested a number of initiatives to achieve effective EE. Establishing a training environment that simultaneously encourages learning and the creation of small business ventures through teamwork will facilitate creativity and self-confidence. (Lawal and Williams,2018).EE should move from abstract teaching to more practical knowledge dissemination through case studies, simulated enterprises, brainstorming, workshops, business planning, mentoring on leadership, shadowing and profiling entrepreneurs, meeting graduate entrepreneurs, and networking with enterprise development agencies (Fenton and Barry,2014). Moreover, the effectiveness of EE is also contingent on the dedication and commitment of entrepreneurship lecturers. Essentially, these lecturers are instrumental in arousing students' interest in EE. The credibility of such persons depends on the ability to match theory with experience.

Effective EE requires collaborations with real-world entrepreneurs. Contemporary EE regards networking as a vital component of successful EE. Development of entrepreneurship requires both formal and informal networks between students and SME owners. These lecturers facilitate links between students, local and national entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship support agencies (Lawal and Akingbade,2017).

5.3 Suggestions for future studies

Finally, our study has certain limitations. First, the empirical study was limited to SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. This limits the generalization of the study. There is a need for more detailed research covering the entire states of the federation. Second, the measurement of ES focused mainly on financial performance using the personal judgment of responding business owners. This was attributed to the paucity of information, particularly the audited financial statements of SMEs. Therefore, a balanced performance appraisal that combines financial and non-financial indicators is recommended. Third, regression analysis was used in testing the study's hypotheses, a more advanced data analysis such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).SEM will allow for simultaneously modeling the multiple independent and dependent constructs and analyzing the more complex model compared to this first-generation technique. Fourth, the measurement of EE focused mainly on formal entrepreneurial training and education. Indeed informal EE is equally important; therefore, EE should be measured by combined formal and informal entrepreneurial training because of more robust and predictive of ES.

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MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM IN MULTINATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

Organisations are now aimed at achieving fast growth, continuous development, increased performance, profitability and being at the top of the global business spectrum. This necessitates the need for Management Control System (MCS) within firms which will improve firms' competitiveness and performance. This study examines the impact of management control systems on organisational performance using belief control, boundary control, diagnostic control and interactive control systems as a proxy in the relationship between MCS and organisational performance. The study was anchored on Resource Based View (RBV) Theory and Contingency Theory. The study employed survey design which is a type of descriptive research design. Simple Random sampling technique was employed and relevant data were gathered through the use of structured questionnaire. The sample population consisted of three hundred and fifty-eight (358) employees of Globacom Limited, Lagos State. The findings revealed that all the management control system (belief, boundary, diagnostic, and interactive control systems) are directly related to organizational performance. The study recommends that managers should prioritize where to spend their time and resources when using management control systems.

1. Introduction

Organizations are undergoing constant change today (Romi, 2018). Corporations are now aiming at fast growth, continuous development, higher efficiency, profitability and being on top of global business (Zhang, 2013). In addition, organizations are now working in a

constantly changing environment that is very difficult to predict these changes. This problem has led organizations to spend a lot of time and money on change so that high performance is achieved (Nwakoby, Okoye, & Anugwu, 2019). Amin (2017) stated that performance excellence is not feasible today through traditional management methods and organizations need the new management approaches.

Formulation, implementation and performance are part of strategic processes which provide information on the drivers of organizational success and failure (Albertini & Muzzi, 2018). A common activity exists at all stages where activities and results are controlled, to compare the actual performance with the desired performance and where managers can take corrective actions. In this business, the MCS is responsible for developing models and systems that support strategic processes (Albertini & Muzzi, 2018). Nasiru (2018) said that the MCS has developed exponentially in the past two decades which has resulted in the need to better understand its roles and how it can meet managerial needs (Nasiru, 2018).

The performance of all businesses is crucial according to Nasiru (2018). The wide discussion of organizational performance extended the sphere of efficiency, effectiveness, quality, productivity, a good workforce, innovation and learning. Companies are focused on general effectiveness (Amron & Mahmud, 2015). Organizations must therefore evaluate their external and internal environment for sustainable performance opportunities and challenges (Muhammad, Masron & Abdul Majid, 2017). This calls for the Management Control System (MCS) of companies to improve their competitiveness and performance of companies. The formulation and implementation of a management control system include all strategic processes that can be achieved through analysis, planning, measurement, control and reward (Bedford & Malmi, 2018).

The Management Control System (MCS) is defined by Hossain and Hakeem (2018) as the process that ensures that resources are obtained and efficiently and effectively used to meet the organization's objectives. In another empirical review, Ukoha, Alagah and Zuzu (2017) classified the MCS as a formal control and defined it as a control package including budgeting, formal hierarchy and oversight, accounting reports, rules and operating standards, job descriptions, organizational structure, performance measurement statistics, and staff and assessment systems.

Okpara (2017) has also reiterated that the management control system supports a company in achieving its strategic goal; it ensures the effectiveness and efficacy of resources in a company, taking into account all of the significant aspects of controls and ensuring their balanced implementation in the company. However, Albertini and Muzzi (2018) expressed their empirical views by noting that the management control system was vital for management to formulate strategies, specify the operational activities that are required to implement strategies, outline mutual expectations, and set priorities for operational improvements.

Management control system allows managers to achieve key organizational goals. First, MCS supports managers in decision-making, aligning their goals with the goal of the organization and tracking the performance of managers so that they can take remedial actions in real time if required. Second, MCS allows managers to provide strategic direction for their organizations' innovative efforts by making efficient use of resources (Lin, Chen & Lin, 2017).

The total economic results of the activities of any organization are the organization's performance. The performance of every organization namely: effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, quality of life, innovation and profitability has a complex interrelation

between these criteria and the organization. In a nutshell, an organization's success depends on the sound implementation of the company's strategy (Amin, 2017).

In short, the management control system is intended to assist managers in achieving their objectives. Individual and organizational goals are permitted to be pursued by managers and their personnel (Ukoha, Alagah & Zuzu, 2017). However, the amount to which managers fulfill these goals is determined by contextual considerations in various business environments. This view makes MCS the main driver of organizational performance (Ukoha, Alagah & Zuzu, 2017).

Ideally, strategic objectives are provided by top management and the employees pursue these objectives. Unfortunately, this is very difficult in practice because an organization, as far as its inner environment is concerned, does not function or remain static and constant. When one or more of these factors change, at least certain aspects of the management control system will probably be redesigned. These changes can result in tension between creative innovation and the movement for predictable goals in the organization.

Okpara (2017) also noted that the strategic choices made by the company will affect its Management Control System (MCS), which means that various types of organizational plans and strategies will tend to cause different configurations of control systems that distort organizational objectives. There has been growing evidence of unseemly use of MCS that could lead to employee dysfunction, thereby negating the productivity and efficiency of the organization. The most prevalent occurrences of the organizational dysfunctional regime are the manipulation of real data to either increase firm performance or prevent unfavorable consequences generated by disclosing the facts.

There is even a lack of prior empirical research into its use, provided that MCS can be used for various purposes. Some studies indicate that MCS is the basis for organizational performance, but how? Recent, ambiguous, inconclusive, or sometimes contradictory results have been achieved through research on the impact of management control on organizational performance. Despite all the studies, the impact of the various MCS applications on organizational performance still needs to be better understood. This study examines the impact of management control systems (belief, boundary, diagnostic, and interactive) on organizational performance in the light of the Resource Based View Theory and the Contingency Theory.

Following the aim of the study, the various research questions are given below:

i. To what extent does belief control system improve organizational performance within the telecommunication industry?

ii. What is the impact of boundary control system on organizational performance within the telecommunication industry?

iii. What are the influences of diagnostic control system on organizational performance within the telecommunication industry?

iv. What are the influences of interactive control system on organizational performance within the telecommunication industry?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resources-Based View (RBV) Theory

Barney (1991) advocated a strategic management approach called a resource-based view (RBV). Since this time, the strategic management approach RBV has become a leading strategic management theoretical concept, to explain how organizations achieve

competitive advantages. This theoretical model considers the resources of an organization as the key to superior organizational performance, according to the resource-based perspective. In this context, RBV defines resources broadly to cover all the assets an organization can use to formulate and implement strategic measures.

A competitive advantage can be achieved when an organization creates more economic value than its product market competitors, and thus "the difference between the profits perceived by good purchasers and the economic cost of the enterprise" is referred to as economic value (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). The development of competitive advantages within the conceptual framework of RBV is strongly linked to the existence of valuable, rare, inimitable or non-substitutable characteristics of organization-specific resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). Moreover, a further precondition is the heterogeneous and immobile distribution of resources and capacity among organizations.

The conceptual framework of RBV states that corporate resources are broadly divided into two categories, tangible and intangible. The key characteristics of tangibles are that they have visible physical attributes; capital, land, buildings, plants, machinery and supplies are examples of tangible sources. Inverse, intangible resources are invisible and have no physical attributes. Some examples are the culture, brand equity, knowledge base, reputation and intellectual property of an organization (Barney, 2007).

According to RBV principles, companies must focus on the identification, development, protection and use of resources and capacities to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. The resource-based theory considers the resources of the organization as the key to improved organizational performance. In this connection, resources include all the assets a firm can draw on to develop and execute an organizational performance strategy. Malmi and Brown (2018) affirm that the management control system can help develop an appropriate theory on how to design a series of controls that support company objectives, control activities and enhance organizational performance.

2.2 Management Control Systems

The concept and definition of the management control system (MCS) have been examined in various literature. Henri (2016) sees Management Control System (MCS) as procedures and systems that are formalized by using the information to retain or alter the pattern of organizational activity and as well include the planning system, reporting and monitoring system that depend on data provided (Henri, 2016). MCS was developed by Anthony (1965) as the process for the effective and efficient management and utilization of resources, to achieve organizational objectives (Akroyd & Maguire, 2017). Agbejule (2017), on the other hand, described the management control system as a formal information-based routine and procedures that managers use to preserve and change organizational patterns.

Bedford and Malmi (2018) state that in the form of planning and control, the management control systems include: strategic planning, management control, and task or operational control. Strategic planning control addresses problems relating to the fundamental goals and implementation in an organization, followed by monitoring of its progress. Management control deals with proper allocation and efficient use of resources, competitive substance and the transformation into the reality of the organizational objectives. The task management controls address the efficiency factors of the company's operations.

The organizations' employees are effectively guided in the achievement of their goals. The management establishes formal controls in writing, while employee behavior provides informal control (Bedford & Malmi, 2018).

The management control system is a system, according to Albertini and Muzzi (2018). A system consists of a combination of machines and people working for a common goal. A system may be described as a number of phases or stages consisting of the input, transformation and output phases. Measurement, analysis and reporting phases are added to the system by a control system. Measurement of output is carried out as compared to a plan, analyzed and then reported in the positive or negative as feedback in the relevant earlier stages of the control system. Data or information is usually returned to organizational management at every stage of the control system.

Nasiru (2018) argued that management control system is a tool for the company's strategy. However, a more comprehensive view of the management control system may be a system based on the concept of guidance instead of compulsion and also include learning and limits. The concept of the management control system is, therefore, more diverse than the concept of formulating and implementing strategies and is used for various purposes: observation, learning, reporting, restricting, monitoring, and motivation.

Simons (1995) designed a management control framework to achieve the company's strategic goals. The control frameworks concentrate on the transmission and interaction of information for empowerment, innovation, and control (Nasiru, 2018). Empowerment means that employees are given more decision-making and rights in addition to senior management; this is believed to be the way to effectively achieve the desired result. Managers cannot take all information and decisions into their possession. Innovation is based on human activities to improve strategic goals and goals.

This framework aims to implement management instruments that can maintain or change patterns of organizational behaviour. This should be done in a way that reduces to a certain level the final control risk. The key in Simons's (1995) control framework is the interaction of instrumental control mechanisms with people. The interaction between instrumental mechanisms and people-oriented control mechanisms involves leverage between belief, interactive, boundary and diagnostic control systems. The leverage effect and control levers reinforce one another and efficiently and effectively achieve strategic organizational aims. The following are four control levers for Simons (1995):

Belief control systems: People that are part of a belief control system are encouraged to explore new methods to provide value to commit to the organization's aims. Effective managers make an effort to educate and motivate workers about the company's basic values and purpose. These executives believe in people's inherent ability to innovate and bring value to strategic organizations. According to Simons (1995), the core values of creating a sort of social control by employees must be strongly identified. This social control reduces abnormal conduct concerning fundamental values. It will also lead project staff to effectively pursue strategic corporate goals (Hossain & Hakeem, 2018).

H$_{01}$: *Belief control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

Boundary control systems: This provides limitations of the employee project so that unethical behaviour can be reduced to a minimum level (such as framework, conditions, rules and code of conduct). Furthermore, boundary control systems are designed to reduce risks. This system shows the limits that should not be exceeded on employees in the organization.

H₀₂: *Boundary control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

Diagnostic control system: It is used to track targets, key performance indicators, and remedy deviations from the default norm. However, using diagnostic control systems alone will not be enough to provide successful control, since the interplay of instrumental and people-oriented control mechanisms, as well as the leverage effects between belief, interactive, diagnostic control systems, and boundary systems, is crucial (Hossain & Hakeem, 2018).

H₀₃: *Diagnostic control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

Interactive control systems: They are used for organizational learning and strategy enhancement and concentrate on organizational strategic uncertainty. To perceive internal and external signals and react to the company plan, interactive control is a constant interaction between top management and other participating organizational components. Managers may use interactive controls to handle strategic organizational ambiguity, assess risks and opportunities, and react proactively to competitive situations (Hossain & Hakeem, 2018).

H₀₄: *Interactive control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

Strict limitations are placed through the diagnostic control and boundary systems-yin-supplemented by belief systems and interactive control systems-yang, allowing the required innovation to be made. Simons (1995) provided a solution with the principle of control levers, where the necessary creativity and control are sought for interaction.

The management should provide the core values of the (project) organization first within the control levers. Management must also set clear boundaries for employees to stay. Second, to attain the organization's objectives, the interactive control needs to focus on the communication of senior management with the other parts of the organization. Interactive controls aim to create a process of learning throughout the organization through the ongoing reduction of human process deficiencies, optimization of processes and improvement of organizational strategies. This can be achieved by managers regularly identifying risks and evaluating their effects.

2.3   *Organizational Performance*

According to Bashaer (2016), organizational performance refers to a company's performance against its objectives. Tomal and Jones (2017) also define organizational performance as an organization's actual results or output against the planned product of the organization. In addition, According to Bello (2017), a company's potential success is determined by its organizational performance and capacity to successfully execute strategies to fulfil its corporate objectives. The efficiency, performance, and outcomes of the business model are only a few characteristics that indicate organizational performance (Beauty, 2017)

According to Adedeji (2017), organizational performance refers to an organization's actual performance or outcomes as compared to its anticipated performance (or goals and

objectives). Organizational performance according to Adedeji (2017) consists of three particular areas of business performance:

i.   Performance of the financial sector (profits, ROA, ROI, etc.)
ii.   Product and performance on the market (sales, market share etc.)
iii.   Return of shareholders (total shareholder interest, economic value added, etc.).

In most studies, variables such as strategy planning, operations, finances, legal and organizational development are included (Paul, 2018). In recent times, organizations have tried to manage their performance using the balanced scorecard methodology, which measures performance in several dimensions like:

i.   Performance of the financial sector (e.g. shareholder return)
ii.   Service to the client
iii.   Social accountability (e.g. corporate citizenship, community outreach)

Every organization's performance largely depends on its leadership ability in the implementation of strategies (Ngwama & Ogaga-Oghene, 2022). According to Silva (2018), the core of leadership is a conditional connection between a manager and his followers. Given the fact that organizational objectives are always being thwarted, leaders' tactics must be adaptable enough to accept change. Employees are a major element of the firm and comprise the team that works to accomplish organizational objectives, thus their performance is also important.

2.4   *Empirical Review*

Similarly, Nasiru and Rapiah (2018) conducted a study that shows how Nigerian companies' institutional issues have led to a general weakness in their management, which hinders the performance of numerous companies and has resulted in a weak management control system, which is not consistent with the strategic organizational goals. The study adopted a framework consisting of a critical component of the Malmi and Brown (2008) MCS package of planning control, administrative control and cultural control and would demonstrate improved performance if empirically investigated. The study showed that Nigerian managers need to be more informed of the necessity of an improved MCS practice because this would lead to reverse institutional changes, where isomorphic pressure would lead to better MCS practices, which would lead to better business performance.

Oshode, Alade and Arogundade (2018) conducted a study which examined the impact of a management control system on the performance of selected Lagos, Asaba and Kano textile firms in Nigeria using the tool for structural equation modelling. The study's findings demonstrated that, as predicted, external control and formal internal control systems were highly linked with financial, service quality, and procedural performance characteristics. Internal informal control, on the other hand, only had a substantial link with service quality performance. In contrast to the direct association between external control and firm performance, the research found that external control, via the existence of formal internal control, had a greater relationship with all three performance characteristics. In a study by Muhammed (2017) numerous studies in several developed and emerging economies studied the effect of the management control system (MCS) on business strategy and company performance. The findings showed that there is a strong connection between MCS, strategy and business efficiency, which can influence the formulation and implementation of competitive strategies positively and support them.

In terms of cohesion and adaptability within the Nigerian aviation industry, Ukoha Alagah and Zuzu (2017) empirically looked at management control and business effective relations. It tried to explain management control systems to improve the efficiency of aircraft companies. The authors found that management control systems and organizational effectiveness are significantly interconnected by the Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient in testing the hypotheses. The interaction between the management control systems and the effect it is having on the strategy and organisational performance has been studied empirically by Okpara (2017). The result of the research showed that performance-driven behaviour and regular use of management control combine to give improved outcomes. Uddin and Hossian (2017) carried out a study examining the impact of management control systems on organizational performance and productivity from the perspective of multinationals operating particularly in the telecommunication sectors of Nigeria. The study maintains that management control influences organizational performance and productivity significantly in the dynamic emerging world.

3.   Methodology

The survey design, which is a descriptive form of research methodology, was used for this study. The survey approach offers the benefit of collecting vast amounts of data from a big population at a cheap cost. For the population of the study, the study focused on Globacom Limited. Telecommunications services, such as international and domestic voice calls, SMS, high-speed internet and fixed landline ADSL from the company as well as telecommunications solutions, are provided by Globacom Limited. Nigeria, United Kingdom, and Ghana are some of the countries in which Globacom has customers.

Due to convenience and easy data accessibility, 358 employees of Globacom Limited in Lagos State were selected for the study. Field surveys were employed to collect data, and structured questionnaires were the primary method. Out of the 358 employees, 248 employees partook and filled out the questionnaire.

Simple random sampling was adopted as it provided the entire population with equal chances and lowers the rate of error. Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The items for each of the management control system construct were adapted from Mohamed, Wee, Rahmana and Aziz (2014) study. Belief, interactive, boundary, diagnostic, and interactive control systems had Cronbach's alpha values of 0.881, 0.897, 0.871, and 0.897 respectively. The items for the organizational performance were developed for this study, and organizational performance had Cronbach's alpha value of 0.756. According to Sekaran (2005), Cronbach's alpha of 0 to 0.6 signifies low reliability; if the value is within 0.7, it signifies acceptable reliability; and if the value is 0.8 and above, it signifies that the instrument is reliable. Pearson correlation was adopted using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (version 20) to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

4.   Research Results

The study showed that there were more male respondents (54.8%) than females (45.2%) in the sample of respondents. 71% of the total respondents were aged between 30 and 49 years. The majority of respondents for this study are married representing 80.6% of the total respondents. The respondents were educationally sound with 58% of them having

graduated with B.Sc./HND. The majority were middle-level staff, and have spent more than 6 years in the organization.

Hypothesis One:

H$_{01}$: *Belief control system has no significant influence on organisational performance*

From Table 1, the correlation result hypothesis one shows that belief control system has a positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.474 with organisational performance, and it is significantly related at 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between belief control system and organisational performance. This implies that as the level of belief control system increases in the organization, the better the organisational performance and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (H$_0$) and the alternate hypothesis is accepted (H$_1$).

Hypothesis Two:

H$_{02}$: *Boundary control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

From Table 1, the correlation result hypothesis one shows that boundary control system has a positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.475 with organizational performance, and it is significantly related at 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between boundary control system and organizational performance. This implies that as the level of boundary control system increases in the organization, the better the organizational performance and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (H$_0$) and the alternate hypothesis is accepted (H$_1$).

Hypothesis Three:

H$_{03}$: *Diagnostic control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

From Table 1, the correlation result hypothesis one shows that diagnostic control system has a positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.393 with organizational performance, and it is significantly related at 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between diagnostic control system and organisational performance. This implies that as the level of diagnostic control system increases in the organization, the better the organisational performance and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (H$_0$) and the alternate hypothesis is accepted (H$_1$).

Hypothesis Four:

H$_{04}$: *Interactive control system has no significant influence on organizational performance*

From Table 1, the correlation result hypothesis four shows that interactive control system have a positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.472 with organisational performance, and it is significantly related at 0.000 ($p<0.01$). This indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between interactive control system and organisational performance. This implies that as the level of interactive control system increases in the organization, the better the organisational performance and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (H_0) and the alternate hypothesis is accepted (H_1).

Table 1 − Correlations Matrix

		Org_Perf	Blf_Crtl	Bon_Crtl	Diag_Crtl	Int_Crtl
Org_Perf	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Blf_Crtl	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
Bon_Crtl	Pearson Correlation	.448**	.538**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
Diag_Crtl	Pearson Correlation	.606**	.530**	.682**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Int_Crtl	Pearson Correlation	.620**	.605**	.612**	.704**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Blf_Crtl = belief control, Bon_Crtl = boundary control, Diag_Crtl = diagnostic control, Int_Crtl = interactive control systems, Org_Crtlorganisational performance

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The management control system is an undisputable instrument for companies to achieve efficiency in terms of cost reduction, coherence and rapid reactions to a dynamic environment for competitiveness and business performance. Research shows that management control system elements play an important role in influencing organizational performance positively. The belief control system relates to the company's culture, in which a vision and mission statement that state the interests of all stakeholders are communicated to the employees. This result showed that the belief control system is an indicator to ensure managers produce reports detailing relevant trends to achieve better performance for the organization. The findings backed up Hossain and Hakeem's (2018) suggestion that organizations should include belief control systems in organizational performance system design to boost employee readiness to share information to create values and modify beliefs to accomplish corporate goals.

The study revealed that the relationship between organizational performance and the belief control system is positive and significant. The organization will have an appropriate code of conduct, standard operating procedures and a variety of regulatory constraints so that employees follow industry practices and guidelines by including the boundary control system in the organizational structure design. The results reflect Nasiru and Rapiah's (2018) findings, stating that boundary control systems aim to mitigate risks. These systems show the limits that should not be exceeded for workers in the organization. Findings on the diagnostic control system, for example, the budget and budgetary controls and performance assessment system will enable Project Managers to regularly monitor the progress of employees.

The study also showed that interactive control is a major indicator of organizational performance. Interactive monitoring systems give the organization the freedom and mechanisms for periodically assessing customer satisfaction, forecasting and maintaining the firm's existing project portfolio. The results are consistent with those of Ukoha, Alagah, and Zuzu (2017), who hypothesized that an interactive control system might inspire organizations to seek out new methods and practices to improve organizational performance. Managers may use interactive control systems to concentrate on strategic organizational uncertainty, learn about dangers and opportunities, and react proactively to changing competitive situations (Hossain & Hakeem, 2018).

5.   Conclusion

This study examined the link between management control systems and organizational performance in the contextual effect of belief, boundary, diagnostic, and interactive control systems. Companies are pushed to establish business models to handle the risks and uncertainties in their business settings in today's competitive and complicated global economy. The role of the management control systems (MCS) in creating competitive advantage by continuously rejuvenating organisational survival and growth in these complex and uncertain environments cannot be over-emphasized. Managers employ instruments and systems to guarantee that the business responds quickly to dynamism, reduces costs and improve safety while ensuring that the actions and conduct of workers are compatible with the corporate strategy and goals. Businesses may achieve efficiency in terms of cost reduction, cohesiveness, and rapid reaction to the dynamic environment via the use of the management control system, which is an indisputable instrument.

5.1   Recommendations

i.   The company's basic values, beliefs and aspirations should be well communicated to personnel to get them enthusiastic and oriented about the organizational culture.

ii.   The assessment of corporate project performance is necessary to identify better processes in the execution of future projects by the management control systems. This allows for an optimal control system for management.

iii.   The study also recommends that to increase organizational innovation, the development and improvement of the top management of a company should be accompanied by leadership features and management control elements.

iv.   Management control systems may demand a lot of time and resources from the management; therefore, managers should prioritize where they can spend their time and resources. Performance-driven conduct (i.e., goal-oriented behaviour) among managers and other employees is essential to effective management control.

5.2   Contribution to Knowledge

This study examined the link between management control systems and organizational performance in the contextual effect of a belief control system, a boundary control system, a diagnostic control system and an interactive control system. Companies are pushed to establish business models to handle their strategic uncertainties and risks in their business settings in today's competitive and complicated global economy. The role of the management control systems (MCS) in creating competitive advantage by continuously rejuvenating organisational survival and growth in these complex and uncertain

environments cannot be over-emphasized. The study demonstrates that the management control system is made up of tools and procedures that managers employ to ensure that the organization responds quickly to change, lowers costs and improves safety, and ensures that employee actions and decisions are in line with the company's strategies and goals. Unquestionably, the management control system is a crucial instrument for businesses to use to increase productivity and competitiveness via cost-cutting, cohesiveness, and quick responses to changing external conditions.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Study

For future research, the following recommendations have been made:

i. This study examined formal control systems. The implementation of informal control systems (shared belief, normative behaviours and values), social relationships, socialisation processes, and the dependence on autonomy demand more empirical studies that deepen academic knowledge of the management control system.

ii. In other large service organizations, management system practices studies are needed, mainly for banking and insurance firms, in order to generally frame the management control system policies.

iii. A longitudinal study of a wider range of companies would be helpful to study how their decision-making, actions and performance management have affected the use of the management control system.

5.4 Limitation of Study

It was only because every other organization has its own unique set of standards, values and cultural variables that the findings for others were limiting. The research focused only on gathering data via the use of structured questionnaires. Respondents were unable to share their ideas outside of the framework since the surveys were closed.

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"INSERT COIN TO PLAY": THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS BETWEEN BRANDS AND VIDEO GAMES

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Abstract

As part of the dynamics of marketing and communication, the practice of celebrity endorsement has seen an increasingly prolific development over the years alongside a new form of brand communication oriented to enhance brand/product perception through endorsements of authoritative celebrities. In more recent times, the advent of the video game medium, and in particular video games, has led brands to develop new promotional and communication methods from scratch or borrow from other mediums. One that is certainly evocative among those derived from other media fields is product placement. Among the practices developed from scratch, especially in recent years, it is possible to find the use of characters or elements from video games within brand communications. This study was developed to understand this new communication mode adopted in specific contexts by brands, the effects it has on the target audience and the economic and image returns. The contributions made to the matter by this study concern that part of marketing that is focused on the target audience's perception of the brand to develop a connection, a feeling and to boost sales. Moreover, being one of the first studies developed with qualitative methodology, it allows to observe a deeper level of perception from the target audience's side. The study involved a sample of seven people from various parts of Italy, interviewed in a focus group to show how positive and relevant the impact of this form of communication is to the target audience and their impulse to purchase, in addition to the high level of brand awareness this methodology brings. Furthermore, during the focus group, it emerged that this practice could be a strong bridge between brands and gamers, by developing a solid feeling of inclusion in the target audience.

Keywords: Video games and communication; Video games endorser; Video players and brand; Video game advertising.

1. Introduction

The use of endorsers in the world of advertising is an established practice that has seen a steady increase over the years.

This contribution is developed to investigate how much brands, which are not endemic to the world of gaming, use endorsement practices that exploit video game characters or elements for promotional purposes.

The intention is to analyse whether the use of video game characters and elements in brand advertisements is effective in reaching the target audience of video gamers, what level of engagement this practice is able to generate, and whether it can develop positive sentiment and purchase intent towards the brand and its products/services.

The questions which guided this research are the following:

RQ1. *Is the use of video game characters and elements an effective advertising method for brands, which are not part of the video game world?*

RQ2. *What psychosocial effects does this type of communication have on the target audience?*

The main objectives analyzed concern:
- To investigate the possibilities and effectiveness for brands of this communication methodology.
- The involvement, the feeling developed and the perception of this methodology by the target audience.
- The observation of the psychological and social effects that this type of communication manages to develop.

The importance of this phenomenon is directly related to the growth capacity of the video game market, thanks to an ever-growing turnover, in 2016, the turnover was around $99 billion, and in 2021 it almost reached 180 billion (NewZoo, 2016 – 2021a) and a large target audience that has grown from 235 million to 489.5 million between 2015 and 2021 (NewZoo, 2017 - 2022). This field has become a fertile ground for brands, which are acquiring new places to promote their image, values, and voice.

To fully understand the effectiveness of this practice, a focus group was conducted with a sample of seven people chosen according to the latest research on the gamers population (NewZoo, 2021b). In this way, it was possible to investigate from a qualitative perspective the phenomenon. Previous studies show that using fictional spokesperson characters and video games characters can lead to results which are equivalent to those of real celebrities if specific key dynamics are observed: consistency between brand and character, relationship with the target audience and notoriety of the spokesperson (Chuchu & Maziriri, 2020; Shelton & Chiliya, 2014). In fact, the quantitative data collected and analysed by Chuchu and Maziriri (2020) and those collected by Shelton and Chiliya (2014), highlight a positive response of the target group towards the use of this communicative

methodology, showing, regarding the samples they analysed, the development of a purchase intent thanks to this practice (Chuchu &Maziriri, 2020; Shelton & Chiliya, 2014).

This research aims to fill a gap with previous studies, in fact, the difference between this research and previous ones is its qualitative format and the reference sample that tries to reflect the target audience as closely as possible. Thanks to this choice, it was possible to observe the emotional impact told directly by the target audience and bring to light possible improvement methods to increase the effectiveness of this video game-related communication practice.

2. Literature review

The earliest examples date back to the 1980s. Some brands tried using game characters to promote their products and image to a newly emerging audience: video gamers. There are mainly two prominent phenomena related to this practice: In 1983 a company called 7-UP made a commercial using the hungry yellow ball from the video game Pac-Man *"Spot - 7UP soft drink – 1983"* as a testimonial (Tutto Spot 80, 2020); Ralston Cereal, with its 1989 *"Nintendo cereal system"* commercial (Loch SNES Monster, 2020). Today, there are many examples of non-endemic brands that have started using video game characters or elements as endorsers (Louis Vuitton, Ducati, Coca-Cola, etc.).

Data collected by various research platforms support this phenomenon. According to the "Digital 2021" report by We Are Social, in the first half of 2021, 85% of the surveyed people between the ages of 16 and 64, who had internet access, defined themselves as gamers (Starri, 2021). Due to the growth and spread of this phenomenon, it is not unusual to find numerous streamers sponsoring gaming and non-gaming-related products during live gaming sessions.

To increase the interest of brands, we find a high level of acceptance for this type of advertising. On Twitch, 76% of users believe that brand support for streamers in exchange for advertising is positive, as long as there is consistency between the brand and the content created (Twitch, 2021).

Another phenomenon that has favoured the rapid rise of video games is eSports, looking at data from the Newzoo platform, there is an increase in spectators of more than 100% from 2015 to 2021, from 235 million to 465 million (Newzoo, 2017; 2022). Today, this market is worth overall more than $180 billion (NewZoo, 2021a).

As this reality establishes itself, another form of collaboration between video games and brands seems to be emerging, involving the use of *"Game Character Spokespersons"* instead of real celebrities as spokespersons. This is also supported by quantitative data from Shelton & Chiliya's studies (2014) on the ability of even non-endemic brands to generate purchase intent among observers by using video game characters in their communication. In fact, according to their study, the use of video game characters in brand communication *"can be effective at positively influencing consumers purchase intentions."* (Shelton & Chiliya, 2014).

This is achieved through three fundamental elements: the attractiveness perceived by people towards the video game character used; the trustworthiness that the video game character used evokes in people; the expertise that people attribute to the video game character used, i.e., the suitability of the testimonial chosen to sponsor a particular product.

Their studies show how these three elements, when present and well-integrated, are able to influence people and persuade them to purchase.

In addition:

> *"This result is supported by the research which was previously done by Pornpitakpan (2003b) and Ohanian (1991); which found that the perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise of the brand endorser has a positive relationship with the purchase intentions of consumers."*
> (Pornpitakpan,2003; Ohanian, 1991; mentioned in Shelton e Chiliya, 2014).

These data also find further support in the quantitative research by Chuchu and Maziriri (2020) regarding the use of imaginary spokespersons by brands:

> *"The study found that consumers are in favor of spokes-characters and advertisements that use spokes-characters. Moreover, the researchers concluded that only a spokes-character's attractiveness and expertise influence attitudes toward the advertisement and a spokes-character's trust influences attitudes toward the brand. In addition, the study found that individually, both attitude variables have a positive effect on purchase."*
> (Chuchu & Maziriri, 2020).

The quantitative data from this research give further evidence of the potential of using this practice by brands. These, in fact, highlight the effectiveness of using fictional characters to develop a purchase intent in the target audience, as long as, as also noted by Shelton and Chiliya (2014), there are certain elements present: people's perceived attraction to the video game character used; the expertise that people attribute to the video game character selected.

The growth of this phenomenon also indicates a change in the social perception of the video game medium, which is no longer seen as mere harmful entertainment, but as a functional element in various clinical and social contexts (Pallavicini and Pepe, 2020).

Moreover, as recently stated by the *"Gamers in the Age of Streaming"* research conducted by Samsung Ads' (2021), *"Advertisers must adjust their strategies and look for innovative solutions to reach gamers in and out of the gaming console environment."*, showing the need for brands to find new ways to communicate effectively with the gamer population.

3. Data and method

Research on this topic is scarce and almost entirely quantitative, leading to a general and cursory knowledge of the phenomenon without being able to generate data to explain in depth the emotional and perceptual effects on the target audience. In fact, as observed in the previous paragraph, previous research shows the ability of this communicative model to increase purchase intent due to the presence of certain characteristics without, however, considering what psychological components develop in the consumer of this type of advertising. Shelton and Chiliya (2014), in fact, speak about variables that, when added together, lead to the increase of a single factor, purchase intention, without analysing in their studies the psychological perception of individuals. Similarly, Chuchu and Maziriri

(2020) focus their studies on understanding the characteristics of *"spokes characters"* that drive people to increase their purchases from a brand. In these studies, the psychological movement that leads to the creation of a bond of value between brand and observer, the positive effects in terms of perception towards the brand and the psycho-social effects that this practice brings were never analyzed.

Today, however, it is becoming more and more crucial for brands to put the consumer at the center; this is possible by providing valuable content that enables identification and develops a strong emotional impact in line with the feeling of its target audience.

The qualitative method was chosen to investigate the phenomenon, a route which was not taken in consideration in the previous research. This made it possible to understand the target audience's reactions to this practice. Secondly, it was possible to investigate consumer sentiment towards brands that use this communication model.

To comprehend the emotional effect and effectiveness on the target audience, the development of a focus group was needed to encourage discussion and to develop a discourse on the most relevant topics. This was done to collect evidence and points of view regarding emotional involvement, perception, ability to generate a feeling towards the brand and effectiveness in creating awareness towards the target audience.

In order to promote greater homogeneity and emotional openness, a sample of seven people was built.

The discussion developed in the focus group followed an informal line with friendly and relaxed tones. In fact, as pointed out by Cortini (2005):

> *"Mini groups, consisting of four to seven participants, are described in the literature as having a good degree of internal homogeneity that facilitates (...) in terms of emotional openness of the participants. Despite this, the low numbers, (...) may make participants feel more pressure on themselves (...). In such circumstances, an informal style of moderation helps to ease this weight and keep participants from feeling under scrutiny."*

Another relevant point for defining the number of participants and the modalities of its execution concerns the possible problems encountered by the construction of a" Full *Group"* (Cortini, 2005). This type of group, according to Cortini, runs the risk of creating problems such as inhomogeneity, dispersion, background noise and not allowing a complete and involved interaction of all participants. In addition to the main topics of interest, possible ways to increase engagement with the target audience of this type of communication and the ability to generate social inclusion have emerged.

Due to a lack of funds and time, the focus group was unique. The sample was defined following an in-depth analysis of the gamer population, which led to interviewing a group of seven individuals between 19 and 34 years old of different nationalities, all residing in Italy in different parts of the peninsula, three were women, and four were men. Four of them obtained a high school education diploma, and the remaining three had a bachelor's degree. The sample included six regular gamers who owned between 2 and 4 gaming consoles and spent more than 10 hours per week playing video games. One of the six gamers instead, considered himself a casual gamer: he spent less than 5 hours per week playing video games, rarely followed eSports, and only owned two or fewer consoles. The research took place between November 2021 and January 2022, instead, the focus group took place on 12 December 2021 and lasted approximately 2 hours. The discussion and

starting questions were elaborated beforehand, basing their focus on the visual samples which were going to be shown to interviewees.

The aim of the questions was to comprehend the psychological and emotional dynamics developed in the target audience by the chosen visual specimens; the main ones were related to:

- The overall perception of the ads, videos and images examined.
- Emotional and psychological responses of subjects towards the specimens shown.
- Relevance, interest developed, perceived value and pertinence noted by respondents.

The following table shows the first letters of the respondents with their demographic characteristics to provide a more complete picture of the statements in the results section.

Table 1 – Reference letter of each participant and related demographic characteristics

Name	Years	Gender	Level of education
G.	19	M	High school education
I.	22	F	Bachelor's Degree
D.	24	M	Bachelor's Degree
A.	26	M	Bachelor's Degree
L.	29	F	High school education
F.	31	M	High school education
C.	34	F	High school education

During the focus group, several ads and videos were shown by non-endemic brands that use video game characters or elements to promote themselves. Among the ads shown it is possible to find the ones made by: Coca-Cola, Louis Vuitton, Ducati, UN, J-Gel and OnePlus.

4. Results

4.1 Effectiveness, involvement, and perception

During the research, there were several confirmations of the effectiveness of this format, on one side the ability to create interest in the brand and on the other, the purchase intent.

Among the first ads shown, we can notice the one used by OnePlus to promote the North Killer series of phones (OnePlus, 2021).

To get the most out of the features of their phones, which fit well with the target group of gamers, the company created some sponsorships on its social channels in September 2021, combining a discount campaign with the game *Magic the Gathering*.

Figure 1 – Ad created by OnePlus in collaboration with Magic the Gathering.

In this ad, OnePlus has chosen to use a reference to a game that is very well known worldwide. In the image, is possible to see how the phone is placed inside the reproduction of one of the game's cards, creating a direct connection in players' minds between smartphones and *Magic the Gathering*. The connection was immediately grasped by 6 out of 7 participants, who expressed a high interest in the brand strategy. The work of OnePlus was then deepened by the respondents, who noticed some aspects of a specific game element.

> *F.* *"It is not that they made a random artefact, they put (...) things that a player can see, for example, the cost of mana, which is very particular (...) they put some*
> *attention to it, they were also a bit careful."*
> *G.* *"It is very nice (...) it also pulls it off a little bit, no? Because it says legendary artefact, it is not just any artefact, legendary!"*

These statements show how the brand's message immediately reached G. and F., both regular players of Magic the Gathering. The brand's attempt to attribute "legendary" characteristics to the product by associating it with an element that is clear in the eyes of the title's players, shows how this format, whose aim was to communicate with the gamers, received a positive response. In addition, the ability of this type of communication to attract the target audience by generating a "*WOW*" effect (Colletti, 2021) and creating purchase intent through the use of characters or game elements have been highlighted.

> *D.* *"I see it and I say WOW... the OnePlus thing I saw it a couple of months ago and I already have the OnePlus because otherwise, it would definitely be... if it were the right time to switch phones, it would definitely be influential."*

> *A. "In my opinion, precisely as G. and F. said, it is extremely targeted, and people who know the game well grasp those things that I do not understand and say WOW, they are geniuses."*

The statements cited above are also supported by data collected by Chuchu & Maziriri (2020) on the effectiveness of fictional characters in promoting a brand and by those of Shelton & Chiliya (2014) on the ability to generate purchase interest through the use of video games characters to promote even non-endemic brands.

Another interesting case is the collaboration of Louis Vuitton (Louis Vuitton, 2019a) and Ducati (Ducati, 2020) with the video game League of Legends.

League of Legends is perhaps one of the games that have caused the most buzz in recent years; the title, which was created in 2009, now has a very high number of players (Riot Games, 2021). This is also one of the main titles within eSports tournaments and, as shown by the Nielsen report *"Esports playbook for brands 2019"*, it generates alone around 60% of the audience (The Nielsen Group, 2019).

In the eSports world, there are several ways in which brands try to make a presence: sponsoring teams and events, creating customised spots and ads to be published and broadcast during the event days.

The first collaboration to draw attention on, is the one between Louis Vuitton and LoL (*League of Legends*). The partnership between the two brands began with Louis Vuitton's participation in LoL's 2019 eSports World Finals. For that occasion, the fashion house created a custom suitcase to carry and display the world trophy.

Through this first collaboration, Louis Vuitton attempted an approach to the target audience, trying to improve its image both towards the community closely linked to the video game and towards the fans who only followed the eSports events of this title. This collaboration took place a few months before the release of the video game-inspired clothing collection created by Louis Vuitton (Louis Vuitton, 2019b; Liberatore, 2019).

Figure 2 – Collection of ads from the first collaboration between Louis Vuitton and League of Legends.
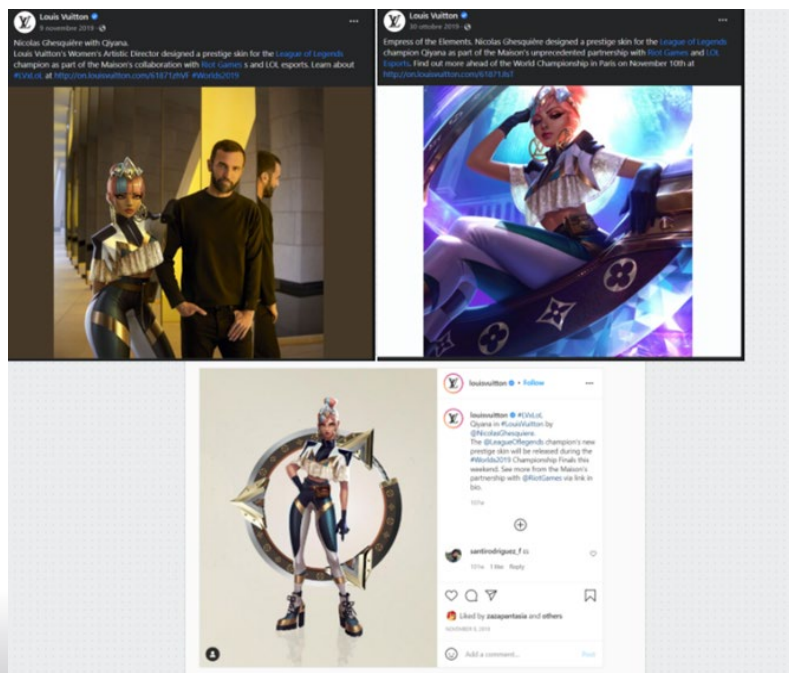
Furthermore, advertisements were created and posted on Louis Vuitton's social media to raise awareness during the months leading up to the collection's release, and several *"skins"*[1] were developed to be purchased inside the video game.

Looking at the creations posted on the clothing brand's social media, it's evident the attempt to bring awareness through the use of one of the game's champions (Qiyana), for whom a themed skin had previously been created. There were several interventions by interviewees in this regard:

G. *"Look, in my opinion... the way I see it, it is also a little bit about the integrity of the company developer, I mean it is very easy to become a sell-out (...) among these ads the one I like the most is the one with Qiyana with her spinning disc and that because it is very much in the spirit of the game. The character is very appropriate to the product including the character, I mean you cannot put a PC[2] as you want, you have to put something that is actually contextualized (...) I mean you do not say "ok the most popular character ever I will put him where I want" (...) and for me the spirit of LOL is very much based on the central image"*

As G. states, the most important thing for him is the consistency between brand and character used, a need that has always been present and fundamental, even when it comes to celebrities in real life. F. then brings to light what he sees as a problem in the use of this method:

F. *"I like the image on the top right where they have replicated next to Nicolas Ghesquière, Qiyana who gives the clear message of collaboration (...) I see the image I say WOW cool LOL it becomes so popular that it has managed to go and affect even Louis Vuitton they have done a collab, but let's say the WOW ends there (...) there is a risk of giving in quotes more credibility to the game than to the brand that is using the game."*

F. statement highlights a possible secondary point of perception. It is therefore essential to study in depth the dynamics that the collaboration between two brands of this type can generate in the consumer's mind; if on one side the reactions can be positive, on the other, there is the risk that one brand will overpower the other.

The following year, Louis Vuitton repeated the initiative by producing a new suitcase for the LoL eSports World Finals trophy (Lombardo, 2020). In addition, the same promotion method was adopted for the French fashion house's new collection of LoL-themed clothes, using ads with gaming characters on Louis Vuitton's social media.

The second collaboration to mention is the 2020 partnership between Ducati and LoL (Ducati, 2020), which saw the creation of a digital model of a motorbike for a music video of the virtual group K/DA, which was composed of LOL champions.

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[1] Skin = different look for characters that can be purchased in the store.
[2] PC = a character in a role-playing game or video game who is controlled by the person playing the game.

For the occasion, a customized bike version was made for the driver - one of the LoL champions -. In the music video promoted by LoL's official channels, the bike is shown in several shots, and from this, some frames were taken out and used by Ducati for their social media ads. This approach has provided the motor house with a powerful impact on two distinct target groups: LoL players and K/DA fans, who are not always players of the title.

Figure 3 – Ad of the collaboration between Ducati and League of Legends.
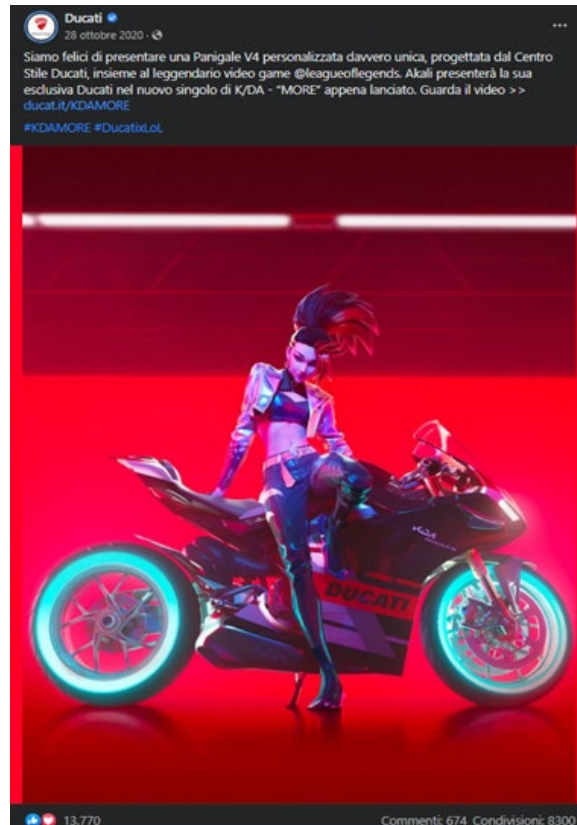
Most respondents highlighted the attractiveness and involvement of this ad:

D. *"I think the one about the motorbike is very beautiful".*
A. *"That is the one I like best too".*
D. *"That one is really beautiful (...) It really has potential as advertising in my opinion. Plus, even on TV, it would fulfil its function as advertisement. When I see it, I stop and say WOW!".*
I. *"I would be interested and if I had seen the motorbike before, I would have run to my father to tell him "Dad, look what a f***ing bike Ducati has made" and then I would have said "do you know who it is? It is one of the ones in the game I play, and they did an ad with Ducati on it, do you like it?" I would have shown it to others because I am not interested in Ducati and if I had been I would have thought about it instead of going and telling someone who can buy it".*
D. *"This makes me say OK WOW! How cool Akali's bike is! I'm going to check it out, got it?"*
C. *"I was thinking the same thing"*

These exchanges show how the use of video game characters as endorsers can achieve high levels of attractiveness to the target audience and the ability to generate an impulse to purchase if the product is within the target audience's interests and economic possibilities. The example spontaneously given by one respondent is also significant:

D. *"OK, I will tell you something that was stuck in my mind a couple of years ago. When I went to Milan I casually stopped right in front of a shop window... there were really big windows... with an advertisement of Final Fantasy 7, one of the girls from FF7, I cannot remember who she was, if Tifa or someone else… With just... there's an advertisement with them and jewellery next to them and on them and that stuff there, it really stuck with me, it worked like a bomb, the advertisement was well done, she was beautiful with the jewellery on, ok, and she was doing the exact same job that a model could do, but from a cool game".*

The example given by D. shows how, in the mind of a passionate gamer of the character or title chosen by the brand, an advertisement of this kind remains imprinted for a long period of time. This is also supported by the Nielsen Company's *"eSports playbook for brands 2019"* report, which shows that 90% of eSports viewers remember at least one non-endemic brand that created bespoke content to sponsor its products during eSports (The Nielsen Group, 2019). Furthermore, as reported by Kristen Salvatore, Twitch's Sales Director, in the Nielsen report:

"Twitch has explained in detail to brands how to authentically connect with gamers and convey their messages. Through tournaments, sponsorships, athletes, and the creation of content tailored to eSports and its audience"
(The Nielsen Group, 2019).

4.2 Psychological and social effects

Various positive effects in the social and psychological spheres emerged during the research. Indeed, we must always consider how advertising communication, in addition to its promotional purpose, clashes with the reality of observers, their perception and society itself. If we consider the perception in past years of the video game medium, there were many parents in the 1980s and early 1990s who were skeptical about their children's passion for video games:

"Like other media at the time of their emergence (think of the advent of the cinema and the famous flight from the cinema hall of the audience seeing the train arriving at the station of La Ciotat, filmed by the Lumière brothers), the video game polarized reactions" (Semprebene, Viganò, 2017).

The characterizing elements of video games have been a source of interest for young people from the beginning, while previous generations needed more time to accept them. As expressed by Semprebene and Viganò (2017), this shift has taken place progressively through the adoption of technologies increasingly linked to video game realities, which have led the more mature public toward a new conception of the video game by showing how:

"The video game could be a medium to achieve an end of personal and social utility (...) associating the medium with a (...) more virtuous end (...)it made possible to lower the level of mistrust towards the medium and, consequently, to ignite curiosity for other possible practices with a tool that was no longer perceived as hostile." (Semprebene, Viganò, 2017).

Thanks to this change of perspective, which also emerged during the focus group, the video game becomes something that goes beyond mere entertainment to which one can associate various possibilities of both social and personal growth. It emerged how this type of communication helps the normalization of the video game and its integration on a cultural level and how this makes players feel more integrated and less stereotyped.

I. "As a player seeing these pictures and seeing them associated with a brand that goes beyond the video game context makes me feel closer and less estranged from all those people who do not actually give video games a penny and do not attribute any seriousness to them."
I. "And seeing the Ducati with Akali on it makes me feel less."
I. "Less estranged from reality"
A. "In my opinion the other side of the coin of what we were saying before...that it does not make you feel, I mean in the sense it makes the game seem like something of"
I. "A bit more real."
A. "Significant for... even for others who are not necessarily players."

Or more:

F. "Watching the premiere of arcane, to give an example, staying in the context of League of Legends, almost all the guests at the party etc., were all over 30 [...] there is a lot of interest (...) so it actually makes it feel more real, closer."
F. "Also because there has always been this taboo of those who play and those who do not, those who play are always mocked by those who do not play and say, "you play video games and pu*****te etc..." and then the Ducati ad comes out."
D. "Now there is no more of this stuff in my opinion"
F. "Maybe also thanks to this phenomenon [advertising with characters and elements of video games]*."*

These sentences lead us to consider how the mentality of the public, the literature world and brands, changed towards video games. Furthermore, it highlights how the strategic and well-integrated use of advertising related to the world of video games generates positive feelings towards the marginalized condition that, until recently, many video gamers used to experience. In this way, it becomes clear the potential this format can have on the image of brands, associating not only the values of the chosen character but also progressive values that aim to integrate and dilute a situation that until not long ago saw a strong stereotyping of gamers.

5. Discussion

This research answered four questions: effectiveness, involvement, perception, social and psychological effects that the use of video game characters and elements generates in the target audience.

The first question concerns the area of effectiveness, both in terms of creating interest and generating purchase intent. In this case, thanks to the responses, it was shown how the involvement of video game characters or elements in a brand's communication generates interest in the observers by attracting them to the brand and developing a declared purchase intention. These outcomes are in line with previous research findings by Shelton and Chiliya (2014) and Chuchu and Maziriri (2020), according to which this communicative practice is capable of creating clear purchase intentionality in the target audience.

The second question concerns the perception of the target group towards this format. If there were a lack of consistency for some collaborations that led to negative perception, the target audience responded positively in those cases where brand and character were found to be similar. This emphasises the importance of carefully choosing the right representative to best convey the company's values and not create a jarring collaboration in the eyes of the public. Here, too, as shown in previous studies by Shelton and Chiliya (2014) and Chuchu and Maziriri (2020), how the relationship between brand and character is perceived is crucial. Both researches have in fact noted as a fundamental characteristic for the success of this practice the expertise of the chosen character, this refers to the coherence of the character and his values with the product, the affinity of his skills with the brand/product and the experience - real or perceived by the target audience - of the character with the product.

The third question concerns the involvement and attraction that this communication can generate in the observer, as pointed out by D. and C. regarding Ducati's advertising, who claimed that this type of ad had created amazement and attraction in them and an interest in learning more about the brand's products. This is supported by previous research, in fact, as Shelton and Chiliya (2014) point out in their article:

> *"This popularity of celebrity endorsement is due to advertisers' belief that a message which is delivered by a well-known personality will attract more attention, as well as improve recall for consumers."*
> (Shelton e Chiliya, 2014).

The fourth issue concerns the psychological and social effects. Respondents highlighted the ability of these advertisements to make them feel more integrated in the social environment, closer to the brand and the real world, partly diluting the stereotypes that usually affect video gamers and the gaming world. This aspect is not investigated by previous research due to their exclusively quantitative approach.

5.1 Theoretical and practical implications

The main implication of this work concerns the importance for both marketers and managers to pay more attention to the potential contact points between their represented brands and the partnership opportunities with game companies.

What emerges from this research is the advantage of brands that comes from the use of video game characters and elements and the positive effects of this practice. Respondents

confirmed the ability of this format to engage and develop the "WOW" effect for a successful and coherent collaboration between PC and the brand.

A further implication of this study concerns the necessity for advertisers to thoroughly research video game characters to sponsor their brand. In this way, it becomes possible to choose what the audience perceives as most similar and connected to the brand in question, to produce an ideal result. If well-balanced, these elements can develop positive sentiment towards the brand and generate purchase intent.

Furthermore, another implication derived from this research is the following: if brand communication managers are aware that the target audience they want to talk to is involved in the gaming world, this communication methodology is a powerful tool to attract this target audience. This consideration becomes even more relevant by observing the steady growth of eSports and its viewers - from 2015 to 2021, more than 100% (Newzoo, 2017; 2022) -, in combination with the steady growth of the video gamer population - from 2020 to 2021, more than 300.00 million (Newzoo, 2020; 2021c) -, are other positive signs for the future of this practice.

This kind of communication, according to the interviewees, could reduce the distance between the real world and the society that surrounds gamers, a reality that has been perceived many times by them. The analyzed methodology seems capable of creating inclusion, bringing benefits of perception and image to the brand that uses it. This leads us to consider a further implication for marketers and brand managers; in fact, choosing to use this communication methodology when dealing with a target audience of gamers leads to a positive perception by creating an inclusive brand image in the mind of the target viewer.

6. Conclusions

The evolution of the video game and its communication from the early 50s to the present day shows us how in this field, various forms of interaction with video games are developing, interactions which were partly borrowed by other media that preceded it. At the same time, the evolution shows how these practices are changing, and how this medium is making them its own and adapting them to its user base. Also, thanks to the explosion of the video game market, the rise of eSports and in recent years the Covid-19, advertising campaigns specifically designed to engage the target audience of video gamers have seen a noteworthy increase as well as the number of brands investing in this kind of communication. The repeated collaborations over the years between brands and video game software houses for the development of this kind of communication proves the validity of this methodology, and the focus group interviewees bring further proof, this time from the audience side, of the potential of this tool.

It emerges that more attention and emphasis should be placed on this mode of communication. To support this theory, there are many examples also in today's scenario: the 2021 *Zalando Privè* commercial in which there are 3D models with explicit references to 80s and 90s arcade video games (Zalando Lounge/Privè, 2021), or the 2022 *Iliad* telephone company commercial that uses the Tetris theme music (Iliad, 2022), or last but

not least, some *Kellogg's Krave* cereal commercials that use different graphic interfaces taken from video games (Kellogg Italia, 2022).[3]

What's more, considering the constant growth of video gamers, communication that is aware of the public's new interests certainly benefits brands. In fact, consumers are more likely to buy from brands that they perceive to be close and that speak their language. Then, considering the statements made by the interviewees, it can be understood how even today, at times, this target group still feels excluded due to the distance between the real world and the world of video games that was created in the past and that still tends to recur today.

6.1 Limits of the research and future improvements

The main limitation of this research concerns the impossibility of extending the surveys to a larger sample due to a lack of funds and time. This inevitably led to the development of limited results in terms of generalizability to other publics. Future opportunities to investigate this phenomenon concern the development of further focus groups as well as the integration of qualitative follow-up interviews. Future research should also evaluate a comparison between gamer and non-gamer audiences; this way, it would be possible to understand whether or not the effectiveness of this methodology on the gamer audience can be found in a non-gamer one.

Other points that should be investigated further by future research include: the psychological and social effects that the phenomenon creates on gamers, and the possibility to understand how many benefits the brand image can obtain from this methodology; secondly, how well and at which level video game characters are able to convey their values to the brand that chooses to use them; finally, future studies should investigate which market sectors can benefit from the use of video game characters and elements within their communication.

This topic is wide-ranging and not well explored, however, the data analysed and collected during this and previous research shows the potential of this methodology, and for this reason, the possibilities for future research are diverse and divided into several areas: social, economic, and psychological

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