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Abstract: *In the midst of the global, sharing, experience, connection, innovation, gig economy—an economy by many names in the transitioning of economic epochs—those in positions of organizational and state leadership and power face surprising new pursuits and perils. In a world where celebrity status and social media activity have become almost reflexive metrics of leadership prominence and visibility, we examine how three exemplars—Musk, Trump and Zuckerberg—have navigated organizational and individual challenges and rewards specifically around the use of social media. We explore how the proliferation in the forms and usage of social media, both as related to lines of business and means of communication, enhances leadership interconnections with constituents and stakeholders, facilitating literally terabytes of information flows, while endangering strategic and ethical transparency. The increase in what can be termed off-piste social media posts—those posts deliberately shocking or provoking readers and deviating from the conventional or expected—has been noted, as has the increase in careful orchestration of highly groomed and curated online images. Analyzing pivotal blunders by each exemplar, we highlight the juxtaposition of social media and global renown, on the one hand, against solecisms in ethics and actions, on the other hand, as powerful leaders of global institutions confront series of dilemmas.*

Abstract: There remains a lack of understanding regarding the potential of digital out-of-home advertising formats and contextual factors in transit and service delivery environments. To address the identified gap this paper developed a conceptual framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media. A framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats with novel perspective on out-of-home media environments and implications for marketers are offered. The key features of major contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats are reviewed. The paper contributes via envisioning by presenting an aspect of marketing science that has yet to be understood or fully studied. It is also generative in nature to guide future research by proposing specific research areas, namely measuring the effectiveness of different formats, multi-media effects, consumers' propensity and potential obstacles to interact with digital out-of-home advertising. Some managerial recommendations are made, specifically to analyze consumers' behavior and movement patterns across out-of-home

EDITORIAL

The **first paper by Kathleen Park & Frederick Wallace** examines implications at the intersection of contemporary digital technological revolution innovations and settings and classic leadership challenges and dilemmas. Being a technology user and inventor, as well as functioning as an innovation leader, calls on certain talents and capabilities and calls forth certain challenges. Previous research into innovation leadership has determined that there are requisite skillsets such as leading experimentation, setting challenges, removing barriers and obstacles, and ensuring access to all essential resources for innovation. In addition, technology and innovation leaders should have vision at the apex of a pyramid of ideation and realization activities. Specifically, Park & Wallace examine the centrality of social media communications for technology and innovation leaders running selected organizations founded or enhanced during the digital revolution: green energy automotive transportation (Tesla), social media as a business (Facebook), and a political and family dynastic enterprise (The Trump Organization). The leaders of these organizations have all encountered problems and have attempted resolutions as expressed, whether in deliberately measured or highly emotional terms, through their social media communications. Whether it is the carefully scripted and contained online presence of Mark Zuckerberg or the more frequent and extemporaneous outpourings of Elon Musk or Donald Trump, there are both upsides and downsides in the breadth and depth of their social media outreach. The blunders, recoveries, and attempted recoveries, as well as new directions forged, all illustrate the promises and perils of leading in a social media-dominated era and also have policy implications toward encouraging ethical conduct and beneficial ramifications of business and political communications and decision making in these challenging times. Specifically, leaders who are in various ways and to various extents technology and innovation-driven can be required and encouraged to provide counterbalancing ethical transparency and philanthropic give-back to their multiple stakeholders and constituents.

The risk at the intersection of celebrity status, social media and big blunders for globally-renowned business or political leaders is that the blunders extend from beyond the momentary online cyber-solecism or faux pas into having wider ramifications for various forms of shareholders. For instance, valuations have plummeted, fines have soared, and reputations have been tarnished in ways that happen swiftly through social media and then are much more difficult to undo. The besmirched reputations of individuals maligned by Musk or Trump, the valuations lost from stock prices, or the large fines paid due to privacy transgressions or violations of SEC protocols around disclosure of information for publicly-traded firms, are issues that can be evoked instantly or almost carelessly through social media platforms and then take months or years to undo. While Musk and Zuckerberg have both paid billions of USD in fines for regulatory violations and Trump has run risks ranging from inaccuracies through impeachment, invoked in part through overzealous tweeting, numerous less famous and less financially buffered individuals have lost value from retirement funds and crucial investments. The soaring market valuation of Tesla—one of the many companies founded and run by Musk—plus the still-growing numbers of Facebook subscribers and the continuing increases in the personal wealth of Trump only attest even further to the need for heightened transparency, social responsibility, and also personally philanthropic measures examined and recommended in their policy implications. Blunders from the celebrity status and social media usage of some leaders may be inevitable, but the boundaries can be strengthened.

Digital out-of-home advertising has become a vital new channel for communicating with consumers in various out-of-home environments. Despite its promising potential, very little research has focused on digital out-of-home communication or digital signage. There remains a lack of understanding regarding the potential of digital out-of-home advertising formats and contextual factors influencing commuters in transit environments or those awaiting service delivery.

To address the identified gap the **second paper by Zwange Sonia Mposi, Therese Roux, & Dion van Zyl** developed in a conceptual framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media. This framework informs practitioners and scholars regarding the major digital out-of-home media formats they can choose from and differentiate between key digital out-of-home media environments and implications when delivering communication in these settings. The paper contributes via envisioning; this happens through identifying, in other words to “establish or make known something that has yet to be established”. The purpose is to present an aspect of marketing science that has yet to be understood or given serious study. A framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats and a novel perspective on digital out-of-home media environments and implications for marketers are offered. This framework classified digital out-of-home media advertising formats found in variety of environments as large formats, spectaculars, smaller formats and custom formats.

When employing digital out-of-home media, businesses must understand the different settings in which they are applied and should not only consider the physical characteristics of different media formats, but the specific situations where the medium will be viewed should also be of crucial concern. Digital out-of-home communications shown on different formats must be relevant or adjusted for a specific setting, where the consumers are exposed to content to ensure efficacy. Proper placement is of outmost importance as it determines the effectiveness of the screen content. If the digital displays are not in an effective location, the advertisers’ content is meaningless even though it is of high quality. Digital out-of-home advertising can be categorized based on their location as place-based network and interactive screens in indoor venues such as malls, retail, trade shows, cinemas and banks and digital billboards placed outdoors in a roadside and transit environment. These major platforms can be used by advertisers to reach targeted audiences across three digital out-of-home environments namely: point of transit, point of wait and point of purchase.

Specific advantages of this novel media include the ability to enhance experiences, overcoming clutter by providing relevant and entertaining content, allowing timeous and cost-effective delivery of contact and innovative customer engagement. Potential disadvantages to consider include the product-orientation applied by some media providers, message exposure and creative inefficiencies, limited coverage within specific venues, an estimated rather than verified performance measurement and expensive incurred due to the original investment required and the expertise involved from multiple role players and additional expenses such as repair, maintenance and upgrading costs.

Mposi, Roux, & Zyl provide clear and unambiguous definitions and features of major contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats. It is also generative in nature to guide future research by proposing specific research areas, namely measuring the effectiveness of different formats, multi-media effects, consumers’ propensity and potential obstacles to interact with digital signage. Some managerial recommendations were made, specifically to analyze consumers’ behaviour and movement patterns across out-of-home spaces, customizing and contextualizing content based on the need state and task of consumers, planning integrated digital out-of-home media campaigns across environments.

The construction sector forms one of the largest sectors of the global economy. It is often seen as a barometer of wider economic activity in most economies. It employs about 7% of the world’s working age population according to an MGI report, contributing some $10 trillion on construction-related goods and services every year. The global construction market was predicted to grow by $10 trillion by 2030 according to a report by Global Construction Perspectives and Oxford Economics. The value added of construction industry as a percentage of US GDP in 2019 was 4.1%. In 2019, the construction output value in China achieved its peak at around 24.84 trillion yuan. The construction sector contributes £117 billion to the UK economy per year, 6% of total economic output, employing nearly 2.4 jobs, 7% of UK workforce.

The significance and growth of the sector are hindered by skills shortages, especially in the UK construction sector. Some causes of skills shortages are decline in blue collar jobs in general, but a significant gap has been low female representation, despite efforts by the sector and government. Acknowledging various causes cited in secondary data and those in the sector, the **third paper by Georgina Whitaker & Shaukat Ali** sought the views and perceptions of group of students in a construction module in a higher education institution in the West Midland region of the UK. A questionnaire, alongside interview, were used on a construction module of 80 students and two tutors. Data instruments were guided by insights from government reports, case studies, statistics, academic sources, journals, and industry reports. The key publications consulted were policy paper and statistics by the UK parliament, Global Construction outlook briefings, and sector reports from the construction industry. Whitaker & Ali confirm that whilst there have been some modernisation and initiatives within the construction industry in terms of anti-discrimination and the promotion of women, a perception of a masculine culture is still evident particularly within a cohort of students. The authors also highlight that perceived macho behaviour is not the main feature of culture within an industry, other factors including long working hours, inflexible family policies, direct and indirect discrimination, disparity in pay, inability to access mentoring network, and lack of personal development may create barriers and challenges to women considering entry into the industry or those currently employed. Whilst discrimination and culture may feature in personal job satisfaction and the decision to remain in a job role, unless the individuals are personally discriminated against, they are unlikely to leave if they perceive that a specific gender is subject to discrimination. The research highlights promotion of female roles within construction industry had limited success with Women in Construction and Women into Property, the key to gender parity in the industry may be through role modelling with families of those considering entry to the industry and the wider community. The research by Whitaker & Ali draws implications from the findings and policy recommendation are posited for various stakeholders. These include flexible working policies, positive role models, career progression, outreach to schools and colleges and intra organisation cultural shifts.

While the determinants of venture performance have been the focus the existing literature, there is a lack of studies examining the performance effects of growth strategies. Responding to the call made by some scholars on this matter, the **fourth paper by Miguel A. Montoya, Gerardo Velasco-Gutierrez, & Joan-Lluis Capelleras** investigates the causal relations among growth strategies and the performances of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Technological Information and Electronic Sector (TIES) in México. The study provides empirical evidence about different growth patterns and firms' performance; identifying the existence of three different growth strategies in a sample of selected firms, and afterwards identifying the different results generated by those strategies among the firms. Montoya, Velasco-Gutierrez, & Capelleras found that certain firms preferably decide to grow organically, building a firm, step by step, pursuing long-term survival and thus achieve fame; some other firms, decide to grow by buying companies, aiming to increase their fortune by improving profits. Finally, another group choose to grow by borrowing-giving resources and capabilities, in other words, making business–friends that allow them to develop competitive advantages. The authors found that different growth strategies will give rise to different firm performances. Also, the authors identify external factors, which influence the relation between growth strategies and performance. Therefore, the authors are including in the study the analysis of the moderator effect of business trust. The research by Montoya, Velasco-Gutierrez, & Capelleras provides empirical evidence about different growth patterns and firms' performance as well as the moderator effect of trust in the environment, identifying the existence of three different growth strategies in a sample of selected firms.

Tourism industry competes globally, as such, countries that plan and leverage on their competitive advantage immensely benefit economically. Both domestic and international tourists are pivotal to the growth of the tourism sector and ultimately the economy. As a result, there is an ongoing debate on what drives inward tourists to destination countries, albeit with mixed findings. This discourse is particularly important in periods of global uncertainties such as crises like the global financial crisis and the Corona Disease Virus (COVID-19) that restrains tourist movements. The interplay between inward international tourist receipts and numbers with both economic and non-economic factors is a linchpin to the understanding of dynamics at play in the tourism sector. The **fifth paper by Mabutho Sibanda, Hlengiwe Penelope Ndlela, & Bomi Nomlala** examines the factors that influence tourism arrivals and receipts in South Africa using times series from 1995 to 2017. The study focuses on South Africa as a developing economy and economic powerhouse on the African continent. Tourism contributes approximately 3 percent of GDP in South Africa. The study is unique in that it includes other non-economic factors such as crime, carbon emissions and country risk in modelling factors that drive inward international tourism in South Africa. Crime, as measured by the intentional homicide as a variable in the model, helps in understanding the socio-economic dynamics in a country that suffered inequalities and injustices due to the apartheid regime. Thus, the choice of the study period reflects the socio-economic dynamics post the apartheid era. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag technique was selected as the appropriate estimation technique due to different levels of stationarity in the series. Studies on drivers of international tourism have used various and distinct methodologies like qualitative approaches, panel data and cross-sectional techniques. This study employs a quantitative approach using time series based on annual data obtained from the World Bank database and the South African Reserve Bank website.

The findings of the study by Sibanda, Ndlela, & Nomlala demonstrate that, at least in the long run, long haul tourism receipts are influenced by domestic GDP per capita, the consumer price index, real exchange rate, crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita and country risk. Interestingly, in the long run, the crime statistics coefficient was negatively related to tourist receipts and statistically significant at the 1% significance level. This provides strong evidence that a decline in crime in South Africa could result in a surge in tourist receipts, ceteris paribus. However, only domestic GDP per capita influences international tourism arrivals. In the short run, domestic GDP per capita, consumer price index, real exchange rate, crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita and country risk influence tourism arrivals. The findings of this study have policy implications as the evidence shows that a holistic approach is required to increase tourist receipts in South Africa. Such an approach entails focusing on critical factors that influence tourism like GDP growth and reduced crime since inflation and exchange rates are already well managed through the country's monetary policy. These findings have implications on interventions and policy development, especially post the crises like COVID-19, which brought international tourism to a standstill. Thus, interventions should be deliberate and incentivised at a macro level to attract international tourists who earn the country much needed foreign currency and lead to both indirect and direct employment creation.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are presently confronted with intricate and evolving operating markets in which they need to stay competitive in order to survive. This implies that because talent has since been acknowledged to be critical to the success of any organisation, HEIs need to find ways to best appeal to their main source of competitive advantage – highly effective academic staff. Despite this knowledge, HEIs continue to lag behind in acquiring and keeping the best talent and minimal research exists on the subject. The main objective of the **sixth paper by Musawenkosi D. Saurombe & E. Nicolene Barkhuizen** was to explore management perspectives on a TVP for academic staff in a South African HEI. The management of the South African HEI were selected as the unit of analysis as they are the custodians of the institution's TVP. The authors applied purposive convenience sampling; participants were selected on the basis of their willingness and relevancy in being able to provide the information sought after. A sample size of 12 participants (N=12) was used. Data analysis was performed through content and thematic analysis, from which emerged various themes and sub-themes.

The findings suggest that the perceived organisational brand of the merged South African HEI comprised the reputation and image, the culture and identity, the strategic vision, the corporate social responsibility, the work and surrounding environment of the institution and lastly, the merger implications that exist within the institution. The qualitative inquiry in this research implied that the perceived employment brand of the merged South African HEI comprised the fringe benefits/incentives and remuneration; the leadership and managerial support; the work/life balance and flexibility; and job security offered within the institution; the occupational health and safety; and performance management and development in the institution; as well as the fulfilment and purpose gained through working for the institution. The findings further suggest that the elements: talent mind-set; talent preparation and acquisition; talent development; talent performance and recognition; as well as talent retention were pertinent to the application of a Talent Life Cycle (TLC) regarding the academics of the merged South African HEI. Finally, the findings show that the main determinants of a TVP for academic staff members in a South African HEI were the organisational brand of the institution; the employment brand of the institution and the talent life cycle within the institution. Apart from the previously mentioned themes, another theme of TVP occurred, which generated the sub-themes: importance of TVPs; mutual expectations; and implementation challenges of TVPs.

The study by Saurombe & Barkhuizen offers crucial acumens to the theoretical, methodological and practical body of existing knowledge. Theoretically, the most feasible TVP for academic staff in a merged South African HEI was examined. Methodologically, this study gave rise to a new TVP model for academic staff members in a merged South African HEI through a qualitative inquiry. A practical offering is that the developed model may be implemented by the merged South African HEI at will. Recommendations for implementation and for further research are also provided.

N. Delener, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

As an interdisciplinary indexed journal, *The Journal of Global Business and Technology (JGBAT)* serves academicians and practitioners in the fields of global business and technology management and their related areas. JGBAT is also an appropriate outlet for manuscripts designed to be of interest, concern, and applied value to its audience of professionals and scholars.

Readers will note that our attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice has been successful. We cannot thank our reviewers enough for having been so professional and effective in reiterating to contributors the need to provide managerial applications of their research. As is now obvious, the majority of the articles include a section on managerial implications of research. We wish to reiterate once again our sincere thanks to JGBAT reviewers for having induced contributors to answer the "so what?" question that every *Journal of Global Business and Technology* article is required to address.

Thank you for your interest in the journal and we are looking forward to receiving your submissions. For submissions guidelines and requirements, please refer to the Manuscript Guidelines at the end of this publication.

N. Delener, Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief
F. Victor Lu, Ph.D., Managing Editor
Fabio Paula, Ph.D., Guest Editor

REVIEWERS

LEADERSHIP AND POWER IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMIC REVOLUTION: CELEBRITY STATUS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND BIG BLUNDERS?

Kathleen Marshall Park and Frederick Wallace

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ABSTRACT

In the midst of the global, sharing, experience, connection, innovation, gig economy—an economy by many names in the transitioning of economic epochs—those in positions of organizational and state leadership and power face surprising new pursuits and perils. In a world where celebrity status and social media activity have become almost reflexive metrics of leadership prominence and visibility, we examine how three exemplars—Musk, Trump and Zuckerberg—have navigated organizational and individual challenges and rewards specifically around the use of social media. We explore how the proliferation in the forms and usage of social media, both as related to lines of business and means of communication, enhances leadership interconnections with constituents and stakeholders, facilitating literally terabytes of information flows, while endangering strategic and ethical transparency. The increase in what can be termed off-piste social media posts—those posts deliberately shocking or provoking readers and deviating from the conventional or expected—has been noted, as has the increase in careful orchestration of highly groomed and curated online images. Analyzing pivotal blunders by each exemplar, we highlight the juxtaposition of social media and global renown, on the one hand, against solecisms in ethics and actions, on the other hand, as powerful leaders of global institutions confront series of dilemmas.

Keywords: digital economy; digital revolution; internet age; technology leadership; digital interconnections; social media; celebrity; insularity; management ethics; strategic action

Dr. *Kathleen Park* *received her PhD from the MIT Sloan School of Management focusing on CEO leadership in high-valuation strategic transactions. Dr. Park is an Assistant Professor of Administrative Sciences, Strategy and Innovation at Boston University with a specialization in leadership, innovation, and internationalization. Her research has been published in the Journal of Business Research, R&D Management, Business Horizons, Journal of Management History, Competition and Change: The Journal of Global Business and Political Economy, and the Thunderbird International Business Review, as well as in a monograph and numerous book chapters with internationally recognized publishers.*

Dr. Fred Wallace *received his Ph.D. in economics from Rice University in 1987. Since receiving his doctorate, he has taught at Appalachian State University, Prairie View A&M, and the University of Minnesota at Morris as well as universities in Mexico and the Middle East. Dr. Wallace has published in some of the top journals in economics including the Journal of Monetary Economics, Journal of Labor Economics, and Economics Letters, among others. He has recently retired from Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait where he had been Professor of Economics since 2014.*

INTRODUCTION

In this study we explore the research question of what are the impacts of social media platforms and deployment on the business and crisis management of organizational or state leaders? Our rationale for the study springs from the seeming proliferation of social media without always adequate ethical or regulatory restraints and where the power of the users can worsen the lack of constraints. The objectives of the research are to better understand the phenomenon of the conjunction of leadership, power and social media in selected contexts toward improving insights and offering advisement to present and future leaders in various institutional settings. Our research design relies on intensive archival data research, retrieval and repeated analysis for key and convergent themes from major online business media sources. For each exemplar, the research team—the first and second author and four graduate research assistants—considered, reviewed, and extracted key themes and issues from 392 news articles and sources. Our major contribution is in elucidating the double-edged sword of social media as in fact more a multi-pronged pike than a sword, with many hazards inherent in its usage particularly around ironically further distancing leaders from their followers through repeated manipulations and violations, and ongoing disclosures of and transgressions in privacy, inappropriate accusations, and *ad hominem* verbal assaults on those expressing different opinions. We address managerial and policy implications in the form of specific potential ameliorating actions at the individual leader and organizational level and particularly in view of economic or epidemiological devastation in pandemic or related times.

CELEBRITY STATUS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND BIG BLUNDERS IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

The Digital Revolution, heir to the Industrial Revolution, trumpets the supremacy of information and electronic communications. Yet it has not been clear that the increasing abundance of information and profusion of ways of staying connected have resulted in truly more ethical, effective and appropriate courses of leadership action. A key change concerns the puzzle of increasing digital interconnections juxtaposed against potentially decreasing ethical awareness and decreasingly strategically appropriate tactics by corporate leadership (Rometty, 2019). Corporate leaders can arguably more and more be found to demonstrate tendencies toward being isolated and uninformed despite the barrage of social media, digital communications, and frequent incursions of business news—both factual and sensationalist—as updates into daily life. Social media has become an instrument of strategic decision making and innovation (Bowen & Bowen, 2016) as well as deception and manipulation. The Internet Era and the Digital Economy have meant the benefits of increased digitization and new online business platform models and interconnections and also the risk of polarization between corporate top leadership and global stakeholders, if stakeholder communication is not managed effectively and with a consistent emphasis on ethics and responsibility (Nel & Esterhuyse, 2019). Increasing executive isolation (Park, 2020) coexists with celebrity status (Lovelace, Bundy, Hambrick, & Pollock, 2018) and the businessperson-turned-politician phenomenon (Gould, Bourk, & Joullié, 2017). The limelight can exacerbate rather than ameliorate technology leadership tendencies toward isolation and disconnection.

As wealth and income disparities grow ever larger in the US and around the world, the modern top executive has become even more isolated from the realities of life as experienced by those at lower levels, despite the profusion of information and electronic communications (Pazzanese, 2016). From a variety of business and political motives and orientations, Elon Musk (Tesla and many other businesses), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), and Donald Trump are transfixing examples of the use or mis-use of information and social media. Each of them occupies or has occupied a leadership role involving or appealing to wide ranges of voters or consumers. Each demonstrates the paradox of a certain closeness to customers and constituents created through an overabundance of and manipulation of information and social media communications juxtaposed against the isolation or distance created by their wealth and power, leading in turn, we argue, into a propensity for diminished ethical awareness and appropriate action.

INNOVATING AND COMMUNICATING IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

Elon Musk has an online presence as an innovative, charismatic, personable but sometimes blunt, workaholic; a highly visible and extremely successful serial entrepreneur; and a thrice-divorced father of seven (see Musk, 2010). He has contributed to the founding of a range of companies including—but not limited to—PayPal, Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink, Hyperloop, and the Boring Company, and his innovation reputation and renown have typically surpassed all other founders of any of the firms of which he has been a member of the founding team (Assis & Shaw, 2018). One of his most successful enterprises, Tesla, occupies a niche where upscale transport intersects with environmental consciousness and attention-getting design, in a way that has even further catapulted Musk into the public consciousness. Having over 30 million followers on Twitter and other platforms worldwide, he has repeatedly demonstrated that he knows how to use—and some would say abuse—his social media power (Wheeler, 2018).

Tweeting voluminously. . .For better or for worse

Musk has repeatedly taken on various individuals, businesses, and popular media seemingly without restraint. During a period of worldwide attention on the plight of school children trapped in an underwater cave in Thailand, he verbally attacked a UK rescue diver attempting to rescue the school children after that diver and his team had rejected an offer of help from Musk via his innovative submarine (Davies, 2018). Musk retracted and apologized. It was not clear if his behavior of precipitous tweets was in fact under control because very soon afterward, in trying to boost the financial standing of Tesla, he prematurely and indiscreetly tweeted his plans for the company privatization. He retracted and apologized again, but the tweet cost him 20-40 million USD and the chairmanship of Tesla (Telford, 2018). Musk has nevertheless remained at Tesla in the CEO position with his global fame and recognition seemingly unabated (Wheeler, 2018). Millions of people in the US and around the world follow his name, his image, his companies, his accomplishments, and his dating life. Elon Musk the individual, CEO and entrepreneur has become, through electronic media and his own volition, a digitally enhanced global phenomenon.

Musk's Twitter output shows his comfort level in using social media and suggests his awareness of its impact on his personal global standing and the free marketing benefits for his firms. Millions watched and applauded the first SpaceX commercial launch (Chang, 2020). Despite his prodigious social media usage and his seeming interest in immediate messaging and gratification, Musk's entrepreneurial history, work ethic, and the time invested from ideation to commercialization all show his endurance and commitment for the longer run (Loudenback & Rogers, 2020). Tesla and SpaceX were both founded in the early 2000s and underwent decades of problem solving, prototyping, and product refinement before reaching global markets or attention (Mosher & McFall-Johnsen, 2020). These long game sacrifices and sweat equity help humanize Musk and underscore the realities and difficulties of implementing business innovations, even as the social media usage and cultivation and manipulation of global fame continue to raise questions.

Marketing for mass appeal but without a product for the masses

Musk has earlier had a mass market image more than mass market products. The Tesla firm—a range of innovative automotive products, including cars, SUVs and perhaps also trucks—struggled for years to achieve consistent profitability, a situation that finally improved with the introduction of the more affordable and available Model 3 (O'Kane, 2019) and then ironically even further improved in the pandemic (Boudette, Eavis, & Phillips, 2020). Tesla surpassed GM in total market valuation years previously and subsequently outstripped longtime global leader in automotive valuation, Toyota (Dey, 2020). A stock price downturn for Tesla then meant that Tesla lost more in one day than the entire market valuation of GM in 2020 (Trefis, 2020). Musk has established a global reputation, despite having shown himself to be disconnected from various global business and health preservation realities. In 2018 he tweeted of IPOs, high-status investment banking, and private equity advisors when none of these relationships or events contractually yet existed. By 2019 he remained as CEO but had lost the chairmanship of Tesla due to these violations. In 2020 he offered to provide ventilators for many individuals suffering from the novel coronavirus COVID-19 but then seemingly reneged and also issued comments that he had not, at least initially, been concerned about the severity of the situation (Coffey, 2020). The still volatile financial performance of Tesla alongside Musk's own burgeoning wealth and hubris, all separate and isolate him from stakeholder interests and needs and ultimately perhaps even from leadership of a firm he helped found. He has built up an image, brand and reputation using the tools of the digital economy (Hoffman, 2012), and his focus has increasingly become oriented toward further scientific and technological innovations at the frontier of outer space, educational, and health challenges (Harris, 2019). The SpaceX launch thrilled beholders (Mosher & McFall-Johnsen, 2020). As his vantage looks further outward in lunar and planetary directions, Musk faces the challenge of reaffirming a grounded commitment to business and humanitarian innovation (Johnston, 2019).

ENCOURAGING TELL-ALL AND PRIVACY VIOLATIONS WHILE CAREFULLY CULTIVATING AN ONLINE PERSONA

Musk is not alone among the exemplars in expertly deploying social media. Mark Zuckerberg, by the very nature of his central business, Facebook, occupies a central position in the social media revolution. Yet as both founder and CEO of Facebook, he has displayed a disconcerting dis-connectedness from ethics, innovation and even a basic strategic business intuition. Zuckerberg illustrates additional dimensions of the juxtaposition of interconnectedness yet isolation. As CEO of Facebook he has been viewed as innovative yet also derivative (Barr, 2018), struggling through acquisitions to stay on the leading edge in social media, and demonstrating—an again potentially derivative—philanthropy yet also the challenges encountered in confronting an ethical conundrum. As now widely recognized and researched, the Facebook social media phenomenon came from earlier manifestations of online social platforms (Arthur, 2009) and often complex and conflicted interactions with fellow founders or almost-founders, including Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss and Eduardo Saverin (e.g. Carlson, 2012; Kosoff, 2016). The Facebook development team interjected new elements increasing the attractiveness of their platform to both extant users of other social media, such as MySpace, as well as users who had at that point not yet ventured into the online and social media worlds. Yet within about five years of the Facebook launch in 2004 and IPO in 2012, it quickly became apparent that there were many privacy issues and concerns (Senguptanov, 2011; Vanian, 2018). At least initially, Facebook surmounted some of these challenges by introducing further privacy controls and buying rising competitors such as Instagram for $1 billion in 2012, WhatsApp for $19 billion in 2014, and augmented reality firm Oculus for around $3 billion also in 2014 (Loizos, 2017; Toth, 2018). Total acquisitions have now exceeded 75 companies and $23 billion (Crunchbase, 2019).

A conundrum of disconnection between ethics and innovation

There have been many ethical, innovative and economic disconnections exhibited by the Facebook CEO (Sanders & Patterson, 2019). In the March 2018 post-US presidential election milieu, turbulence and furor resulted over disclosure of the unwarranted access to personally identifiable information on over 80 million Facebook accounts as a result of data inadvertently or deliberately made available by Facebook to political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica. This firm, Cambridge Analytica, had been hired by the Trump political campaign in 2016 to improve access to amenable or impressionable voters. In the view of many observers and analysts, Facebook CEO Zuckerberg could not adequately defend or explain the release of such personally identifiable user information to a clearly partisan political consulting firm acting for the Trump campaign as well as other clients (Confessore, 2018). Meanwhile Facebook continued shedding existing users while failing to recruit new users at the same rate as previously (Schneider, 2018).

If the Digital Revolution means rapid losses and rapid rejuvenation, it can also mean rapid losses again. Facebook stock prices sharply declined, then rebounded a few months after the Cambridge Analytica revelations (Mirhaydari, 2018), but the share prices declined again by July 2018, as the firm missed projected user increases, (Neate, 2018). Facebook ended 2018 with clear net losses (Rodriguez, 2018). In continuation of the privacy and reputational difficulties and in further reification of the financial implications, Facebook in July 2019 received a record-setting $5 billion fine from the FTC for mishandling private consumer data (Fair, 2019; Romm, 2019). Many industry observers and analysts pronounced that the fine did not go far enough, in part because it did not require acknowledgement by Facebook of intentionality or of any harm resulting to consumers from disclosures of their private data (EPIC, 2019; Newcomb, 2018; Statt, 2019).

Buying innovation yet losing the leading edge for generation Z

While CEO Zuckerberg is the face of a preeminent brand of social media apparently sanctioning disclosures of user details, he is himself unquestionably protected by his personal wealth and privilege. While he presides over the brand—Facebook—that heralded the explosion of the global social media phenomenon, he apparently derived rather more inspiration from fellow founders and existing social media than is often acknowledged (Barr, 2018). An apparent icon of innovation must now increasingly buy that innovation and usurp the advantages from the competition rather than generating new innovations internally (Parkin, 2014). It is not clear how long this strategy can last (Hoium, 2018). There is evidence that younger users are increasingly shying away from Facebook (Lang, 2015; Sulleyman, 2018) in favor of the more recent, innovative and trendy social media such as Snapchat, Tumblr, Kik—although teens also like Instagram and WhatsApp (Moreau, 2019), both now owned by Facebook, and reinforcing the point about Facebook buying innovation. As additional risk factors to the waning Facebook social media market dominance, there are ever more offerings from the indefatigable and technologically imperialistic Google (Wagner & Molla, 2018); users everywhere express concerns over trust violations and privacy risks (Vanian, 2018); and Facebook equivalents from emerging markets tech giants such as Tencent (WeChat) in China and Cardbox in India challenge the global hegemony of a brand previously synonymous with social media. The worldwide pandemic has provided in some sense an unanticipated rehabilitation opportunity for the reputation of Zuckerberg and Facebook, if the firm and leader can show privacy, empathy and outreach, as well as ensuring accurate information flows and appropriate limitations on hate-mongering, in globally challenging circumstances (Durkee, 2020). Some of the early indications have been positive but so have been persistent concerns about various levels of manipulations and controls (Ovide, 2020), demonstrating yet again the difficulties for the firm and founder in bridging the various disconnections.

CONVERGING THE PERSONAL, POSITIONAL AND POLITICAL FOR ATTEMPTED POWER GAINS

Our final exemplar has attempted conflating the personal, positional and political—using positional and political power as a platform for highly personalized attacks—toward achieving nominal power gains. Businessperson and politician combined; Donald Trump experienced a turbulent start to his presidency. Heir to and head of the Trump business and family fortune—known as the Trump Organization—he had pulled off a stunning political upset in 2016 to attain the highest elected office in the US. Two years into in his term in office, Trump was irked by the Facebook privacy violations scandal, when Zuckerberg was called in 2018 to testify before the US House and Senate due to Facebook user data obtained and unmasked by consulting firm Cambridge Analytica to boost the Trump political campaign prospects (Cadwalladr, 2018; Rosenberg, Confessore, & Cadwalladr, 2018). The next year, in 2019, Trump became enmeshed in impeachment proceedings in the US Congress due to allegations and increasing evidence (Sevastopulo, 2019) of his having inappropriately pressured the president of Ukraine to besmirch the standing of former US vice president Joe Biden, a potential Trump presidential rival (Fedor, 2019). The following year, in 2020, Trump struggled to deal with the realities and ramifications of the COVID-19 global pandemic (Abutaleb, Dawsey, Nakashima, & Miller, 2020), which in various ways challenged Musk (Holmes, 2020) and Zuckerberg (Dwoskin, 2020) as well. Born at the start of the US "baby boom" era in 1946, before the digital revolution, Trump has surprisingly shown an extraordinary adroitness with social media, responding to literally riotous issues with profuse, albeit often emotionally disconnected and ineffectual, outpourings. For example, even as numerous individuals testified in high-visibility sessions before Congress, Trump—with a social media verve bordering on obsession—was already tweeting *ad hominem* rebuttals in flawed refutation of well-documented credentials and events (P. Baker, 2019). Perhaps not surprisingly, given the social media floods and multiple forms of isolation, the Trump administration has suffered unprecedented internal turmoil and staff departures (Shubber, 2019; Tenpas, 2019). Imputed levels of narcissism have been implicated in the unusually high levels of Executive Office turnover (Lu & Yourish, 2019). Narcissistic characteristics can indicate or inculcate a sense of grandiosity and can momentarily inspire followers, even while ultimately separating leaders from their realm of influence (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Conway, 2019), and, in the case of Trump, reinforcing a psychological as well as socioeconomic isolation.

Insulated by present wealth yet having a background of maternal poverty

As a wealthy individual from a wealthy family, Trump has led an insulated life. He has nevertheless developed strong insight into the mass market psyche and national concerns about economic development, global competitiveness, and personal advancement. Perhaps part of this insight stems from the experiences of his mother, Mary Anne MacLeod Trump, who was raised in poverty in the Isle of Lewis in Scotland and who later worked for several years as a domestic servant in the household of Louise Whitfield Carnegie, widow of robber baron and philanthropist *extraordinaire* Andrew Carnegie; Mary Anne Trump held this domestic position after first emigrating from Scotland to the US (Burleigh, 2017; Pilon, 2016; Sebak, 2018). Donald Trump's Make America Great Again campaign stems partly from a broad-based economic malaise, as US consumers have become frightened by job losses and declining real incomes (Stein & Van Damm, 2018). Many voters who felt overlooked turned to Trump with their concerns (Brownstein, 2019).

Benefiting the rich while also reaching the white working-class

As president of the US, Trump has favored tax incentives and policies benefiting the upper half of the top 1% of the income distribution in the country (Stewart, 2018). Yet he has maintained the allegiance of blue-collar white women (Kim, 2019) as well as white male blue-collar or working-class voters (Lombardo, 2018; McAdams, 2019). Ironically, in a previous generation, this cohort of voters would typically have been members of another political party and unionized. Trump has bridged the economic isolation of his wealth through an uncanny boundary spanning across the extremes of socioeconomic status. Still, his actions have not always matched his talk. For instance, his reported treatment of undocumented Polish workers building Trump Tower in the 1980s evoked much criticism with respect to secrecy around rule-breaking, promises betrayed, and wages unpaid (Bagli, 2017). This incident, among others, showed his paradoxical yet antithetical intertwining of elite status and common touch (Wigglesworth, 2017). He has tried to combine being "elite" and relating to "everyman," yet this dichotomy cannot be sustained (Lubit, 2002).

Finally, in the sense of strategic isolation, Trump has been many times mentioned as a successful businessperson and entrepreneur, who forged his own path despite his fortunate wealthy origins. Yet it has also been asserted, with appropriate numerical calculations, that he would have been just as wealthy today not owing to his strategic insights and business acumen but simply by having invested his inherited wealth in an index fund (Levine, 2015). While his aptitude for business strategy has not been sufficient to be a clear competitive advantage, other negotiation as well as, later, digital-age skills propelled Trump forward in the building industry, into the public consciousness, and ultimately into the presidential seat. Although in many respects economically, psychologically and strategically isolated and disconnected, Trump has, as noted, also remained in elemental ways interconnected with a core constituency. This paradox reinforces the juxtaposition of his social media skills alongside his psychological, economic and strategic isolation and his struggles to deal with economic, social and pandemic issues on a grand scale.

LEADING IN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX TIMES

Leadership has long been a topic of interest and phenomena such as the social media frenzy and the global-digital-interconnected-sharing-experience economy have only intensified perennial dilemmas (Isaacson, 2014). Leaders must still contend with strategic issues involving power dynamics, social responsibility and collaboration to compete and perform effectively in worldwide markets (Park, 2016; Park, Meglio, & Schriber, 2019). In an age of ever more permeable boundaries and faster communications—between individuals and across time and space—what are the implications for the modern executive, managing a global consumer base that in the aggregate never sleeps and that has widely shared interests yet also highly diversified tastes and preferences?

Inspiring innovation while existing with isolation

Modern executives have become their own avatars of innovation, living in virtual worlds (Kohler, Matzler, & Füller, 2009) in many ways disconnected from the daily reality of their millions of stakeholders worldwide (Fu, 2017). Yet these online worlds of celebrity status and carefully management social media demonstrate the amazingly rapid scaling-up of information dissemination alongside the careful crafting of social media narratives. Technology leaders, whether they resemble their online images or not, exert real impact in real time, sometimes in positive ways such as transforming organizations, inspiring new projects and product development teams, and maintaining a frontline position in human capital and talent development and sometimes in ways that are alarming for personal privacy and safety.

Leadership challenges in the digital era can center on evolving business models, innovation ecosystems, and value chains (Ritter & Ruggero, 2017). Outside the organization, the spectrum of stakeholders—customers, suppliers, competitors, analysts, and investors—and issues in the macroeconomic business environment concern and challenge corporate leaders. Structures, systems and stakeholders have become more complex and differentiated—as well as more agile—in the digital era, spawning additional issues for leaders who must address simultaneously global and local level concerns, multiple online and in-person products and services for technologically adept as well as more traditional and technologically conservative consumers (Gartner, 2017).

Honoring tradition while forging new directions

Digital workplace automation and business models disrupt established practices yet can be seen to venerate leadership traditions (Feser, 2016). Trends in artificial intelligence, blockchain, machine learning, robotics, and natural language learning, big data and data science may contribute to workplace automation and cost reduction, but also increase complexity as well as capabilities transformation and business value creation(Orji, 2019). The need for an overarching understanding and a clear distillation of vision and mission remain leadership imperatives. Human fears about loss of employment, status and income remain the same. These deep-level concerns must be addressed and not forgotten. For instance, new business models in the abstract are generally be greeted with approval, particularly by end users experiencing enhanced transportation, travel, dining, real estate location, and accommodation—as well as new ways of finding and staying connected to important people in our lives—and by the companies profiting from these business model, product and service innovations. But what comes between the people and profits? Workplace automation generates huge fears of job loss. Yet the attractive new business models do not necessarily imply ultimate job loss. If job loss or job changes are involved, clarity is essential. The aphorism that "businesses do not downsize their way to greatness" can be adapted for the digital era into "businesses do not automate their way to greatness." Fundamental leadership challenges in exercising power, protecting and improving the lives of followers, and maintaining organizational momentum persist (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

Technology creates the possibility that present products or services will be dramatically transformed. For instance, for all the allure of the new Teslas, will autonomous driving and alternative transportation services at some point displace our current personal vehicles (Naughton & Welch, 2019)? Will Facebook tumble to ever newer, trendier—and perhaps more privacy-preserving—forms of social media? The joy of driving, the joy of connecting, and, for some, the joy of power are fundamental needs and desires to which the exemplar leaders speak and why they continue to have influence, although the influence may eventually wane as their connections with consumers and constituents become attenuated through various economic, psychological and strategic disconnections, as we have examined with our exemplars.

Balancing acts in a complex and multifaceted environment

Business leadership now more than ever requires a clear grasp of sociologically and economically as well as technologically complex scenarios. While technology provides the infrastructure facilitating communications and connections—and can provide the *appearance* of many more connections being in place—digital outreach does not automatically mean a highly functioning business connection has been formed. Think for instance of LinkedIn, which will suggest connections and then tell users they are connected; but in fact, a vital next step remains to be completed; the initial "congratulations you have made a connection" represents only an *invitation* to connect extended to the person with whom LinkedIn says you have already “made a connection.” The invited party must accept to confirm the connection. Then, at even the next level, the connection should function in various ways to add value to the individuals who are connected. If it is a business connection, adding value nowadays in a business sense would typically mean fulfilling the people, planet and profits triple bottom line—that is, making money (profits), protecting stakeholders (who are different groups of people affected by your business), and safeguarding the environment (planet). This organizational or corporate multidimensional mission comes to the heart of our purpose in reflecting on dilemmas confronting the modern executive. To be connected in appearance—to have the digital capability and outreach for interconnection—is not necessarily the same as to be connected in ways adding real value for business purposes. The modern executive too often fails to recognize the performance risks of being seemingly interconnected but in reality isolated and uninformed (W. E. Baker, 1990). In this respect we echo the leadership philosophy of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. Leadership not only draws on networks, connections, and credentials, it also becomes vitally a question of making "the right" (Welch & Ward, 2017) decisions for adding value.

The challenges of leadership in the digital epoch also concern millennia-old issues of influence and motivation. Digital capabilities facilitate the translation of innovative ideas into business realities. Digital business strategy and technology strategy center on communication and collaboration rallying organizational incumbents and stakeholders toward an articulated vision (Pelser & Prinsloo, 2014). Modern digital strategy and historic arts of influence converge in building and sustaining a leadership innovation and performance momentum. As seen with Musk and Trump, mobilizing digitally on Twitter can be a form of noise or a form of influence. Sometimes the noise dominates, and the medium overrides the message. Knowing when to reach out for a synchronous voice-to-voice conversation “in real time” or “in real life”—and with key impactful individuals—can mean the difference between success and failure. A variety of institutional and neo-institutional theoretical factors come into play in the design and implementation of national, international and global corporate citizenship. These factors pertain to seeking legitimacy, interrelating state and other institutional actors, and reconciling the boundaries between business and society. Specifically, institutional theory has been applied in efforts to understand corporate citizenship as a mode of economic governance taking over from the failure of state institutions to promote social welfare in liberal market economies (Brammer, Jackson, & Matten, 2012). As a mode of economic governance, corporate citizenship and social responsibility could manifest in the launching of community initiatives (Beddewela & Fairbrass, 2016) to counteract institutional voids at the state level by offering health, educational and housing infrastructure related services to local residents, ensuring fair labor practices, and taking initiatives toward protecting the natural environment. Institutional approaches to corporate citizenship and social responsibility can also mean syncretizing institutional theory, individual actor and stakeholder perspectives, and legitimacy practices toward understanding corporate motivations as well as how and why corporate citizenship, sustainability and social responsibility, even from the same organization, varies from country to country (Fernando & Lawrence, 2014).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The policy implications of our research into technology leadership in the digital pandemic epoch are that (1) the increased earning of high tech companies and wealth of high tech entrepreneurs can in part be applied toward combating the digital divide and lessening targeted educational and economic effects of disparate access to technological resources; (2) related to the first item, technology leaders can also exert a positive influence and example in creating and mobilizing resources to help in various ways in combating the global C19 pandemic; and (3) as the “new robber barons” or the “tech barons” of the 21st century, technology leaders—particularly founders and CEOs or chairs of the “tech giant” firms have leading roles to play in guiding us forward in new digital, ethical and socially responsible directions, for instance as in their testimony provided when they are summoned before the US Congress, the European Commission or are in other ways called upon as leaders of high technological and economic impact.

In addition, as a policy implication it should be noted that technology leadership as a broader construct exists at multiple levels of power and influence and in organizations around the world. It is essential to nurture these capabilities in a global and demographically inclusive manner. Furthermore, as we increasingly transition from what are known as digital "connections" to what have been termed full-scale digital "experiences"—and the attractiveness or even addictiveness of such experiences to users—the need grows for monitoring and accountability in, for instance, anti-trust enforcement, assurances of enhanced competitiveness, and more social and emotional health and environmental sustainability measures.

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TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL OUT-OF-HOME ADVERTISING MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

There remains a lack of understanding regarding the potential of digital out-of-home advertising formats and contextual factors in transit and service delivery environments. To address the identified gap this paper developed a conceptual framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media. A framework for contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats with novel perspective on out-of-home media environments and implications for marketers are offered. The key features of major contemporary digital out-of-home advertising media formats are reviewed. The paper contributes via envisioning by presenting an aspect of marketing science that has yet to be understood or fully studied. It is also generative in nature to guide future research by proposing specific research areas, namely measuring the effectiveness of different formats, multi-media effects, consumers' propensity and potential obstacles to interact with digital out-of-home advertising. Some managerial recommendations are made, specifically to analyze consumers' behavior and movement patterns across out-of-home spaces, to customize and contextualize content based on the need state and task of consumers and for planning integrated digital out-of-home media campaigns across environments.

Keywords: retail setting, digital advertising formats, media environments, outdoor advertising

INTRODUCTION

The global digital out-of-home (DOOH) market size represented USD 19.78 billion in 2018 and is anticipated to reach USD 35.94 billion by 2026, increasing at a compound annual growth rate of 8.0%

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(Fortune Business Insights, 2020). DOOH advertising has become a vital new channel for communicating with consumers in various out-of-home environments (Cote, 2018). Numerous retailers have launched DOOH advertising networks aimed at reaping benefits of advertising in store and enhancing shopping experiences (Moving Tactics, 2020). With more DOOH advertising displays in place, their nimbleness and flexibility offer marketers the opportunity to reach many geographically targeted audiences very quickly (Gurumoorthy, 2015). Furthermore, DOOH advertising networks can also generate significant advertising revenues (Dennis, Brakus & Alamanos, 2013) and have proven to increase the sale levels of advertisers between 5-30 % (Burke 2009; Smith, 2017).

Despite its promising potential, very little research has focused on DOOH communication or DOOH advertising networks. A few exceptions have examined the impact of using this novel digital medium in retail settings to provide customer or brand experiences (e.g., Dennis et al., 2013; Dennis, Brakus, Gupta & Alamanos, 2014) or to influence purchasing behavior inside stores (e.g., Burke, 2009; Willems, Brengman & Van De Sanden, 2017). These studies focused on digital signage effectiveness at point of purchase but disregarded the potential of DOOH advertising networks in other settings such as the transit environment or places where people await service delivery. Recent studies explored the opinions of practitioners regarding the DOOH media landscape in Ireland (Roberts, 2018) and South Africa (Roux, 2018), yet no clear distinction was made between different formats and environments. Furthermore, only two journal articles offering some type of classification framework for out-of-home advertising could be found (Roux, Van der Waldt & Ehlers; 2013; Roux & Van der Waldt, 2014). However, they focused on conventional or static out-of-home advertising media types and not on the unique features of DOOH advertising media type in different contemporary settings.

Not having a comprehensive framework of DOOH advertising media formats and environments can lead to a lack of understanding of the wide range of contemporaneous options and environmental considerations when evaluating this novel digital medium. There is thus a lack of a methodical, cohesive conceptual foundation to describe and investigate this auspicious contemporary digital platform.

This paper aims to overcome these identified gaps in the existing body of knowledge by proposing a conceptual framework for contemporary DOOH advertising media. This framework offers benefits to practitioners and scholars by addressing the following objectives:

- To inform marketers about the major DOOH media formats from which they can choose
- To differentiate between key DOOH media environments and implications when delivering communication in these settings

MacInnis (2011) differentiates between four types of conceptual contributions in the marketing discipline: envisioning, relating, explicating and debating. The current article contributes via envisioning: This occurs through identifying, in other words to "establish or make known something that has yet to be established". The purpose is to present an aspect of marketing science that has yet to be understood or adequately examined. A framework for contemporary DOOH advertising media formats and a novel perspective on DOOH media environments and implications for marketers are offered in the paper. The proposed framework is of value for business owners, brand specialists, as well as for researchers. It is anticipated that small and large business owners, marketing communication specialists and brand managers could apply this framework as guide when assessing and choosing different DOOH advertising media options. Understanding all the various alternatives and environments where it can be found might also reduce advertisers' risk to invest in ineffective formats, messages, designs and screen technology.

THE NATURE AND FEATURES OF DOOH ADVERTISING

Defining DOOH Advertising Media

Some academics use the term digital signage (Burke, 2009; Dennis et al., 2013; Dennis et al., 2014; Willems et al., 2017), while others prefer the encompassing label DOOH advertising media (Roberts, 2018; Roux, 2018). For the purpose of this paper DOOH advertising media will be used as a comprehensive label when considering the overall media class, while digital signage will be used when reviewing indoor placed-based networks with dynamic advertising displayed, as suggested by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (2016). Digital signage is thus a specific type of DOOH advertising media involving the use of screens that display a continuous loop of advertising and editorial material at point of purchase (Burke, 2011).

DOOH advertising media can be conceptualized in different ways. Dennis et al. (2013) emphasize the wide range of content types delivered when elucidating that DOOH media entail the use of screens in public places showing video, of which the content may include advertisements, community information, entertainment and news. Lundstrom (2013) has a similar view and asserts that DOOH media includes the application of different kinds of display devices in ways that are efficient to provide information and advertising to people in public areas. These explanations concur that DOOH media entails dynamic and contextualized content in the form of advertising or other content displayed on some form of digital or electronic screen.

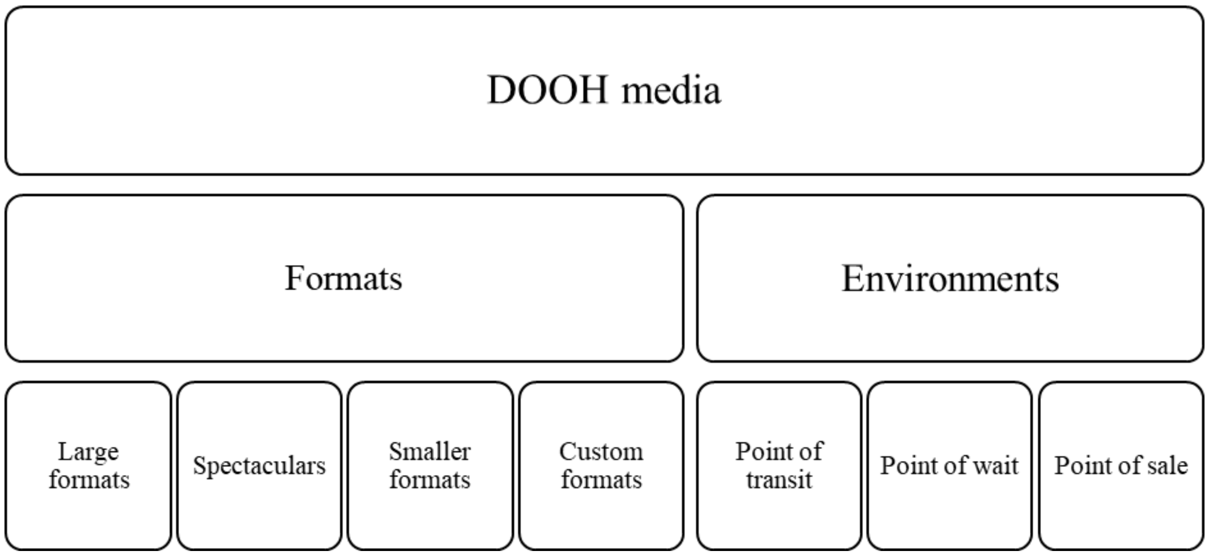
Furthermore, this digitalization means that DOOH advertising displays offer new opportunities and advantages in contrast to traditional out-of-home advertising (Roberts, 2018). Marketers can, for example, display information such as advertisements or news in the form of dynamic multimedia presentations including audio, animations and video (Bauer, Dohmen & Strauss, 2011). Additionally, content can be changed instantaneously at any time and with less effort (Jasko & Marinkovic, 2016).

Contemporary DOOH Advertising Media Framework

Marketers need to understand the different digital networks to operate DOOH advertising in order to employ it to their best advantage. Conversely studies exploring industry problems and perspectives of revealed that business practitioners often lack understanding and the ability to design and evaluate contemporary DOOH advertising media alternatives (Bauer, Kryvinska & Strauss, 2016; Müller & Krüger, 2009).

The level of attention paid to public displays is a key consideration when evaluating DOOH advertising media effectiveness. Huang, Koster and Borchers (2008) showed that paying attention to public displays is a multifaceted process and depends on several criteria such as the location, size, content format and content dynamics. The study by Burke (2009) identified content and context of exposure as key aspects determining the type of response. This study also found that consumers are more responsive to content related to their current tasks and need states, rather than traditional brand messages, and when planned to offer high quality exposure in a specific environment. Maximizing the attention to and effectiveness of DOOH advertising media, thus requires careful consideration of the format and the environments where they are placed. This section will present key DOOH advertising media formats and environments guided by Figure 1.

Figure 1. DOOH advertising media formats and environments



DOOH advertising media formats

DOOH advertising media formats comprise a wide assortment of display types, sizes and interactive features. This media class includes from digital billboards next to the road to digital signage inside waiting rooms and stores. All of them have some form of digital display with technologies such as liquid crystal display (LCD), light-emitting diode (LED), digital projections and e-paper to display videos, images, text, restaurant menus or weather information (Lafitte, 2019). Unlike traditional static signs, DOOH formats allow for moving images and interactivity, they are a lot more flexible and have far more potential to make an impact (Cote, 2018). This wide variety can be classified as large formats, spectaculars, smaller formats and custom formats (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2016).

- *Large formats* are 15 square meters or larger in size and are designed for clear viewing from a distance. These large formats are typically found in high traffic commercial, industrial, as well as major metropolitan areas (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2016). These screens are expensive to install and rent but are robust to deliver constant messaging (Moving Tactics, 2017). When large DOOH formats are applied creatively, they can create lasting visual impact, spark excitement, attract consumer attention and inspire positive moods (Thompson, 2015).
- *Spectaculars* are deemed as high impact units with full motion, often targeting pedestrians in heavy foot traffic (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2016). Spectaculars offer mass consumer exposure when they are utilized in areas where there is visibility to numerous major highways at the same time, such as expressways in major downtown areas (The Outdoor Advertising Association of America, 2019).
- *Smaller formats* or place-based digital screens are normally found in a venue or at street level and are ideal to build brand awareness and to support advertising campaigns aimed at targeted audiences (Outdoor Advertising Association of America, 2020). Place-based digital screens at veterinary clinics can, for example, reach the person who is sitting in the waiting room with educationally focused programming and advertising aimed at pet owners. Those at fueling stations can offer a highly targeted medium for entertaining and informing people while they are refueling their cars.

- *Custom formats* include digital displays such as digital projections, mobile billboards and displays placed in empty storefronts with the intention of creating interactive digital experiences using gesture and touch screen technologies (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2016). Koeck and Warnaby (2014) argue that these emerging interactive technologies allow brands the opportunity to use digital signage to deliver an “interactive out-of-home experience”. Digital screens equipped with gesture-based interactions that allow advertisers to introduce interactive gesture-based games can for example connect the brand with users. Customized formats help to make the medium more attractive for consumers by displaying appropriate updated tailored messages, rather than one-way stationary content (Roux & Van der Waldt, 2014).

Major DOOH media environments and implications when delivering communication in these settings

The importance of the environment where DOOH media are placed are reflected on in the contemporary marketing literature. According to Roberts (2018), DOOH formats are carefully placed in specific environments that facilitate contextual connections compared to traditional out-of-home advertising that is found alongside routes. Roux (2018) reports that since DOOH advertising is normally environment based, it enables campaigns to be designed to make contextual connections, target niche markets and be responsive to what’s going on at specific times of a day or day of the week. Clohessy (2017) advises that for DOOH advertising to engage viewers the audience, place and time in a specific environment must be considered. DOOH advertising media can be placed in environments to deliver communication when people have stopped as opposed to traditional or static out-of-home advertising placed along routes aimed at delivering messages to a highly mobile audience. DOOH advertising thus allow campaigns to be timed so that messages are delivered at the most appropriate moments (Clohessy, 2017), transforming their DOOH advertising into spectacles and events (Koeck & Warnaby, 2014). Ramirez (2015) asserts that DOOH advertising should act as a bridge between context and location in relevance and favourable recall – vital components of any media campaign.

When employing DOOH media, businesses must understand the different settings in which they are applied and should not only consider the physical characteristics of different media formats, but the specific situations where the medium will be viewed should also be of crucial concern. DOOH communications shown on different formats must be relevant or adjusted for a specific setting, where the consumers are exposed to content to ensure efficacy (Roux & Van der Waldt, 2014).

Proper placement is of outmost importance as it determines the effectiveness of the screen content (Mewherter, 2016). If the digital displays are not in an effective location, the advertisers’ content is meaningless even though it is of high quality (Lundstrom, 2013). DOOH advertising can be categorized based on their location as: a) place-based network and interactive screens in indoor venues such as malls, retail, trade shows, cinemas, banks, etc. and b) digital billboards placed outdoors in a roadside and transit environment (Quinn, 2017; Schaeffler, 2013). These major platforms can be used by advertisers to reach targeted audiences across three DOOH environments: point of transit, point of wait and point of purchase (Roux, 2018).

- ***Point of Transit environment***

Point of transit digital networks refer to displays that are positioned in common areas of transit or attached to moving vehicles (Outdoor Advertising Association of America, 2016). These types of digital screens are usually found on the side of a highway where they are visible to voluminous viewers, typically passing at high speed. They can be at train, metro or bus stations, airports and in store windows (Roux, 2018). In this context consumers are on-the-go viewers, where digital networks can be place on all modes of public transportation to meet the information and entertainment needs of those consumers. Future technological innovations such as artificial reality displays in vehicles equipped with "blue screens" could allow customizing content for individual commuters. Advertisers could then create continuous campaigns to adjust the message, offer, or even product based on stages of a journey and modes of transportation (Merchant, Schlaff, Pankratz, 2017).

Time t process content is limited in point of transit environments since the content is viewed by mobile drivers and passengers in traffic. This restricted time to view and process messages means that advertisers must design strong impactful visual messages rather than lengthy textual or detailed copy (Gurumoorthy, 2015). Advertising in these transit settings, when placed on major roads and high-traffic urban streets, can enable wide reach to the mass markets. This results in efficient geo-demographic targeting aimed at influencing users of different types of public and private transport types. Thus, communicators must create noteworthy brand impressions rather than detailing the offering (Roux & Van der Waldt, 2014).

Point of transit DOOH advertising is however also associated with some potential disadvantages. Viewers' mood in a certain setting will impact their receptiveness. Sceneries outside the home introduce the element of mood. The audience might be tired, stressed, daydreaming – or on the other hand, remarkably alert and interested in appropriate messages, specific certain times of the day or at some locations (O'Guinn, Allen, Semenik, Scheinbaum & Guinn, 2018). Advertising at point of transit must compete for attention with numerous potential distracting stimuli (Roux et al., 2013). For example, commuters may be engaged in other activities or media such as mobile devices, magazines and newspapers which may prevent contact with transit advertising messages. Additionally, not everyone that is exposed to the transit DOOH advertising will be a potential customer.

- ***Point of Wait environment***

Point of wait networks are tailored towards customers who are waiting to receive a product or service, for example health care waiting rooms, vets, salons, retail banks, fitness centers as well as bars and restaurants (Grant & Meadows, 2016; Bauer et al., 2016). Therefore, communication delivered on DOOH advertising in these point of wait environments enables advertisers to narrowly target and customise their campaigns for their chosen audience (Clohessy, 2017).

Interactive displays at point of wait must be placed and designed to stimulate additional engagement. The public do not usually go out in order to specifically look at digital displays, but just come across a DOOH and are encouraged by external factors to look at it. These displays could help users with task-oriented functions by displaying financial and weather updates as well as speculative needs for curiosity and exploration by offering information on the time and place of upcoming meetings and collaborative games (Davies, Clinch & Alt, 2014).

Kelsen (2013) highlights three main objectives of point of wait: to deliver key messages relating to the service provider, to increase customers' satisfaction by reshaping the perception of how long they must wait as well as to provide relevant and interesting content in various venues. DOOH advertising at a point of wait can capture the attention of the audience when they are waiting to realize obtain services. Furthermore, if DOOH advertising screens are presented and positioned in an appropriate way, it can alter the customers' perceptions of the overall waiting time (Jasko & Marinkovic, 2016). Advertisers can also benefit from longer waiting times by showing longer messages and more repetition (Bauer et al., 2011). When requiring interaction with a digital touch screen, it must be placed in a space that allows enough dwell time for the expected interaction. Situations with a captive audience, such as commuters awaiting transport, passengers at business lounges at airports and at commercial service settings, usually allow people to observe and be perceptive about their environment. These type of settings with longer dwelling times, enable marketers to deliver relevant communication to a narrowly target segment via more comprehensive and enjoyable messages (Roux & Van der Walt, 2014).

High-dwell locations in retail and leisure environments offer specific targeting opportunities. Advertisers can capitalize on digital signage in retail environments by publishing unique brand imagery and dynamic content (Clohessy, 2017). People have ample opportunity in point of wait environments to view and process digital signage content and the advertiser may thus employ different strategies such as repetition, lengthier and persuasive messages (Bauer et al., 2016).

- ***Point of Purchase environment***

Point of purchase networks deliver communication to consumers by means of encounters close to a product or service that is for sale. These screens, typically referred to as digital signage, comprise of in-store or retail digital signs placed at the end of an isle or near the deli in a grocery store (Kelsen, 2013). Currently, point of purchase, as the largest global application area for DOOH advertising, is driven by the potential to increase sales inside retail outlets and stores (Burke, 2009; Willems et al., 2017).

The Gartner Research report (2017) found that global retailers stores' usage of digital technologies to enhance customer experience is likely to increase 2,5 times from 30% in 2016 to 75% in 2021 (Deloitte, 2017). Marketers can utilize point of purchase digital signage to improve and personalize customers' experience, cross-promote products and to educate customers about the availability of products and services (Davies, Clinch & Alt, 2014). As these screens are placed where consumers make their buying decision, their best advantage is that the call to action is immediate (Kelsen, 2013). When shoppers do not enjoy the shopping experience provided by a particular shopping mall, they will turn to other shopping malls that will meet or exceed their expectations of having a pleasurable shopping experience (Dennis, Michon & Newman, 2008; Fantoni, Hoefel & Mazzarolo, 2014). Considering the shoppers' high expectations for a shopping mall to provide them with a favorable experience, shopping mall managers are seeking to find new ways of making their shopping mall environment stand out for the purpose of enhancing the shopper's experience (Dennis et al., 2010). Digital signage therefore becomes an important tool that can be applied for enhancing atmospherics. Burke (2009) found that shoppers consider technological innovations, such as digital signage, beneficial when it provides them with product information. Digital signage in shopping malls provides a chance of direct sales within the mall, although the signs are not located next to the products, because consumers usually visit malls in the frame of mind of making purchases (Kelsen, 2013).

When reviewing practitioner and academic literature, the following benefits of digital signage in the retail environment could be identified:

- ***Ability to enhance experiences***

Creating shopping experiences that are pleasurable to shoppers is essential for the long-term success of retailers (Heffernam, 2015). Past studies confirmed that attractive digital signage displaying content employed as a retail atmospheric tool could contribute to positive shopping experiences. (Berstein, 2014; Dennis et al., 2008; Dennis et al. 2010; Dennis et al. 2013). Dennis et al. (2008) found that emotions such as arousal and pleasure can be stimulated by positive perceptions of the environment with digital signage, which then result in positive mall approach behaviors such as spending and revisiting the shopping mall. Dennis et al. (2010) report that digital signage, as an effective and easily identified form of media, can enhance customers' positive perceptions of service or retail settings. The study by Dennis et al. (2013) suggest that digital signage can be used as experiential cues to enhance the mall environment. Berstein (2014) confirms that digital signage helps to enhance the overall shopping experience as well as enforce effective branding. As a result, shoppers are likely to have positive perceptions of the retail environment when experiencing digital signage as a visual attractive cue or technical innovation.

- ***Overcoming clutter by providing relevant and entertaining content***

A typical consumer is exposed to between 10 000 and 40 000 advertising messages per day (Simpson, 2017), consequently, consumers are more attracted to moving advertisements over static signs and posters (Delco-solutions, 2016). Digital signage has the advantage of breaking through the visual clutter, in environments where there is a great deal of competition for the consumer's attention. Additionally, the dynamic multimedia presentation, video and motion graphics employed by digital signage can help to gain the attention of shoppers and lead to increased purchases (Kelsen, 2013).

- ***Allows timeous and cost-effective delivery of contact***

Traditional out-of-home advertising is time consuming, costly to create as well as to dispense, install and update (Koeck & Warnaby, 2014). These can have damaging effects on businesses that need to update messages in a timely manner. With digital signage there is nothing to install, ship or stock and it can therefore be updated in seconds, which makes it message delivery cost-effective and immediate (Johnson, 2017). The content displayed on digital signage can be customized according to the demographics of people viewing the display at different times and locations and, as a result, the message is targeted at certain people (O'Guinn et al., 2018). Therefore, digital signage can be effective for delivering relevant messages at the right time, at the right location to the right target audiences.

- ***Innovative customer engagement***

Digital signage is transforming the way customers engage with brands. The increasing power of this technology provides business owners with the opportunity to showcase a targeted range of products to each customer, feature loyalty promotions and drive users to preferred content. Interactive digital displays make it easy for consumers to disregard what they find irrelevant and focus more on features which matter to them personally (Murton, 2017).

- ***Potential influence at point of purchase***

Point of purchase digital signage screens are usually placed in stores next to the merchandise that are being promoted. The screens are also placed at the checkout area or other locations where the purchase decision is made (Mattila, 2012). According to Point of Purchase Association International over 82% of purchase decisions occur inside a store (POPAI, 2014). Several researchers have found that point of purchase digital signage can influence a consumer's purchasing decisions and increase actual sales (Burke, 2009; Willems et al., 2017). Brick-and-mortar retailers are starting to realize the ability of digital signage to influence consumer decision making at point of purchase and have therefore rolled out the implementation of digital signage in their retail outlets (Simone & Sabbadin, 2017).

Disadvantages of digital signage in the retail environment are as follows:

- ***Product-oriented***

Advertising on digital signage at point of purchase might influence what products consumers may buy, but not where they will buy them (Hampton Roads, 2020). It may attract the passer-by, but there is no guarantee that he/she will actually buy the advertised brand. Thus despite being effective for improving product sales (Burke 2009), place-based media are inherently limited in their ability to attract new customers, build traffic, and improve market awareness for retail advertisers (Hampton Roads, 2020).

- ***Expensive***

Despite its prominent placement and highly targeted reach, digital signage at point of purchase can be prohibitively expensive (Hampton Roads, 2020). This is due to the expensive original investment required to install digital signage networks and the expertise involved from multiple role players (e.g. media owners, space providers, digital media designers and advertisers) to install the medium, develop and manage the content displayed. Furthermore, there are other additional expenses such as repair, maintenance and upgrading costs (Bauer et al., 2016).

- ***Message exposure and creative inefficiencies***

The limited time that a mobile audience is exposed to a message on digital signage might hamper the ability to recall and process a brand message (Schaeffler, 2013). The evolution of the out-of-home industry to move from static boards to digital requires substantial adjustments in the development and production of advertising materials designed for these digital platforms. Despite the opportunity to create attention grabbing animation and moving image, however, advertisers often find it challenging to design their own contextualized and interactive campaigns (Bauer et al., 2016). Furthermore, some companies do not have the resources to invest in the expensive creative production needed for content across hundreds or thousands of spots (Roberts, 2018).

- ***Limited coverage and performance measurement***

The nature of location-based advertising implies that it only reaches a small group of consumers gathered for specific purposes within specific venues (Wilson & Suh, 2013). The ability to accurately measure the number of people exposed to digital signage is also limited, since media providers only provide estimated numbers of passers-by exposed to a screen (Bauer et al., 2016).

IMPLICATIONS

The framework has implications for marketing practitioners and academics. It is envisaged that small and large business owners, marketing communication specialists and brand managers could apply this framework as guide when assessing and choosing different DOOH advertising media options. Understanding all the various alternatives and environments where DOOH can be found might also reduce advertisers' risk to invest in ineffective formats, messages, designs and screen technology.

Marketers can use the different DOOH formats to offer content that is creative, target specific, has better visibility and many more attention-grabbing elements. DOOH formats can accommodate dynamic and interactive campaigns that can change in real time based on the location, which means advertisers can update their campaign materials instantaneously at any time, effortlessly (Jasko & Marinkovic, 2016; Johnson, 2017). Furthermore, the digital screens can play consecutive adverts that change every now and then, targeting different types of customers (Johnson, 2017). Displaying diverse information for specific people can be advantageous to the advertiser. For example, an advertisement targeted at young people might be displayed during the hours they are usually in a shopping mall , and then adapted for late in the evening when there might be older people in the shopping mall.

The content created for the different DOOH formats should be customized for the environment to which consumers are exposed. DOOH formats with interactivity, creativity and engagement value can be placed strategically at places where there is high audience traffic and/or high chances of idle time for the audience. For example, digital displays can be placed at indoor locations, such as airports and malls, where people have to wait on services and using DOOH for entertainment. The mood and need state of consumers in particular surroundings will have a significant effect on their responsiveness. By understanding consumers' movement (e.g., shopping, sitting, browsing, waiting, walking, driving) marketers could combine DOOH advertising media options key environments to create relevant and contextualized campaigns.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper offers numerous future research avenues. Marketing specialists and academic institutes should investigate and compare consumers' receptiveness to different DOOH advertising media formats. Another worthy potential research topic would be to test the determinants (e.g., brand, pictorial and multi-media effects) on attention capture and interpretation of digital content by viewers.

Placement and behaviors when exposed to content across locations and within environments should also be examined. A comparison could be made between in-store and out-of-store creative content on consumers' message processing and purchase intentions. The effects of changing creative content based on the stages of consumers' journey and advertising on different DOOH advertising media types are also a worthwhile future research area.

Considering the extensive growth of DOOH advertising media and mobile devices, it would also be beneficial to design experiments testing consumers' propensity and potential obstacles (e.g. privacy concerns, design errors and resistance to technology) to interact with digital signage.

CONCLUSION

DOOH advertising continues to grow and is anticipated to play an important role in today's dynamic world. It is predicted to become a specialised discipline within the advertising and marketing context (Roux & Van der Walt, 2014). However, there remains a lack of understanding regarding the potential of digital out-of-home advertising formats and contextual factors across environments.

To address the identified gap this paper offered a conceptual integrative framework for contemporary DOOH media of four DOOH formats (large, spectaculars, smaller and custom formats) and three environments (point of transit, point of wait, point of sale). Each of these formats and environments were presented and described. As one of the first conceptual articles it contributes to the limited body of knowledge surrounding the novel and unappreciated phenomenon of this contemporary digital platform. The proposed framework informs practitioners and scholars by i) comparing major DOOH media formats, ii) differentiating between OOH environments and iii) discussing implications when delivering communication at point of transit, point of wait, and point of purchase settings.

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HARDHATS AND GLAD RAGS – WOMEN IN UK CONSTRUCTION: PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

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ABSTRACT

The construction sector forms one of the largest sectors of the global economy. It is often seen as a barometer of wider economic activity in most economies. It employs about 7% of the world's working age population according to an MGI report, contributing some $10 trillion on construction-related goods and services every year. The global construction market was predicted to grow by $10 trillion by 2030 according to a report by Global Construction Perspectives and Oxford Economics. The value added of construction industry as a percentage of US GDP in 2019 was 4.1%. In 2019, the construction output value in China achieved its peak at around 24.84 trillion yuan. The construction sector contributes £117 billion to the UK economy per year, 6% of total economic output, employing nearly 2.4 million jobs, and approximately 7% of UK workforce. The significance and growth of the sector are hindered by skills shortages, especially in the UK construction sector. Some causes of skills shortages are in decline in blue collar jobs in general, but a significant gap has been low female representation, despite efforts by the sector and government. Acknowledging various causes cited in the literature, secondary data and those in the sector, this research sought the views and perceptions of a group of students in a construction module in a higher education institution in the West Midland region of the UK. A questionnaire alongside interviews were used on a construction module of 80 students and two tutors. Data instruments were guided by insights from government reports, case studies, statistics, academic sources, journals, and industry reports. The findings show negative perceptions still exist but are changing. The paper draws implications from the findings and policy recommendation are posited for various stakeholders. These include flexible working policies, positive role models, career progression, outreach to schools and colleges and intra organisation cultural shifts.

Keywords: construction sector, women, work-life balance, discrimination, west midlands, UK

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the construction sector forms one of the largest sectors in most economies and is often seen as a barometer of wider economic activity within the country. It employs about 7% of the world's

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working age population according to an MGI report (Barbosa et al., 2017), contributing some $10 trillion on construction-related goods and services every year. The global construction market is predicted to grow by $10 trillion by 2030 according to a report by Global Construction Perspectives and Oxford Economics (Robinson, 2019). Some data around major economies highlight the significance of the sector. For example, the value added of construction industry as a percentage of US GDP in 2019 was 4.1% (Statista, 2020). In 2019, the construction output value in China achieved its peak at around 24.84 trillion yuan (Anon, 2019). The construction sector contributes £117 billion to the UK economy per year, 6% of total economic output, employing nearly 2.4 million jobs, and around 7% of UK workforce (Robinson, 2019).

The significance and growth of the sector are hindered by skills shortages in many economies, especially in the UK and US construction sector. Some causes of skills shortages are decline in perception of blue-collar jobs in general. For example, Wilkie (2019) offers interesting insights into why jobs, that were once the backbone of the U.S. economy, have grown increasingly hard to fill, calling it a “drought”. In the context of the UK, the traditional vocational route of apprenticeships that emerged since the industrial revolution, declined from the 1960s onwards. The craft skills passed on from generation to generation gave way to technical colleges, but that too declined as more glamorous areas in the services sector and other white-collar jobs emerged. Careers progression within the sector too has contributed to its unattractiveness in comparison to other sectors. For junior to middle management positions, the significant increased responsibility and pressures are not matched by the financial rewards, so many eschew that path. Another factor, especially in the UK, has been low female representation, despite efforts by the sector and government. Greater female participation within the sector could close some of skills shortages but this has not happened.

The UK construction industry plays a significant role in the economy and is often seen as a bell weather of economic activity in the country. The diverse industry’s output is more than £116 billion per annum and contributes 6-7% of GDP but if supply chain and related businesses are included the figure is double that. It provides between 2.3 million (CIOD, 2020) and 2.4 million (Robinson, 2019) jobs.

Compared to many other blue-collar sectors, not only does it pay well, but the sector provides far more opportunity for social mobility. The sector has faced uncertainty due to Brexit - the UK’s decision to leave the European Union - causing investment to stall. There are regional variations and the West Midlands area of Central England, with England’s second largest city, Birmingham, at its heart, has maintained momentum and growth with estimated £3.8 billion of projects per year for the next 5 years (CITB, 2018). Apart from the contribution to GDP, crucially the sector is also an enabler, creating new infrastructure that enables growth and prosperity and opens up opportunities for major social and economic gains (CITB, 2018). However, the industry faces major challenges. As the CIOB (2020) states “…it has an ageing workforce and has relied heavily on overseas labour in recent years. Fears that it may face labour shortages in the years ahead have focused minds on how to increase productivity. This has been a constant cry for decades, not just in the UK but worldwide”. Within the West Midlands, construction industry skills shortages of 3,390 workers was predicted by the CITB Research (2018) for professional roles and skilled trades. Against this scenario, it seems logical to explore the work profile, especially around female composition. Whilst there have been initiatives to encourage female participation within the sector, female participation remains low. For example, 22% are in architect roles and 2.7% are in the skilled construction trades within the West Midlands (Office of National Statistics, 2018). It is also desirable to have broader female participation in the sector because diversity within an industry ensures a business can compete in a competitive environment (Agapiou, 2002). Research on why female participation is low within the construction industry is therefore needed to ensure the industry can attract and retain females, ensuring some of the skills shortages are mitigated.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are likely to be multiple reasons (and regional variations) for low participation and not all can be covered in this small piece of exploratory research. We aim to provide at best a piece of the jigsaw. The research intends to investigate whether the perception of a masculine culture in the construction industry has changed within a cohort of construction students on a construction module at a large West Midlands Higher Education provider. It seeks to understand whether the wider workplace culture is encouraging females to enter or leave the sector, and how this compares with published findings and case studies following initiatives to encourage women into the industry. Whilst there is extensive secondary research from women within the industry outlining the barriers and challenges females face, there is scarce data from undergraduate students who will be entering the workforce or mature students in the sector considering their progression into management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the 19th century women working in the construction trades was a common occurrence, however the figures decline to 0.5% in the sector in 1951 due to males returning from World War II (Smith Institute, 2014). Historically women were marginalised in the sector, for example in line with guidelines by the National Joint Council for the Building Industry, women could only temporarily replace male workers during World War II, the latter having the right to return to their pre-war jobs. Other barriers included employers choosing who to employ in the traditional apprenticeship systems and lack of state legislation (Smith Institute, 2014).

Demands for equal pay for women with equal work were first noted in the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives Conference in 1955 (Smith Institute, 2014, pp.14 and 17). Equal Pay Act (1970) was introduced to ensure that there was no distinction between men and women in pay or allowances (Gov.uk, 1970). The Equality Act (2010) further extended the Equal Pay Act (1970) to ensure women were not subject to indirect discrimination involving practices within a company that may put them at a disadvantage or they are perceived to be of a protected characteristic (ACAS, 2014).

Alongside the introduction of the Equal Pay Act (1970), Sex Discrimination Act (1975), Equality Act (2010) to legislate against discrimination, organisations such as Women into Construction, were created to encourage female participation and the number of females within the Construction sector in the United Kingdom had increased to 277,000 in December 2015 (Women into Construction, 2018, CITB, 2016). In comparison, Australia has undertaken decades of initiatives to increase women into the industry however there had been a 17% decrease in participation from 2006 to 2012 due to perceptions of disadvantage, pay disparity and lack of promotional opportunities (Galea, 2015).

Across Europe the highest participation of women in the industry is 14.1% in Austria (ILO, 2016, Navarro-Astor, Román-Onsalo & Infante-Perea, 2017). The perceptions of barriers within the construction industry include: balancing work and childcare, sexual harassment, lack of pay equality and the fear mistakes will be judged harshly (Navarro-Astor, Román-Onsalo & Infante-Perea, 2017).

Navarro-Astor, Román-Onsalo, & Infante-Perea, 2017 describe the working conditions as belonging to the “masculine model” where the environment was constructed “by men for men” with working hours incompatible to childcare responsibilities, lack of part-time hours, and a nomadic lifestyle.

In comparison to the construction industry, the engineering sector has similar issues where "stereotyping and bias that can still pervade our culture, particularly within the male dominated engineering" (WES, 2016). Whilst the Women's Engineering Society give positive case studies of women's experiences within engineering, anonymous female engineers give their experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace and lack of recognition for female directors (WES, 2016; Northfield, 2018). Erin Browne, an apprentice Electrician with BAE Systems (a major defence employer), noted having different behaviours with her male colleagues compared to her female friends (BBC, 2010). Within the Accountancy sector female participation had risen globally from 23% in 2001 to 35% in 2012 (Flynn, Earlie, & Cross, 2015).

Research indicates women adapt to the male environment by adopting workplace cultural values and suppressing female attributes. Females feel their position in work environments is more at risk than males (Flynn, Earlie, & Cross, 2015). A male dominated culture within the organisation relating to perception and stereotyping can impact on women (Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990, Haynes, 2008d; Lyonette & Crompton, 2008; Barker & Monks, 1998, cited in Flynn, Earlie, & Cross, 2015). Research indicates a perception of a male culture by both genders although both genders deny discrimination (Flynn, Earlie, & Cross, 2015).

Perception of the Construction Industry

The traditional culture within the construction industry can be perceived as being dominated by masculine stereotypes largely based on a male career model with the image of a drinking culture, long hours, tough men, nomadic lifestyles, sexist behaviour, with males exhibiting hard playing behaviour and ego protecting tendencies. Both men and women exposed to on-site hazards with excessive drinking and smoking are part of the social life after working hours (Healthbusiness.net, 2019; Langford et al., 2000, pl.180 and p.182; Watts, 2007 cited in Sang & Powel, 2012). The industry's poor image, sexist attitudes and stereotyping behaviour can therefore appear to be barriers to women, who may need flexibility to balance work and family (McDermott et al., 2010). These barriers may also create segregation within the industry (Sang & Powel, 2012, p.173). It has been suggested that within the industry, women are undervalued, profit is a priority over people, and it would seem to penalise those who need flexibility or part-time working (McDermott et al., 2010). In summary the culture within the sector "with regards to attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards women and the inherent work-life balance penalties, tend to disadvantage women" (McDermott et al., 2010).

Male Perception of Females

Males have mixed perceptions of women on construction sites including women should not work on-site and they are incapable of dealing with on-site issues (McDermot et al, 2010). Research by Agapiou (2002) revealed operative males thought that women did not have the strength or natural ability to use tools. Previous experiences of women attempting to lift, and employers witnessing women failing to lift heavy equipment, may have reinforced perceptions that women were incapable. The presence of females on site raised fears that the females may flirt and there may be accusations of sexual harassment from women if the current male behaviour remained unchanged (Agapiou, 2002). The males in the research indicated they thought females on site evoked protective attitudes to prevent females being exposed to risky situations. Males also thought that the presence of females inhibited swearing (Agapiou, 2002).

Alternative perceptions of women included some males appreciated the presence of females as it offered an opportunity of alternative conversation from sexual conquests and cars and there was an understanding that women have alternative skills such as finishing and organising. Male perception of females on construction sites have however been changing, as females have been observed doing the same tasks as men (Agapiou, 2002).

Female Perceptions of Discrimination in Construction Industry

In a case study *Building The Future* (Smith Institute, 2014, pp.84-85), Suzanne Kervin argued she had been paid less than her male colleagues, not been considered for manual tasks, and had not had access to adequate safety equipment, and had been asked for sexual contact. Karen King argued within her career she had been unable to access training, equal pay, and a work/life balance (Smith Institute, 2014, pp.85 - 86). Women on construction sites reported incidences of patronising language including being called love, petal and chuck and respondents in research by McDermott et al. (2010, p.275). They felt their self-esteem and confidence levels were reduced and directly attributed these to sexist and negative attitudes by male colleagues. McDermott et al., (2010) made a direct connection with organisational culture undermining the role of women and the women perceived they were made to feel less capable (McDermott et al, 2010).

An alternative view by Agapiou (2002) indicated women perceived themselves fitting in with their male colleagues and employees within the construction industry and perceived a cultural shift, with young women perceiving entry into the sector and acceptance by colleagues (Agapiou, 2002). Research indicated that women were not discouraged from working in a masculine environment and may prefer it. Women may relate to their operational male colleagues compared to office based female staff however inclusivity may not extend organisationally (Ackrill, Caven, & Alaktif, 2017).

Differences in perception by the women in case studies in Smith Institute (2014) and Agapiou (2002) could be explained by the women being in a mature age group compared to the new entrants to the sector which is attempting to attract women. Research by Bennett, Davidson, and Gales (2000) compared perceptions of undergraduate students and employees and suggested women in professional roles “were more committed to remaining in the construction industry than female students”.

Smith Institute (2014) argued whilst numbers of women are increasingly entering the sector, retaining women appears to be problematic and Amaratunga et al (n.d.) and Inman (2016) noted in their research 41% of women expect discrimination in the industry. Actual and perceived discrimination has had an effect on the progression and retention of women in the industry (Dainty, Neale et al., 2000; Tharenou, 2005; Whitman, 2005; Worrall et al., 2010, Francis, 2017).

Construction Student Perceptions

Early research by Gale (1987) cited in (Langford et al., 2000, p.181) indicated a lack of modern perspective in the perception about females. In a survey commissioned by Gale (1987), respondents asserted that females progressed within the industry as they were attractive to males and they were cheap labour. It has been noted that culture may not be the only factor in retaining women in the construction industry, long working hours incompatible with childcare commitments, manual working conditions, the lack of equal opportunity, sexism, and employment via social networks may be a barrier to inclusivity.

Key themes and thematic Framework

The key themes within the secondary and primary research included; perception of culture, Male perception of females, perceptions of acceptance, and actual or perceived discrimination. These are captured below in table 1, comparing the practitioner (industry) studies and student focused research.

Table 1 Theoretical framework.

Theme	Industry	Students
Perception of culture within differing demographics	Generally, culture is viewed as masculine with excessive drinking and sexist attitudes within secondary data (McDermott et al., 2010, Healthbusiness.net, 2019; Langford et al., 2000). Women with extensive experience within the industry report sexism and discrimination in case studies in secondary data (Smith Institute, 2014)	Little secondary data to compare, however culture from the industry can transfer into the classroom (Langford et al., 2000). Primary data research through questionnaires and interviews will highlight themes within the classroom.
Modernisation of construction industry	Within secondary data, Women in Construction are actively encouraging women in the industry and Equal Pay Act to legislate against pay disparity between men and women (ACAS, 2014)	Within secondary data early research of student perceptions highlighted a lack of modern perspective (Gale, 1987 cited in Langford et al., 2000, p. 181). Primary research will highlight changing attitudes.
Discrimination	Secondary data indicates some perception of the presence of discrimination within the case studies given by female employees particularly for those balancing work and family (Smith Institute, 2014, McDermott et al., 2010).	Little data within secondary data however questionnaires and interviews will provide primary data.
Recruitment and Retention of new entrants/existing employees and culture	Within the secondary data long working hours incompatible with commitments and lack of opportunity and employment via social networks indicate barriers to inclusivity to women (Clarke & Herrmann 2007; Galea, Powell, Loosemore, & Chappell, 2015, cited in Ackrill, Caven, & Alaktif, 2017).	There is limited secondary data however primary data will provide student insights into improving recruitment/retention

Recommendations	Secondary data by Smith Institute (2014) suggests equality of progression and tackling discrimination within the sector and engaging with young girls to promote construction as a career (Smith Institute, 2014)	There is limited secondary data however primary data will provide student insights

Three widely understood key theories underpin the research. Given their pervasiveness in academia, the theories will be mentioned in passing, without going into detail. Schein's theory of culture, where three layers of visible artefacts of observed behaviour, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions of perceptions relate to the masculine environment of the construction industry (Schein, 2004). Schein's Theory of Culture has attracted criticisms as it assumes culture is predisposed from inside the head of the leader, generalisations are made regarding organisations, and the contribution of new entrants, and new learning developments (Schein cited in Mouton, Nørholm Just, & Gabrielsen, 2012). Within the construction industry new entrants may have an effect on the development of culture. Review of the literature reflects on the Theory of Culture model and asserts there is little agreement between researchers on what organisational culture consists of and whether it can be measured. Underlying assumptions of organisational values are also difficult to investigate and measure. It was also noted individuals bring their own narrative and backgrounds into an organisation and these may not match the values of the organisation and to some extent the leaders may be constrained by their own employees values in contrary to Schein's assertion that culture is predisposed by the leader (Mouton, Nørholm Just, & Gabrielsen 2012).

Herzberg's Two Factors Theory relates to the research in terms of maintenance or hygiene factors – those required to ensure dissatisfaction does not occur – and motivators to encourage performance. Personal relationships are highlighted as being a 'hygiene' factor (Mullins & Christy). Unfairness, discrimination, lack of progression may lead to dissatisfaction within the individual in the construction industry (Mullins & Christy, 2013; Dainty, Neale et al., 2000; Tharenou, 2005; Whitman, 2005; Worrall et al., 2010, Francis, 2017). Direct and indirect discrimination of women in the construction industry may disadvantage progression and be a de-motivator for women to remain in the industry (Herzberg, 1959, Mullins & Christy, 2013; Dainty, Bagilhole et al. 2000, Dainty & Lingard 2006, Worrall et al. 2010, Watts 2012).

Herzberg's theory has attracted criticisms too for being focussed on limited sample of accountants and engineers and has limited relevance to manual workers (Mullins & Christy, 2013). Hardin (1965) and Opsahl & Dunnette (1966) cited in Bassett-Jones, & Lloyd (2005) challenged Herzberg's methodology within his theory on respondents' recall of situations that evoked feelings of non-satisfaction surrounding financial rewards. Other criticisms of Herzberg's Two Factor theory include only one aspect of job attitudes was used by the study and respondents tended to attribute positive narratives to internal factors and negative narratives to external events (Ewen, 1964; Vroom, 1964, Marvin Peterson, 2007).

A consequence of dissatisfaction for both sexes within the workforce may lead to the third theory – Adams' Theory of Inequity (1965, Mullins & Christy, 2013). Where females perceive inequity, choose to adapt their behaviour to address the perceived inequity, by reducing their hours worked without pay, requesting transfers or resigning from their organisation. Carrell & Dittrich (1978, p.205) noted that attempts to reduce perceived inequity may be temporary however further research is required. Whether attempts to reduce perceived inequity are temporary or not, perception may not reflect the true reality of their situation (Mullins & Christy, 2013, pp.266-268; Carrell & Dittrich, 1978).

How students within the primary research and respondents in the secondary literature process perception will differ between individuals according to age, gender, cultural backgrounds, education, and the environment they operate within (Rookes & Wilson, 2000). Carrell & Dittrich (1978, p.205) study on Adams (1965) Equity Theory also note gender may have an effect on perception of inequity.

Perception of culture by employees within a construction company normally undergoes a process of attribution where individuals make sense of the behaviour of colleagues or informal groups. External forces including the organisational norms, environmental factors, behaviour at work and women may believe that these factors are beyond their influence (Mullins & Christy, 2013). Mullins & Christy (2013) highlighted a criticism of Adams (1965) Theory of Inequity perception may not reflect reality. Perception errors may occur within males and females due to stereotyping and self-fulfilling prophecies (Mullins & Christy, 2013). An example of stereotyping is illustrated by Agapiou (2002) where employers had perceived women had failed to lift equipment and were labelled as incapable, true messages may be blocked out or avoided, and there may be a risk of discrimination. (Mullins & Christy, 2013).

In summary, the literature review has highlighted perceptions of culture and women in the construction industry, and how this has changed over time and initiatives have started to encourage women into the industry, however the perception of a traditional masculine culture remains. Lack of flexibility of working hours, perception of discrimination, sexual misconduct, and pay disparity appear to create challenges and barriers for women in the construction industry. As students will be new entrants into the industry or promoted in management positions following completion of their course, their perceptions will inform organisational culture. Those within the industry currently may also bring the prevailing organisational culture within the classroom setting.

At present there is a gap into research of student perceptions as the majority of the literature has been based on women within the industry or perceptions of primary school children considering their future careers. There is a gap in current research in undergraduate student perceptions in the following areas; it does not assess whether perceptions of culture differ between differing demographics in students considering entry into the industry, it does not investigate whether initiatives to encourage new entrants are having an effect, there are gaps in the research at whether there is a perception of discrimination because of culture within students, it is not clear from current research whether culture or other factors are discouraging retention or new entrants, or whether there is still an under-current of culture remains within the work place. The primary research will address whether the perception of a masculine culture remains, if it is more prevalent within a student demographic or whether the students perceive there are alternative barriers to recruiting and retaining women within the industry. Primary research within the cohort of students will identify recommendations that can be taken to attract a diverse working environment and retain skilled women. Literature sources included trade journals and faculty were selected as they provided an academic and local insight into the issues related to women and the construction industry.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of the project was both exploratory and explanatory and sought insights into the perceptions of culture within the construction industry and involved interviewing those employed or who were considering a career within the sector. A questionnaire alongside interviews were used on a construction module of 80 students and two tutors. Data instruments were guided by insights from government reports, case studies, statistics, academic sources, journals, and industry reports. The latter also provided the base against which to contextualise and explain the findings. The key purpose of these methods was firstly to research whether perceptions of a masculine culture differ from a cohort of students from a range of demographics against published research and secondly to research the extent to which perception of workplace culture is discouraging students from working in the sector. There is limited secondary data on perceptions within a classroom environment and primary data was thus required to understand whether perceptions are changing or whether the students are being discouraged from working within the sector. Within these broad constructs several questions were posed:

1. To assess to what extent perceptions of culture differ between ages and length of service within the cohort of students.
2. To assess to what extent initiatives to modernise the industry are having an impact on a cohort of students
3. To understand to what extent the students perceive the presence of discrimination because of traditional masculine culture
4. To assess to what extent a perception of a traditional masculine culture remains with a cohort of students
5. To establish if culture or other factors are responsible for discouraging new entrants or encouraging employees to leave

The interviews were transcribed by Naturally Dragon Speaking Software into text. Analysis of qualitative data involved content analysis to draw out common phrases, frequently used keywords or phrase used by the interviewees e.g. discrimination, banter, sexist behaviour, macho behaviour. Excel was used to analyse survey data. The sample were mixed gender full and part time students on a construction module. The age group of the full-time students was 20-23, whilst for part-time students (working in construction industry) it was 24+. Also included in the sample were tutors with industry experience aged 50+ years.

RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Results

Student female respondents represented 26.7% of the survey population in comparison with a total of 24.73% of female participation in the construction industry within the West Midlands (Appendix C - Office of National Statistics, 2018). Survey participation by age were 18-23 (37%), 24-30 (38%), 31-40 (13%), 51-60 (6%), 61+ 6%).

Age and length of service & the perception of masculine culture within students

Across the age groups of respondents, most responses were in the Mostly Agree to agree category that there was a masculine culture within the industry. The highest category saying Strongly Agree in the 24-30 age group, Agree was equally chosen both in 18-23 and 24-30 age groups. No one chose Mostly Disagree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

As the industry is defined as being gendered, male stereotyped, and based on a male career model with the image of long hours and sexist behaviour (Healthbusiness.net, 2019; Langford et al., 2000, Sang & Powel, 2012) the students were asked “Why do you think construction graduates leave for another career?”. The top responses were long hours, family, lack of progression, lack of acceptance and discrimination.

Long hours, lack of development, discrimination featured in the 18-23, 24-30 responses indicated an awareness of the male career model and this may exclude some entrants. In Herzberg's Two Factor Theory unfairness, discrimination, lack of progression may lead to dissatisfaction within the individual in the construction industry (Mullins & Christy, 2013, Francis, 2017).

When student were asked if behaviours witnessed in the classroom were similar to those in the workplace classroom, this could be an indication of the prevalence of a masculine culture (Langford et al., 2000; Schein, 2004, Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2008) and most of respondents indicated they Mostly Disagreed, with particularly the 18-23 and 24-30 age groups. This data contradicted individual interviews. This may have occurred as the respondents may have felt fear of identification.

When asked whether all genders were accepted in the industry and this alluded to whether the culture was masculine (and not inclusive to women), the respondents from all main groups mainly Disagreed or were Neutral that women were accepted which contradicted research by Agapiou (2002). The 61+ age group abstained.

Does the perception of discrimination exist within students?

Whilst the data indicated a neutral stance on the discrimination of women, this contradicted the individual interviews. This may have occurred as the respondents may have felt fear of identification. There was a disparity between the two oldest age groups where the 51+ group agree there is discrimination and the 61+ strongly disagrees. On the questionnaire the 61+ indicated it was much worse in the 1970s.

The respondents were asked a series of questions whether women were discriminated against because of the prevailing culture, whether legislation went far enough to protect women, and whether women were discriminated against in terms of promotion. These questions alluded to direct and indirect discrimination due to a protected characteristic (ACAS, 2014).

The female in the 31-40 age group felt that women were treated as being less capable and knowledgeable than their male colleagues, whereas the male respondents did not highlight the lack of knowledge and capability in women which contradicted research by Agapiou (2002).

When asked whether women were discriminated against because of a masculine culture, across the younger age sets and the 51+ the responses ranged from a Neutral response to Agree and the data was in agreement with the individual responses from interviews.

Students were asked whether legislation was sufficient to encourage equality and diversity in the workforce. The respondents were mainly Neutral on whether legislation went far enough to protect women. Under further comments some of the 24-30 and 31-40 age groups felt that whilst legislation was in place, organisations should take responsibility in promoting equal opportunities. This corroborated the views of Schein (1999, Whetton and Cameron, 2012) where leaders within the organisation may have a role in 'defending' the core beliefs within the organisation and socialising new members.

The respondents were asked if there was a level playing field for promotion as the question alluded to discrimination against women. The 18-23 age group were Neutral however the 24-30 and 51+ age group felt there was not a level playing field. The results are skewed towards Disagree.

Respondents were asked whether perceived discrimination would affect their decision to remain in the industry. Unfairness and discrimination may lead to no satisfaction within the individual in Herberg's Two Factor Theory (Mullins & Christy, 2013). A consequence of dissatisfaction could lead to Adams' Theory of Equity and whether the women are leaving the industry due to a perception of inequity.

The respondents were asked if they would leave if other genders were treated differently as this question would allude to discrimination.

The majority of respondents would not leave the industry or change their career choices if other genders were treated differently. Herzberg's Two Factor theory relates to unfairness and discrimination leading to dissatisfaction within the individual, so therefore it could be argued if it does not relate to the respondents, they will continue to have job satisfaction (Mullins & Christy, 2013). This assertion is corroborated when asked whether career choices would be affected by the perception of whether women are treated differently. Within the 18-30, and 61+ age group this would not change their career plans. Particularly to note the 61+ age group may start to disengage with their careers at the age of 60+ and discrimination of others may not have any effect on their career plans (Inkson, 2007).

The respondents were asked whether they perceived culture had changed in the industry. Within the sample the older age groups felt that the industry had changed/modernised over the last 10 years. The younger group mostly agreed or felt neutral – this could be attributed to the fact they have had less experience within the industry.

With a skills shortage in professional roles and skilled trades and low female participation within the West Midlands (Appendix C, Office of National Statistics, 2018,CITB Analysis, 2018, CITB Research, 2018), a series of recommendations were sought from the respondents on encouraging women to enter/stay in the industry. Research suggests that culture may not be the only factor in retaining women in the construction industry, long working hours incompatible with childcare commitments, manual working conditions, the lack of equal opportunity, sexism, and employment via social networks may be a barrier to inclusivity. The responses varied. Across the majority of the age groups the consensus was flexible working hours and family friendly policies would encourage women to remain in the industry. The 18-30 age group held a neutral stance as the issues may not be a deciding influence in their current life stage. Culture change as a means to retention was explored. The majority of the age groups felt a change in culture would encourage women to remain in the industry. Conversely there were strong representations in the disagree and strongly disagree categories which could be explained by students already employed within the industry and research by Bennett, Davidson, & Gales (2000) comparing perceptions of undergraduate students and employees suggests that women in professional roles "were more committed to remaining in the construction industry than female students".

Whilst promotion by Women in Construction to encourage women into the industry, participation remains low (Appendix C, Office of National Statistics, 2018), students' perceptions were sought on whether Women in Construction had been successful. Whilst the majority of the groups agree the initiative has been successful, the interviews contradict these findings. Actual and perceived discrimination has had an effect on the progression and retention of women in the industry and this may have an effect on the effectiveness of these initiatives.

The students were asked if career planning and promotion to executive levels, in an attempt to overcome direct and indirect discrimination, would encourage women to remain. The majority felt that career planning and promotion would encourage women to stay. This would seem to contradict the findings by Agapiou (2002, p.701) that males had the perception that women are not capable but may have been in a manual role rather than executive.

The students were asked if the media had an influence on the image of the construction industry and the choices of careers. The industry has a poor image, sexist attitudes and stereotyping behaviour which are all barriers to employees, particularly for women, who may need flexibility to balance work and family (McDermott et al., 2010). The students, particularly in the 24-30 to age group felt the media had a part to play. In the interviews, participants suggested other influences on career choices and these are explored in the next section.

Results from Qualitative Data

Recorded interviews with open-ended questions were undertaken and transcribed. Given the snapshot timing of the survey within class time only a limited number of students agreed to participate in interviews, however they kindly allowed their surveys to be used. A content analysis was completed on the transcribed interviews. Words used frequently by the interviewees highlighted where the greatest concern was held by the participant. Keywords or phrases which were searched for were: macho, manly, male orientated/dominated, working hours, family/ children, discrimination, schools, and sexism.

The content analysis summary in terms of perception of a masculine culture indicated that across the age groups there was a perception of masculine culture due to the appearance of words including macho and male orientated. This was more prevalent in the 51+ age group with the frequency of the words “macho” and “male orientated” within their interview. The 51+ age group will have witnessed social change, introduction of legislation detailed earlier, and have had significant experience working in the industry.

Interviewees were asked if banter in the classroom was similar to the workplace as this can be an indication of reinforced culture (Torrington, Hall, and Taylor, 2008). Whilst the tutors were insistent it was not evident in the classroom, there was an admission that it may occur “behind closed doors” and other respondents confirmed “onsite slang” was used between males.

The interviewee in the 18-23 group indicated language used in the classroom was not cross-gendered. The female in the 24-30 age group indicated that there was banter within her friends’ group on the course, however it was not replicated in the workplace. The lack of input by the 31-40 age group during the interview stage may have provided more of a bias towards a perception of a masculine environment.

The content analysis summary in relation to the perception of discrimination indicated there was an awareness of discrimination across the age groups. The frequency of the word “discrimination” appeared more prevalent in the 24-30 age group and 51+ age group. Individual perception may not, of course, be a true reflection of reality (Mullins & Christy, 2013). The 51+ age group indicated “trades were dominated by males and women were not welcome”. The 51+ age group would have had experience working within the industry and witnessed the introduction of the Equality Act (2010) (ACAS, 2014). In terms of whether the students feel the industry is modernising, the 51+ age group witnessed significant change with “women coming into construction both on site and in professional roles” and they felt there was still much to do. The 18-23 age group felt “more needed to be done in terms of equality in pay”. The female 24-30 age group had felt they had seen the least evidence of modernisation. The 51+ age group had witnessed significant change within the industry however the 18-23 age group had not enough industry experience to perceive distance travelled in terms of modernisation. Again, perception is individual, and perception may not be a true reflection (Mullins & Christy, 2013). In terms of what recommendations can be made to attract and retain females or new entrants, key themes from interview transcripts highlighted flexible hours, family friendly policies, followed by role models within the industry, equal pay, and the promotion of construction careers for women.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key outcomes from the results can be summed up in that whilst the differing age groups in the student group perceived a masculine culture within the construction industry with its challenges and barriers to women, the women perceived that their capabilities were questioned by their male colleagues. Males in the primary research did not perceive a lack of capability within the females. Workplace culture is construed as having many layers and it is not just macho behaviour or discrimination which is discouraging women. As women are the main caregivers of young children and other family members, long working hours and inflexibility are barriers to participation within the industry. There was a tacit acknowledgment that whilst discrimination and 'banter' is discouraged within the classroom; behaviour witnessed in the workplace can, behind closed doors, be replicated in a learning environment in the student group. With legislation to prevent discrimination, those within the student group felt that organisations and their leaders have a responsibility in creating change in the 'macho' culture. Promotion of females into executive roles may provide a shift in organisational culture however respondents felt females should be promoted on merit.

Whilst there were perceptions of a masculine environment within individual workplaces, this did not detract the students from entering the workplace. There was an awareness of discrimination and inflexibility of working hours, however as this did not affect the individuals concerned in their current life stage, the students' satisfaction in their jobs was not adversely affected enough for them to consider leaving the industry. Key recommendations generated by the students for encouraging women to enter and remain in the industry include flexible working hours, family friendly policies and role modelling by female executives.

So, what can we conclude from above? The research confirmed that whilst there have been some modernisation and initiatives within the construction industry in terms of anti-discrimination and the promotion of women, a perception of a masculine culture is still evident particularly within a cohort of students. The research also highlighted that perceived macho behaviour is not the main feature of culture within an industry, other factors including long working hours, inflexible family policies, direct and indirect discrimination, disparity in pay, inability to access mentoring network, and lack of personal development may create barriers and challenges to women considering entry into the industry or those currently employed. Whilst discrimination and culture may feature in personal job satisfaction and the decision to remain in a job role, unless the individuals are personally discriminated against, they are unlikely to leave if they perceive that a specific gender is subject to discrimination. The research highlighted that the promotion of female roles within the construction industry had limited success with Women in Construction and Women into Property, the key to gender parity in the industry may be through role modelling with families of those considering entry to the industry and the wider community. The introduction of the National Careers Strategy with mandatory requirements for employer engagement may provide opportunities to widen the participation of women in the construction industry with an eventual feminisation of culture. Careers Advisors may have an important role in highlighting and promoting careers in construction to all genders. Whilst Careers Advisors' own professional practice is client-centred where clients are best placed to make their own decisions, the government's introduction of the National Careers Strategy in secondary schools with a mandatory requirement for interaction with employers from Years 8 to 13 should include a cross-section of STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) industry sectors which may help highlight the careers available to all genders within the construction industry (Hambly & Bomford, 2019). These interactions may potentially increase the numbers of female participation and precipitate further cultural and perceptual change within the industry.

Implications

Despite the small sample, the research has national and regional implications as a skills gap remains within the industry and national housing shortage. Suitably skilled personnel are required to construct 340,000 houses annually until 2031. The perception of a masculine culture may impact on the industry's ability to recruit and retain women into an industry they feel does not value their knowledge, capabilities, or welcome and accept them. Family friendly policies and change in the perception of the construction industry will enable the retention of females and help close the national and regional skills gap.

The research has implications for employers within the construction industry. Unless a change of culture occurs with a shift to flexible working hours, family friendly policies, and the enforcement of anti-discrimination procedures, the industry will be unable to retain suitably skilled staff to fulfil national and regional housing building contracts. Culture change will also promote broader diversity and business competitiveness whilst a failure to promote inclusivity for all genders may stunt creativity, innovation, strategic decision making, and organisational growth.

Companies may need to implement mentoring, networking opportunities and staff development programmes to enable females to progress to senior positions within the organisation. These women would then act as role models for new entrants into the industry. Coaching and mentoring offer opportunities of changing and establishing expected behaviours for all genders within the organisation in relation to anti-discriminatory behaviour and this would also enable a shift in cultural change. The current perception of culture has implications for careers guidance professionals and for industry initiatives including Women into Construction and Women into Property. Perceptions of their lack of effectiveness to encourage women into the industry may mean women lack awareness of the career opportunities in the sector or rely on unofficial sources for careers guidance or alternatively advice given by careers guidance professionals.

The research also highlights implications for educational establishments if females do not see construction as a viable career or they would not be accepted into the sector. Unless establishments can encourage women into the industry and establish early anti-discriminatory behaviour amongst students, the industry will fail to recruit a diverse and capable labour force and the skills gap will continue. The introduction of the National Careers Strategy and employer engagement may increase awareness of sector careers and encourage females to consider a career within the industry and this may initiate feminisation and culture change.

Policy Recommendations

Key recommendations to encourage female participation in the industry include:

- Implementation of flexible working and family friendly policies within construction companies
- Positive role modelling by female executives within construction companies
- Promotion of women to board level positions to encourage broad diversity and business competitiveness
- Construction companies engaging with schools and colleges as part of the National Careers Strategy to promote careers to all genders to attract talent from a diverse range of demographics
- Sustained organisational shift in culture within individual construction companies and the Higher Education sector to ensure adherence to anti-discriminatory policies and encourage inclusivity.

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BUILD FOR FAME, BUY FOR FORTUNE AND BORROW FOR FRIENDS: GROWTH STRATEGIES AND SMES' PERFORMANCE IN MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

We researched and analyzed the relationships between growth strategies and the performances of SMEs. There are external factors that influence the relationship between growth strategies and performance, as well as modify the way firms behave and how the strategies and performance relate to one another. Therefore, we are including in the study the analysis of the moderator effect of interfirm trust, as perceived by CEOs, due to its role affecting the relationship between the two variables previously mentioned. The present research provides empirical evidence about different growth patterns and firms' performance and how they can be analyzed through the scope of the Resource-Based View, as well as the moderator effect of interfirm trust; identifying the existence of three different growth strategies in a sample of selected firms and the effect trust has over their relationships with performance.

Keywords: growth strategies; SME performance; interfirm trust; resource-based view

INTRODUCTION

Growth and firm performance have been the focus of a lot of research, but most of the literature has concentrated on forecasting the result of different variables associated with the firms' performance. Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies examining the performance effects of growth strategies (Davidsson et al., 2006; Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; Delmar et al., 2003; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). Additionally, the effect that interfirm trust has over the growth strategies selected and the firms' performance has not been included as a moderator effect. Therefore, the present article presents a research about the relationship between growth strategies and SMEs' performance in the Electronic, Technology, Information, and Communication sector (ETICs) in Mexico, and how interfirm trust, as perceived by the

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CEOs, moderates said relationship, analyzing these effects and relationships from the Resource-Based View (RBV).

There have been numerous studies analyzing growth, but the SMEs' growth has not been thoroughly studied and researchers have complained about the difficulty generating conclusive findings with all the existing material due to different obstacles (Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; Gilbert et al., 2006; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010; Wiklund et al., 2003; Zahra et al., 2006). One critique is that it has been difficult to achieve a cumulative body of knowledge, since researchers use different measures of firm growth (Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; Gilbert et al., 2006; Wiklund et al., 2003; Zahra et al., 2006). The variety of concepts and methods used, such as the unit of analysis, different ways of growth, or variation in growth rates over time (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010), has been a problem towards standardization and generation of deeper knowledge, while simultaneously neglecting the studies regarding the way growth occurs in SMEs. Due to this lack of studies, some scholars initiated two different growth analysis research lines. The first one analyzed how growth is attained (Achtenhagen et al., 2010; Davidsson et al., 2006; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010), while the second one focused on the growth strategies used by firms (Anderson et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2009; Davis & Marquis, 2005; Delmar et al., 2003; Gilbert et al., 2006; Zou et al., 2010).

In the present study, we analyzed three growth strategies: organic, also called internal growth; acquisitive or external growth (Lockett et al., 2011; Penrose, 1959); and hybrid growth, combining elements from the other previously mentioned strategies and taking different forms, such as franchising, licensing, and strategic alliances (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). This classification provides a framework to analyze the different implications on firms' performance and, consequently, different managerial challenges, arisen from the growth strategies chosen and the resources firms have (Lockett et al., 2011; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). There are external factors that moderate the relationship between growth strategies and firm performance, one of which is trust. Interfirm trust between firms, especially between SMEs, has been identified as a factor that helps create relational knowledge, develop market opportunities, and navigate institutional voids, therefore we are including in the study the analysis of the moderator effect of interfirm trust (Audretsch et al., 2014; Clarysse et al., 2011; Fiedler et al., 2017; Williams & Vorley, 2015). Under this lens, some researchers have suggested that the environment has a direct relationship with firm performance, i.e. a favorable environment improves firm performance (Audretsch et al., 2014; Williams & Vorley, 2015), however, other studies have found that an adverse environment would not necessarily hurt firm growth (Bamiatzi & Kirchmaier, 2012). We analyzed the relationship between growth strategies and firm performance, and argue that interfirm trust, as perceived by the CEOs, is an external factor that moderates that relationship in Mexican SMEs from the ETICs sector.

Firm performance has been extensively studied and analyzed from different dimensions (Becchetti & Trovato, 2002; Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; Gilman & Edwards, 2008). We decided to focus the effects of growth strategies on firm performance related to the organizational aspirations, since organizational aspirations and growth strategies have been used to explain performance, strategic behavior, and actions such as product development, mergers, and acquisitions (Kotlar et al., 2018; Walter et al., 2006; Zou et al., 2010). These aspirations and the firms' performance were reported by the CEOs in a self-developed database. Using this perceptive measures by managers of different levels or even the owners has been accepted and reproduced by other studies, including profitability and growth as common measures (Pucci et al., 2017). We grouped the responses into three perceptual measures. The first group consists of those conservative firms seeking to grow in the long run through inside investment while keeping control over the operations (Agnihotri, 2014; Cooper et al., 1994), what we call gaining fame. The second group is made up of firms aiming to aggressively obtain financial results in the short term, growing at a fast pace through purchases (Agnihotri, 2014). According to conventional economic theory, profit is a key performance indicator, since it allows for the firms to analyze the wealth and margin obtained, and profitability has been used to analyze performance and has been identified as an aspect to be considered for new business strategies (Ates et al., 2013; Jarvis et al., 2000; Pucci et al., 2017). With this in mind, the second group is conceptualized as gaining fortune. The third group is formed by firms that are willing to share resources and wealth with partner firms to obtain a competitive advantage in the market and when synergies are perceived among the partners (Agnihotri, 2014), which they would not be capable to gain by themselves; they are seeking strategic allies or, as we name them, business friends.

Previous empirical works in Eastern economies (Zou et al., 2010) show that a firm's performance varies as a function of the growth strategy selected. However, because the evolution of institutions in Latin American economies has been different from that of other Eastern economies (North, 1990), environmental factors have a different effect on businesses in Latin American economies (Capelleras et al., 2010). Therefore, it becomes interesting to analyze how the relationship between these variables is and how interfirm trust moderates it within a Latin American country. We used a self-developed database with 450 observations, result of surveying CEOs of SMEs in the ETICs sector, most of them located over the 3 largest cities in Mexico. It is expected that this study will help better understand how growth strategies influence firms' performance aspirations, as well as the moderating effect of interfirm trust, which is relevant due to its theoretical and managerial implications (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010).

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Theoretical Background

Growth strategies. Most of the growth literature for the past sixty years has concentrated on understanding why some firms grow more than others, following the approach of *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm* (Penrose, 1959), which aims to identify resources that contribute to the growth of firms and how resource endowment explains differences in terms of performance (Nason & Wiklund, 2018). Growth has been conceptualized and measured in different dimensions. The growth model presented by Penrose is based on leveraging the resources of the firm as well as growth opportunities. In this sense, different growth strategies and the way resources are employed generate different challenges and opportunities, therefore, when managers are not able to either identify or exploit growth opportunities, the firms' growth slows down (Delmar et al., 2003; Hamilton, 2012; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). Under this approach, various relationships have been analyzed between growth and resources, like the existing relationship between entrepreneur characteristics and growth (S. Anderson, 2003; Baum et al., 2001; LeBrasseur et al., 2003; Smallbone et al., 1995), the resource configuration and endowment to achieve growth (Fuller-Love, 2006; Nason & Wiklund, 2018; Wright & Stigliani, 2012), and the role of innovation as one of the main sources of firm growth (Audretsch et al., 2014; O'Cass & Sok, 2013). There have been different literature reviews carried out related to the growing phenomenon, for example those carried out by Delmar (1997), Weinzimmer (1998), and Achtenhagen et al. (2010). Most empirical studies focused on examining the determinants of venture growth (Davidsson et al., 2006; Gilbert et al., 2006; Macpherson & Holt, 2007), attempting to find explanations for firm growth by analyzing a large number of dependent variables that explain the variations of growth *as a quantitative increase* (Achtenhagen et al., 2010).

Despite the great number of studies already made, the results of the empirical works are not convergent, and researchers have been unable to identify variables that have a consistent effect on growth across studies. This can be explained by the analysis units used, variations in time, and differences in the growth forms, among other things. The results of empirical studies show models able to explain a limited portion of the differences in growth among firms (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). More recent research on firm growth has increased our understanding of different growth patterns (Achtenhagen et al., 2010;

Davidsson et al., 2006; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). In essence, the focus of this research stream is understanding *how* growth happens, which we will call growth strategies. Growth strategies can be explained by the RBV, defined and used by different authors, such as Penrose (1959), Barney (1991), and Nason and Wiklund (2018), focusing on the firm's internal strengths and unique, inimitable resources to create sustainable competitive advantage and using strategies to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. To be considered a source of competitive advantage, a firm's resources must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and irreplaceable (Barney, 1991; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). On the other hand, the firm's capabilities are defined as the way the resources are used by the firm to improve its performance (Grant, 1991). In this regard, growth strategies are the way in which the firms' managers or CEOs decide to assign the firms' resources and capabilities in order to achieve the aspirations and objectives that have been established. It is possible to classify the growth strategies into three groups.

The first one is organic growth, also called internal growth, which refers to the strategic focus on internal research and development, applied to product development, enhancements, and extensions (McCann, 1991). Organic growth is based on projects proposed and generated within the firm, as well as the knowledge absorbed by it through technological resources, such as knowledge and patents, and capabilities, like the ability to integrate and build long-term business with these technological resources (Bell et al., 1995; Medina et al., 2020). Organic growth is usually associated with genuine job creation (Pasanen, 2007) and firms that follow organic growth strategy usually spend resources on researching to develop new products and enhancing their product portfolio, while keeping control of the operations (Agnihotri, 2014; Zahra, 1991).

The second group is acquisitive or inorganic growth, which refers to forward or backward integration, where high-growth firms in mature industries have been suggested to grow through acquisitions and mergers (Henrekson & Johansson, 2010; Levie, 1997; Lockett et al., 2011; Medina et al., 2020; Penrose, 1959). The firms that grow by acquisitions usually have enough financial resources and this strategy is often considered a shift of jobs from one firm to another, but this can create a challenge of cultural integration (Agnihotri, 2014; Pasanen, 2007).

A third group, that we will call hybrid growth, combines elements from both organic and acquisitive growth (Williamson, 1991). Hybrid growth strategy is neither organic nor acquisitive, but it is somewhere in between (Chen et al., 2009; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010; Zou et al., 2010), and it is presented in various forms, such as franchising, licensing, and joint ventures/strategic alliances (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). When firms become partners, they can access external resources, which allows them to develop new products and share the risks of those developments, even though they have to share the control of the operations as well (Agnihotri, 2014).

Each growth strategy will have different antecedents determined by the assignment of the resources and capabilities of each firm. From the RBV perspective (Barney, 1991), the competitive advantage of a firm is closely related to the use of the resources and assets owned by the firm (Grant, 1991). Therefore, firm performance will depend on the ownership of valuable resources and the assignment of firms' resources and capabilities, as well as the growth strategy selected (Chen et al., 2009; Nason & Wiklund, 2018; Zou et al., 2010).

Growth and performance. Previous research suggests there is a close connection between growth and the performance of a firm, being common to find in existing literature the concept of growth as a synonym for success or performance (Baum et al., 2001; Davidsson et al., 2006; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Zahra, 1991), although they are different concepts. Generally, growth can affect several aspects of performance and it is an important precondition for the achievement of other financial aspirations (Pasanen, 2007), the reason why some researchers have emphasized the role of firm growth as the key indicator for business success (Clarysse et al., 2011). The main problem to measure performance lies in the breadth of the concept, and the heterogeneity of the factors that influence it (Delmar et al., 2003; Phelps et al., 2007; Pucci et al., 2017). Measurement systems for performance have evolved, in some cases transforming into performance management in terms of what to do with performance measures and changing into more dynamic measures (Ates et al., 2013; Vij & Bedi, 2016). There is no consensus on measurement methods (Vij & Bedi, 2016), but a major indicator associated to performance has been growth, both internal and external, even though it is now considered a multidimensional construct (Cooper et al., 1994; Pucci et al., 2017; Vinogradova, 2018). Not only growth, but most ways performance has been measured is according to financial variables, such as increase in sales, market share, or financial profitability (Desai, 2008; Gilbert et al., 2006; Stewart Jr et al., 1998; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003).

Building on this tendency of using growth as an important indicator for performance, it is also relevant to understand the growth strategies and the paths firms follow towards growth (Brenner & Schimke, 2015). Some decades ago, Penrose (1959) stated that selecting a growth strategy, either internal or external, would generate different results in terms of performance. The role of growth strategies, extended to organic, acquisitive, and hybrid growth, has been stated and explained in different studies, suggesting that resource exploitation and allocation follow different growth strategies, which generate different challenges and impact firm performance (Agnihotri, 2014; Medina et al., 2020; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). Under this guidance, we argue that each growth strategy will have different effects on firm performance related to the organizational aspirations the firm has.

Previous studies and literature reviews have identified the difficulties of conceptualizing performance, but having a transformation, from a financial, static perspective to a new paradigm, understanding it as a multidimensional construct including non-financial factors, such as social responsibility or customer satisfaction (McCann, 1991; Pucci et al., 2017; Taticchi et al., 2010; Vij & Bedi, 2016). Nevertheless, it is very rare to find comprehensive performance measurement systems for SMEs, despite it being critical for their strategic management (Garengo et al., 2005; Pucci et al., 2017).
Another factor that hinders the measurement of performance in SMEs is the difficulty to obtain it, either because managers and owners are unwilling to share strategic or sensitive information from their firms or because the information made public may be biased due to the lack of auditing systems (Chandler & Hanks, 1993; Pucci et al., 2017; Vij & Bedi, 2016). To deal with the problem regarding accessing objective data, researchers have opted for using subjective measures. Even though academics prefer objective measures due to a bias risk, it has been suggested and analyzed how subjective measures can be equivalent to objective measures (Pucci et al., 2017; Vij & Bedi, 2016; Wall et al., 2004).

Among the nonfinancial measures for performance, some scholars have used variables related to organizational aspirations. Autio & Acs (2010) suggested that obtaining organizational growth data requires a substantial investment of resources, time, and effort; they used entrepreneurial growth aspirations as a dependent variable to prove the moderating effect of the intellectual property over education and household income. Other authors have also used growth aspirations as independent variables to prove the mediator effect of the resources and opportunities overgrowth (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms concerning the behavior are usually found to predict real behavioral intentions with a high degree of accuracy (Ajzen, 1991). For this research, we used perceptual measures of firm performance, reflected by firms' objectives and aspirations as reported by the CEOs. Following the work by Walter et al. (2006), we selected three types of aspiration measures: profit attainment, competitive advantages, and securing long-term survival. We suggest that those firms that have chosen acquisitive growth are more willing to take a greater risk than those that grow organically or by alliances; so, they are aiming towards increasing their financial performance (profit attainment). On the other side, we suggest that companies growing organically are generally small, conservative businesses, whose growth responds to market demand, so the effects of their strategic performance can be considered as long-term survival.

Finally, companies that grow by establishing partnerships do it to obtain the competitive advantage they lack individually.

Interfirm trust. A large amount of recent empirical studies of growth and firm performance mentions the importance of the effects of the environment over both constructs (Capelleras & Rabetino, 2008; Shepherd & Wiklund, 2009; Westhead & Wrigth, 2012; Wright & Stigliani, 2012). Some studies analyze the positive effect over firm growth, with environmental factors like government support programs (Becchetti & Trovato, 2002; Delmar et al., 2003; Fuller-Love, 2006; Keogh & Evans, 1999), national cultural factors (Anderson, 2003), and access to credit (Carpenter & Petersen, 2002). Dickson and collaborators (2006) suggested that the impact of uncertainty is higher on large firms than it is in small ones. Bamiatzi and Kirchmaier (2012) suggested that an adverse environment does not necessarily hurt firms' growth, but firms need to be in harmony with the environmental conditions to thrive easier (Pasanen, 2007).

Societies with higher trust levels enable actors to base their business relationships on trust rather than contract, usually based on institutional trust (Rus & Iglic, 2005). In those societies, trust promotes long-term coexistence and competitors from one sector can share machinery, specific assets, and information more freely, expanding their capacities and lowering transaction costs due to the interfirm trust (Dickson et al., 2006; Liao & Long, 2018). When a company seeks resources or knowledge it lacks, it often opens the firm up to the potential for opportunistic behavior (Dickson et al., 2006), so interfirm trust helps reduce costs in supervision and management controls, while incentivizing investment and cooperation in the collaboration between firms (Anderson et al., 2017; Liao & Long, 2018).

Firms require the creation of a business environment that enables growth and trust in the collaborating firms to strengthen their competitive position (Kale & Singh, 2009; Wright et al., 2015). "Trust between firms refers to the confidence that a partner will not exploit the vulnerabilities of the other" (Gulati, 1998, p. 303). Interfirm trust alludes to the willingness to place the firm in a vulnerable position based on a positive expectation towards the partner's abilities, trustworthiness, and intentions, which can be understood on multiple levels, ranging from individuals to firms (S. W. Anderson et al., 2017). Interfirm trust is related to a firm's performance, reduction of opportunism, changes in organizational behavior, and environmental variables, such as increases in environmental innovation and establishment of rules through dialog, eliminating uncertainty and mitigating the effects of a hostile environment (Liao & Long, 2018). Therefore, we argue that interfirm trust, as perceived by the CEOs, moderates the relationship between the growth strategies and the performance aspirations of SMEs.

Hypotheses Development

Growth strategies, and performance aspirations. As mentioned before, different growth strategies will have different effects and generate different challenges on the strategic performance of the firms (Achtenhagen et al., 2010; Agnihotri, 2014; Davidsson et al., 2006; Delmar et al., 2003; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010; Medina et al., 2020; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). Growth strategies chosen by the companies are dynamic and vary over time (Brenner & Schimke, 2015). The growth strategy chosen by a company responds both to the availability and allocation of resources and the effects of environmental factors, such as economic crises or declining markets (Bamiatzi & Kirchmaier, 2012), among others. Firms that choose the organic growth strategy assign resources to their processes and their technological products, and have the capability of making them productive by investing in their internal projects (Medina et al., 2020). They invest a significant amount of resources, which reduces short-term profit, but guarantees long-term survival (Lockett et al., 2011). Organic growth focuses on the development of new products either due to a proposal from their employees (Medina et al., 2020) or as a response to the market demand, enabling them to stay on the market in the long run (McCann, 1991). Businesses growing this way reduce their exposure to risk and aim for their survival through slow, but controlled growth (Agnihotri, 2014; McCann, 1991). Due to the speed of growth, firms that grow organically are relatively unlikely to attain superior profitability in the short term (Agnihotri, 2014; Davidsson et al., 2009). Therefore, we suggest growing organically is related to the performance aspiration of long-term survival.

H1: Firms that choose an organic growth strategy are more likely to look for survival in the long run than to obtain competitive advantages or attain above-average profit.

On the other hand, firms growing by acquisitions tend to be more mature, older, and larger, due to their consolidated processes and access to financial resources for forward or backward integration (Levie, 1997; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). These firms look for business opportunities, knowledge expansion, and discovery of unexpected sources of synergy resulting on high financial performance through fast growth (Agnihotri, 2014; Graebner, 2004), although acquisitions may also be pursued by firms lacking the ability to expand organically (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). Financial resources help firm growth by allowing them to purchase an existing business (Gilbert et al., 2006). *Profit* firms have attained the ability to both create and appropriate value above the industry average (Clarysse et al., 2011). Firms tend to grow by acquisitions due to their willingness to acquire high-profit businesses (Agnihotri, 2014; Pasanen, 2007). Therefore, we hypothesize:

H2: Firms that choose an acquisitive growth strategy are more likely to look for attaining above-average profit than to obtain competitive advantages or secure long-term survival.

Hybrid growth modes include partnership relations with external actors to the firm so they work together and share assets and profits, but also control and risks, to accomplish mutual growth (Agnihotri, 2014; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). To facilitate these relations, the firm must have strong social relationship capabilities (Aldrich et al., 1987; Dowling, 2003; Kogut & Zander, 1992). Performing some form of association allows the firm to be able to participate in markets in which it could not enter by using only its resources, as well as prevent competitors to enter (Agnihotri, 2014; Kale & Singh, 2009). Three main forms of hybrid growth have been identified by McKelvie and Wiklund (2010): Franchising is a legal agreement between a firm and an external partner to share the firm's intellectual property in exchange for monetary compensation, so the firm grows without spending its financial resources. Licensing consists of selling intellectual property rights in exchange for a royalty payment based on usage. Strategic alliances consist of collaborations with another firm or firms to achieve synergies that the firm would not be able to obtain by itself. Moreover, the firms share, not only profits, but risks as well.

Potentially, alliances may ease the flow of resources between organizations (Dickson et al., 2006). The relationship between social relationship capabilities and success has been intensively studied in small business literature, where higher levels of networking activities or social capital are associated with greater firm performance (Aldrich et al., 1987; Dowling, 2003). Firms that choose hybrid growth are looking for resources and capabilities they lack, but their partners have, joining to reach business opportunities they could not exploit individually (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). R&D alliances often have long-term profit horizons and aim to seize opportunities in the environment or new markets (Dickson et al., 2006; Hoehn-Weiss & Barden, 2014); in other words, when using the hybrid forms of growth, firms are trying to get a competitive advantage.

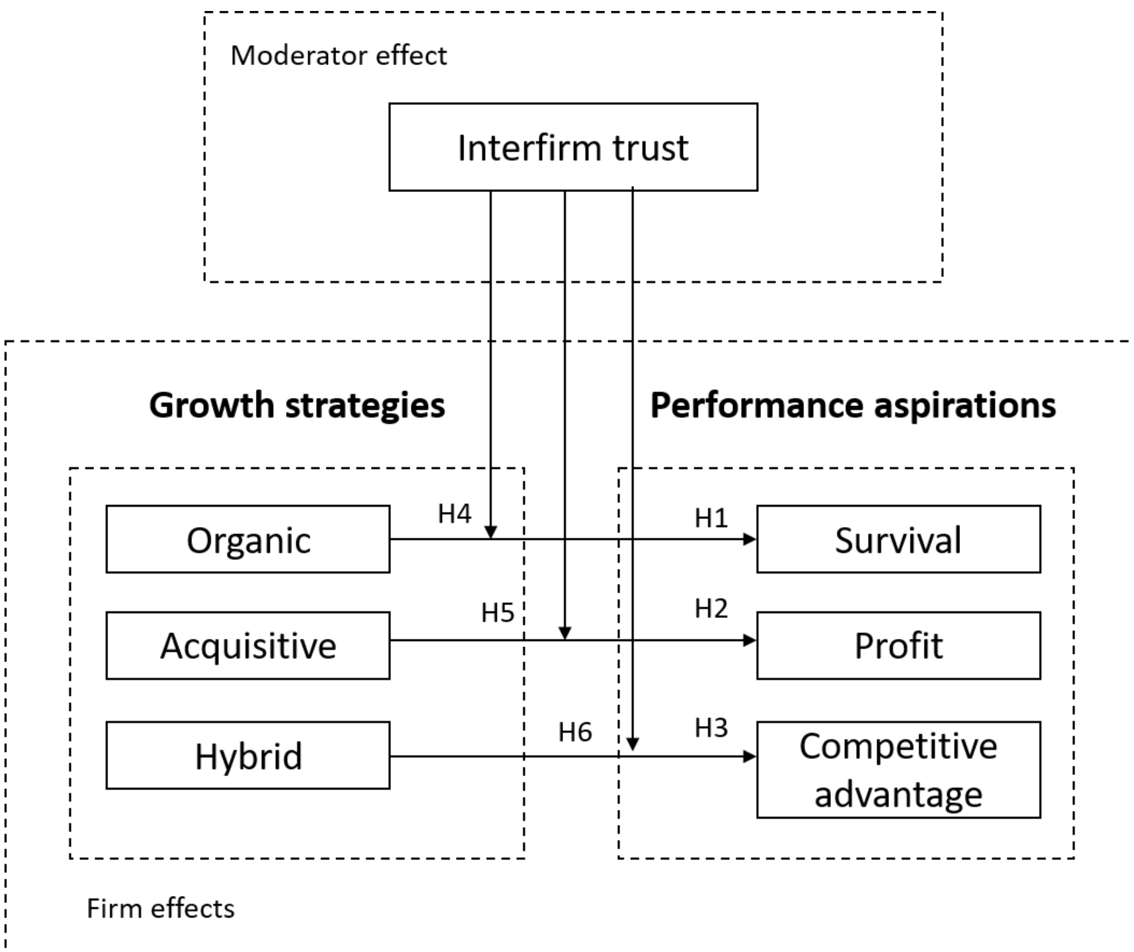
H3: Firms that choose a hybrid growth strategy are more likely to look for obtaining competitive advantages than to attain above-average profit or secure long-term survival.

Moderating effect of interfirm trust, and performance aspirations. The perception of the managers regarding interfirm trust and trust in the environment regarding the commercialization of technological resources, like protection against patents and industrial secrets theft, is related to the firm's performance aspirations (Herrera & Lora, 2005). In sectors of intensive use of knowledge, the environmental forces play an important role in a firm's performance (Balbinot & Bignetti, 2006). Particularly in the technological industry, knowledge management is a crucial aspect to create revenue, to defend the firm's competitive position, and to survive (Candelin-Palmqvist et al., 2012). Interfirm trust allows firms to share knowledge and information more openly and has an impact on operational performance, performance of an interfirm relationship, and environmental innovation (Anderson et al., 2017; Liao & Long, 2018; Shi & Liao, 2015). Therefore, we hypothesize:

H4: Interfirm trust moderates the relationship between organic growth and long-term survival aspirations.

The relationship between growth strategies and firm performance, moderated by interfirm trust, is shown in the figure 1 below. Note that Hypotheses H5 and H6 are given after Figure 1.

Figure 1. Relationship between Variables



Mergers and acquisitions are processes, where there is an implicit risk that one partner takes advantage of another because of an asymmetry of information between firms (Dickson et al., 2006). In sectors where the use of knowledge is intensive, firm acquisitions include intangible assets that are difficult to value (Hennart & Reddy, 1997); therefore, interfirm trust between actors reduces the costs of transactions of buying and selling (Kogut & Singh, 1988; Liao & Long, 2018; Singh & Kogut, 1989). Then, we can hypothesize

H5: Interfirm trust moderates the relationship between acquisitive growth and profit attainment aspirations.

Firms with aspirations to obtain competitive advantages by using a hybrid growth strategy need to be in harmony with the environmental conditions surrounding them and with their partners (Pasanen, 2007). In societies with little interfirm trust and trust in the business environment, the contracts that formalize partnerships are complex with high control costs, and this affects the firm's performance (Teece, 1986). On the other hand, having greater levels of interfirm trust allows firms to access, exchange, and generate knowledge, reduce transaction costs, and face environmental uncertainties (Agnihotri, 2014; Fiedler et al., 2017; Liao & Long, 2018). It has been suggested that interfirm trust helps reduce perceived risks and opportunistic behavior and improve the stability, integration, and performance in interfirm relationships (Anderson et al., 2017; Shi & Liao, 2015). Therefore, we hypothesize:

H6: Interfirm trust moderates the relationship between hybrid growth and aspirations of obtaining competitive advantages.

METHODOLOGY

DATA AND SAMPLE

Following recommendations made by Davidsson et al. (2006, p.387), "…the use of homogeneous samples allows one to use operationalization that is maximally relevant for the particular type of firm or industry". The study sample consists of SMEs operating in the ETICS industrial sector in Mexico. The ETICS industry has been one of the fastest-growing sectors in Mexico in recent years. During the last 10 years, it has received 4.560 billion USD of direct investment. It has generated 47.590 billion USD in exports and has created about 50,000 jobs.

The analysis focused on SMEs using the classification of the Secretary of Economy, considering as SMEs those firms that have 250 employees and annual sales of up to 250 million Mexican pesos. The questionnaire was designed to be applied face to face to the CEOs from the firms in the sample. The questionnaire was designed in Spanish, and multiple item constructs were used. Besides, experts from the sector were consulted to validate the instrument and avoid misunderstandings in the wording. Most of the answers were expressed on a Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree. The rest are ordinal or quantitative variables.

We conducted a pilot project in the city of Guadalajara, realizing the difficulty of collecting primary data. To ensure the attainment of data, we hired the firm BERUMEN S.A., which is one of the most prestigious companies in Mexico for collecting and processing information. To collect the full sample, we signed two cooperation agreements. The first one was made with the National Association of Computer Technology and Communications Distributors (ANADIC) and the second one, with the National Chamber of Electronic, Telecommunications and Technology Industry (CANIETI); both of them combined reach 99% of the firms in this sector in Mexico.

The pilot sample included 25 firms and the results helped us correct the wording of some items. Later, we sent e-mails to the CEOs requesting their participation in this research. From the affirmative responses, face-to-face appointments were made with CEOs in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey;

in the rest of the cities the contact and surveys were made by telephone. A team of 11 professionals was trained to conduct the surveys and they developed the application of surveys for 12 weeks.

The universe, once the duplicates and unreachable firms were removed, was formed by 2,095 firms over the country, from which 1,092 (52.1%) were located in Mexico City, 556 (26.5%) in Guadalajara, 393 (18.7%) in Monterrey, and 54 (2.6%) in other states around the country. From the total of firms, 90% had less than 30 employees and 65% of the total were less than 10 years old. In the total sample, there were 450 valid responses, from which 40% were firms located in Mexico City, 28% in Guadalajara, 23% in Monterrey, and 9% throughout the rest of the states, ensuring the representativeness of the sample respect to the universe.

The characteristics of the CEOs were identified (see Table 1). Most of the CEOs (99.1%) were Mexican, 78.2% were men, 2.1% studied only until high school, 52.9% had a Bachelor's degree, and only 9.1% had a Master's or a Doctorate. Additionally, 29.6% of the CEOs had attended postgraduate business courses in addition to their professional studies and 58.4% were between 20 and 40 years old. Concerning firms, 55.3% were family businesses and 95.9% were located in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara, with 40.2%, in Mexico City specifically. 61.6% had fewer than ten years in existence and 89.3% had less than 30 employees, which also shows that the sample has representativeness. According to the CEOs, 53.3% of the firms were in the consolidation stage, 44.7% registered annual sales between 100,000 and 1.5 million USD, and 44% reported a profit margin between 20% and 40%.

Table 1. Sample Profile

Variable	**Frequency**	**%**	Variable	**Frequency**	**%**
CEO Nationality			**Business Cycle**		
Mexican	446	99.1	Early Stage	26	5.8
No Mexican	4	0.9	Initial Growth Stage	126	28
			Growth Stage	240	53.3
CEO Sex			Mature Stage	55	12.2
Male	352	78.2	Unanswered	3	0.7
Female	98	21.8			
			Company age until 2014		
CEO Highest educational degree			Between 1 and 5	153	34
Elementary school	1	0.2	Between 5 and 10	124	27.6
High school	95	21.1	Between 10 and 15	76	16.9
Technical	73	16.2	More than 15	97	21.6
College	238	52.9			
Master/PhD	41	9.1	**Number of employees during 2014**		
None	2	0.4	Less than 30	402	89.3
			Between 30 and 60	22	4.9

CEO Additional Management		
Yes	133	29.6
Not	314	69.8
Unanswered	3	0.7
CEO Age		
Less than 20	1	0.2
Between 20 and 30	127	28.2
Between 30 and 40	136	30.2
Between 40 and 50	113	25.1
Between 50 and 60	58	12.9
Between 60 and 70	11	2.4
More than 70 years	4	0.9
Yes	249	55.3
Not	201	44.7
Company Location		
México	181	40.2
Monterrey	103	22.9
Guadalajara	125	27.8
Other	41	9.1
Between 60 and 100	10	2.2
Between 100 and 200	12	2.7
More than 200	4	0.9
Business Sales during 2014 (million		
Less than 1	177	39.3
Between 1 and 20	201	44.7
Between 20 and 40	14	3.1
Between 40 and 60	2	0.4
Between 60 and 80	3	0.7
Between 80 and 100	5	1.1
Between 100 and 120	3	0.7
Between 120 and 140	1	0.2
Between 140 and 160	2	0.4
More than 160	2	0.4
Unanswered	41	9.1

VARIABLES AND MEASURES

The selection of variables included in the study was made considering previous studies (see Table 2 for a summary of the variables and sources). The variables measured are presented below. All the answers were expressed on a Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree

Independent variables. Five items belonged to growth strategies based on the work of Zou et al. (2010). The scale that contained items referring to Organic growth was represented by internal technological development (one item), Acquisitive growth was measured by firms' acquisition in related or unrelated business (two items), and Hybrid growth included all partnership contracts such as franchising, licensing, and joint ventures (two items).

Interfirm trust. Three items were defined based on the previous work of Rus & Iglic, (2005) and Tonoyan et al. (2010). Questions about the trust in a legal environment, partners, suppliers, and clients were included.

Firm performance aspirations. To investigate the impact of growth strategies on firm performance, it is important to recognize the multidimensional nature of the performance construct

(Delmar et al., 2003; Kramer & Venkataraman, 1994; Phelps et al., 2007). Due to the difficulty in obtaining objective measures of firm performance in Mexico, the present study collected perceptual measures of firm performance, following the work of Walter et al. (2006) and the conclusions by Vij and Bedi (2016). Long-term survival was measured with a single item. The profit attainment was measured with a single item, indicating whether the firm had achieved its respective growth objective on a 5-point scale. Obtaining competitive advantages was measured with three items, indicating the extent to which a firm had gained advantages in its generation of know-how, customization of technologies, and cost savings.

Control variables. Prior studies suggest that a firm's age and size can influence strategic growth (Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; McCann, 1991; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Thus, we used both as control variables, where firm size was measured by the number of employees. Two exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were developed using SPSS; both used the maximum likelihood extraction method and VARIMAX rotation. The EFAs were used, because they are the most commonly used tool to analyze the relationships between variables, and the VARIMAX rotation is an orthogonal rotation that allows easier comparison between uncorrelated factors (Osborne, 2015). The first EFA corresponded to the items related to growth strategies; the second one was related to all the items about the performance aspirations. About the data analysis techniques required to test the hypotheses, we decided to use ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions, since linear regressions are very common techniques and OLS is used to establish correlations between two variables (attribute and label) with the presence of a third one (Sheffet, 2017).

Table 2. Summary of the variables, measurements, and references

Variable	**Construct**	**Number of items**	**Item content**	**Reference**
Independent variable				
1. Organic growth	Growth strategy	1	Growth through internal R&D	Zou et al., 2010
2. Hybrid growth	Growth strategy	2	Growth through licensing and alliances	Zou et al., 2010
3. Acquisitive growth	Growth strategy	2	Growth through acquisitions of related and unrelated businesses	Zou et al., 2010
Dependent variable				
4. Long term survival	Performance aspiration	1	Success aiming towards survival	Zou et al., 2010
5. Obtaining competitive advantages	Performance aspiration	3	Success aiming towards competitive advantages through performance, development of know-how, or product differentiation	Zou et al., 2010
6. Profit attainment	Performance aspiration	1	Success aiming towards greater rentability	Zou et al., 2010
Moderating variable				
7. Interfirm trust	Moderator effect	3	Trust in allies, clients, and government processes	Rus & Iglic, 2005; Tonoyan et al., 2010

Control variable				
8. Firm age	Control variable	1	Year of foundation	Wiklund, 1998
9. Firm size	Control variable	1	Number of employees in last three years	Wiklund, 1998; Zou et al., 2010

RESULTS

With the uni-dimensionality of the measures established, we used the composite scores of each construct in the analysis. Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all variables.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Organic growth	1								
2. Hybrid growth	0	1							
3. Acquisitive growth	0	0	1						
4. Long term survival performance	0.568**	-0.09	-0.042	1					
5. Competitive advantage performance	0.243**	0.239**	0.015	0	1				
6. Profit attainment performance	-0.045	-0.039	0.488**	0	0	1			
7. Interfirm trust	0.104*	0.439**	0.012	0.057	0.199**	0.013	1		
8. Firm age	-0.05	0.025	0.069	-0.059	0.054	0.112*	0.071	1	
9. Firm size	0.015	0.047	-0.053	0.059	0.096*	0.016	0.102*	-0.056	1
Mean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37.76	8.32
Standard deviation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11.31	6.02

*p < 0.10; **p<0.01; *p<0.001

The results of the first EFA of all growth items showed the existence of three conceptual growth strategies: organic, acquisitive, and hybrid, with 81.93% of cumulative variance. Both Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic and Bartlett's Test of sphericity were satisfactory. All commonalities were above 0.5 as shown in Table 4. We also calculated the Cronbach’s alpha for the items in the three factors, and the values were greater than 7.

Table 4. EFA of Growth Strategies

Variables	F1	F2	F3
Growth mode – Acquisitive (CA=0.894)			
40. The acquisition of other firms or business units, business NOT related to our business	0.949		
39. The acquisition of other firms or business units, business related to our business	0.942		
Growth mode - Hybrid (CA=0.802)			
37. License technology to / from other firms (we shared technology in any direction)		0.913	
38. Strategic alliances or some other form of association		0.903	
Growth mode - Organic (CA=0.856)			
35. Internal development via increasing resources, both human and physical			0.935
36. Internal development via innovation and R&D			0.934
KMO and Bartlett´s Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.671		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity - Approx. Chi-Square	2099.811***		
% of Cumulative Variance	87.22%		

p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

CA Cronbach's alpha

Table 5 shows the results of the factor interfirm trust, with 73.47% of the cumulative variance and satisfactory results in Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic and Bartlett's Test of sphericity.

Table 5. EFA of Interfirm Trust

Variables	F1
29. We trust in our customers and suppliers	0.827
30. We trust in our business partners	0.800
28. We trust in the legal environment for doing business with other companies.	0.770

KMO and Bartlett´s Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.847
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity - Approx. Chi-Square	4259.662***
DF	153
% of Cumulative Variance	73.47%
p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	
CA Cronbach's alpha	

Similarly, we calculated the EFA over all the multiple-item constructs related to the performance of the SMEs, identifying three factors. Cronbach's alpha value for the items of Realized Competitive Advantages was 0.930, and both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded satisfactory results. All commonalities were above 0.5 and the cumulative variance represented by these three factors was 96.79%, as indicated in Table 6.

Table 6. EFA of the SMEs' Performance Aspirations

Variables	**F1**	**F2**	**F3**
Obtaining Competitive Advantages (CA=0.836)			
43. Competitive advantage through the creation of own know-ho	0.889		
42. Competitive advantage through the best performance facing competition	0.859		
44. Competitive advantage through differentiation of products and services	0.849		
Long-term Survival			
41. Survival in the market in the long term		0.971	
Profit Attainment			
45. Increasing the level of profitability			0.977
KMO and Bartlett´s Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.684		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity - Approx. Chi-Square	626.915***		
DF	10		
% of Variance Cumulative	85.37%		
p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001			
CA Cronbach's alpha			

In relation to the data analysis techniques required to test the hypotheses, we identified that the OLS is a commonly used technique for correlation models. The empirical studies analyzed related to growth reaffirmed this assertion (Achtenhagen et al., 2010; Aidis, 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Rus & Iglic, 2005; Zou et al., 2010). Six Ordinary Less Square (OLS) regression analysis was developed; two for each performance aspiration (dependent variable). The first analysis considered control variables and growth strategies, and the second one considered the moderating effect of trust in the business environment for each growth strategy. Table 7 shows the model results.

Table 7 reveals that organic growth strategy has an effect on both, long term survival performance (β=0.566, ρ<0.001) and obtaining competitive advantages (β=0.245, ρ<0.001). The effect is higher on long term survival, which means that firms pursuing organic growth strategy are more likely to seek long term survival in the market than obtain competitive advantages. There is no significant effect with profit attainment, therefore Hypothesis 1 is supported. We found that Hypothesis 2 is supported, because pursuing the acquisitive growth strategy affects profit attainment (β=0.485, ρ<0.001), but not on long-term survival and obtaining competitive advantages. The firms´ age also resulted in statistically significant in the analysis. The higher effect of hybrid growth strategy is related to obtaining competitive advantages (β=0.233, ρ<0.001), and, secondly, also has a weak effect with long-term survival (β=0.092, ρ<0.10), thus Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Regarding the moderating effect of interfirm trust, we found a moderating effect of interfirm trust (β=0.076, ρ<0.10) in the relationship between organic growth and aspirations to achieve long term survival, therefore Hypothesis 4 is also supported.

Table 7. Performance Aspirations of the SMEs (Standard Parameter Estimates)

Variable	**Long Term Survival**		**Profit Attanment**		**Obtaining Competitive Advanges**	
Control						
Firm´s age	-0.024	-0.022	0.180**	0.181**	0.064	0.063
Firm`s size	0.051	0.053	0.049	0.145	0.086*	0.084*
Firm Growth Strategy						
Organic	0.566***	0.567***	-0.042	-0.038	0.245***	0.245***
Hybrid	0.092*	0.119*	-0.043	-0.037	0.233***	0.238***
Acquisitive	-0.38	-0.4	0.485**	0.494**	0.015	0.012
Moderating Effect						
Trust * Organic		0.076*				
Trust * Hybrid						0.158
Trust * Acquisitive				0.084*		
R square	0.335	0.338	0.25	0.257	0.127	0.13
F	44.807***	37.728***	29.554***	25.497***	12.92***	11.060***

*p < 0.10; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

There is also a moderating effect of interfirm trust (β=0.084, ρ<0.10) in the relationship between acquisitive growth and aspirations to attain above-average profit, therefore Hypothesis 5 is also supported**.** Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

DISCUSSION

The present study was developed as a response to the call made by scholars like Davidsson et al., (2006) and McKelvie and Wiklund (2010), who highlighted the need for additional studies analyzing the *mode* of growth. This research adds to the empirical works previously developed on this stream, identifying, firstly, the existence of different growth strategies in a sample of selected firms and, secondly, the different results generated by those strategies among the firms in the ETICS sector in Mexico.

The present study contributes to the literature on firm growth by analyzing the phenomenon from its less studied dimension. The results presented here are noteworthy in providing evidence that suggests that different growth strategies result in different effects on firm performance. We recognize the differential impact of growth strategies on firm performance, which has been a topic proposed by researchers in the past (Gilbert et al., 2006; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). These results are relevant since they allow us to better understand the implications of different modes of growth.

GROWTH STRATEGIES AND FIRM PERFORMANCE

Our study shows that the performance aspirations variables (profit attainment, obtaining competitive advantages, and long-term survival) is influenced by a growth strategy. The results confirm prior studies on growth and performance, showing that firms vary considerably in their performance when they select a specific growth strategy (Chen et al., 2009; Zou et al., 2010). The findings enrich the understanding of two dimensions related to SMEs' growth. First, they support the arguments of entrepreneurship scholars regarding the importance of analyzing the performance implications of acquisitive vs. organic vs. hybrid growth (Davidsson & Delmar, 1997; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010; Pasanen, 2007). Second, as we have analyzed the similarities and differences of different modes of growth, we found results that can be useful for firms' managers and CEOs (Achtenhagen et al., 2010; Clarysse et al., 2011; Lockett et al., 2011; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). We found that the organic growth strategy has a direct effect on long term survival performance, which is consistent with previous studies (Pasanen, 2007; Zou et al., 2010), suggesting that organic growth strategy is important to help new ventures secure long term survival. The organic growth strategy reduces risk, involves investments of financial resources, and, thereby, reduces the financial profitability in the short term. Typically, firms that grow organically are young and *build* their growth mainly using technological resources, allowing them to react quickly to the changes in the market. This way, they can remain in the market and *become famous*. Another finding was that a lesser extent of firms using the hybrid growth strategy has a long-term survival performance aspiration.

Regarding the firms that seek above-average profit attainment, we found that an acquisitive growth strategy has a direct effect on the profit performance aspiration. This finding supports the previous work of Gilbert et al. (2006), in which they state that firms, especially mature ones, seek to expand their business and improve financial indicators through acquisitions that make costs more efficient due to the synergy and scale economies: "buying an existing firm substantially increases the year-to-year sales in the months under an acquisition" (Gilbert et al., 2006, p. 939). The results obtained suggested that acquisitive growth strategy, defined as a *buying* strategy, aims for fast returns that increase the firms' *fortune*.

Similarly, we found that firms that choose the hybrid growth strategy are willing to share profits, by *borrowing* resources they lack from associated firms, which brings out more competitive advantages than the organic and acquisitive growth strategies. The results confirm prior studies on partnership capabilities, showing that firms use different forms of associations to gain access to external resources and to get competitive advantages (Aldrich et al., 1987; Dowling, 2003) by sharing profits with their strategic allies, or *business friends.*

THE EFFECT OF INTERFIRM TRUST

We extended recent empirical studies about growth strategies and firm performance (Chen et al., 2009; Zou et al., 2010) by including the moderating effect of interfirm trust, moderating the relationship between growth strategies and performance aspirations. We found that there is a weak moderating effect of interfirm trust over the relationship between organic growth and long term survival aspirations, which confirms that, in sectors of intensive use of knowledge, trust affects firm performance (Balbinot & Bignetti, 2006) and helps the firm defend its competitive position and survive (Candelin-Palmqvist et al., 2012).

Similarly, we found a weak moderating effect of interfirm trust over the relationship between acquisitive growth and profit attainment aspirations. This confirms that, in fusions and acquisitions, interfirm trust reduces transaction costs (Kogut & Singh, 1988; Liao & Long, 2018; Singh & Kogut, 1989), which fosters the relation between firms growing by acquisitions and aiming to increase profitability.

We did not find evidence of the existence of a significant moderator effect of interfirm trust related to firms growing with hybrid strategies and looking for competitive advantages.

CONCLUSION

One of the main challenges that the managers and CEOs of SMEs face is making the right decisions to help them accomplish their organizational aspirations and objectives. We have demonstrated that different growth strategies pursued by the firm will generate different managerial challenges related to performance aspirations. Those that choose organic growth are seeking results that allow long term survival. The firms that follow the acquisitive growth strategy chase objectives related to above-average profit attainment. Finally, firms that go for hybrid growth strategy obtain mixed results of performance. Thus, different growth modes will give rise to different firm performances. Because of this, managers will have to be conscious of these relations to achieve their performance aspirations. About governmental public policies, contrary to what is proposed by most of the governmental support programs, two of the three growth modes do not necessarily result in increased levels of hiring or employment. Thus, adjustments to current policies suggested that these programs better meet their stated objectives of job creation, nevertheless, the three growth strategies generate value and profitability for the firms.

Although the study provides some interesting findings, several limitations should be noted. This study analyzed relationships between growth strategies and firm performance aspirations in a single environment and in a single sector. The study was designed to be developed in a relatively homogeneous sector of the economy, making the results valid for this sector exclusively. Another limitation was that we used a single informant approach in our data collection, therefore, a bias problem can occur. The results expressed here were obtained from a unique observation in time; the lack of longitudinal data is a limitation to this study. We showed the results obtained from a sample of the ETICS sector, however, it is advisable to analyze other sectors in the same environment. The results of the study implicitly consider the external effects of the environment, for the particular case of Mexico, so another line of research could analyze the firms' growth strategies and performance aspirations in different countries, to identify the effect of the institutions on firm performance aspirations. The decision of "how to grow" is a complex process for firms, responding to several factors that can vary over time. We showed results obtained in a single observation in time, therefore, future research could analyze the same sector in other points of time.

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DRIVERS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: EVIDENCE FROM ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors that influence tourism arrivals and receipts in South Africa using times series from 1995 to 2017. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag technique was selected as the appropriate estimation technique due to different levels of stationarity in the series. The study found that, at least in the long run, long haul tourism receipts are influenced by domestic GDP per capita, the consumer price index, real exchange rate, crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita and country risk. Interestingly, in the long run, the crime statistics coefficient was negatively related to tourist receipts and statistically significant at the 1% significance level. This provides strong evidence that a decline in crime in South Africa could result in a surge in tourist receipts, ceteris paribus. However, only domestic GDP per capita influences international tourism arrivals. In the short run, domestic GDP per capita, consumer price index, real exchange rate, crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita and country risk influence tourism arrivals. The findings have policy implications as the evidence shows that a holistic approach is required to increase tourist receipts in South Africa. Such an approach entails focusing on critical factors that influence tourism like GDP growth and reduced crime as inflation and exchange rates are already well managed through the country's monetary policy.

Keywords: tourist receipts, tourist arrivals, country risk, crime, real exchange rate, inward tourism

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INTRODUCTION

As global economic growth shifts from traditional economic giants like the United States of America, and Germany to emerging markets, it is important to evaluate the impact of this paradigm shift on the South African economy. International tourism is one of the largest sectors of the global economy (Cornelissen, 2017) and the literature shows that tourism can be used as a tool for economic development (Moscardo, 2005; Danish and Wang, 2018). Although tourism's direct and indirect contribution to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is less than 10%, it remains a potential growth driver. The country has a vibrant tourism industry and the number of international tourists increased by more than 500% from the 1980s to 2.5 million in 2017. International visitors play an important role in developing the hospitality sector, contributing R121 billion (44% of tourism expenditure) in 2017 compared to R126 billion contributed by domestic visitors (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The tourism industry employs 4.5% (over 700 000) of employed South Africans, of which approximately 70% are women. In other words, one out of every 22 working South Africans is employed in this sector. In 2016, tourism contributed 2.9% of South Africa's GDP. International tourists' expenditure in South Africa is spread across various sectors and services, including (from highest to lowest) non-specified products, accommodation, tourism connected products, road passenger transport, air transport, restaurants, recreation services, travel agencies and transport rentals. The tourism industry is labour intensive and therefore plays an important role in stimulating growth.

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) identifies tourism as a focal area for sustainable and inclusive growth. According to the NDP, growth in tourism stimulates rural economies and non-retail small and medium enterprises through the provision of guesthouses, hotels and tour operators. The State of Tourism Report 2015/16 notes that 33% of tourism products and services in South Africa are located in the Western Cape, 20% in Gauteng and 14% in KwaZulu-Natal. Rivett-Carnac (2009) asserts that, tourism is an important driver of local economic development not only because of the number of jobs it creates but also due to other spinoffs in local communities such as supplier developments for other tourism products in the tourist destination. This suggests that tourists spend more money on non-specified and tourism connected products. Thus, this study sought to identify the factors that drive international tourism in South Africa. The study is unique in that it includes other non-economic factors such as crime, carbon emissions and country risk in modelling the interplay between tourism receipts and quantum and the identified factors from the perspective of a developing economy.

The rationale for this study is premised on the need for individual countries to understand the factors that drive international tourism at a macro level in order to develop policies and interventions that foster growth in the sector. According to Delener (2010), tourism competes globally and as such it is important to understand trends in the sector. Thus, the interplay between inward international tourist receipts and numbers with both economic and non-economic factors is a linchpin to the understanding of dynamics at play in the tourism sector. This need is particularly relevant in the periods of global socio-economic uncertainties that inhibit international tourism. For instance, the country will require interventions that will catapult international tourism post the COVID-19 pandemic that brought the tourism sector to a standstill in 2020. Thus, such interventions should be deliberate and incentivised at a macro level to attract international tourists who earn the country, the much-needed foreign currency and create a substantial number of direct and indirect jobs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has evolved rapidly across the globe, and its development can be regarded as a natural process driven by supply and demand factors (Streimikiene and Bilan, 2015). Butler (1980) and later Butler and Miossec (1993) provide a theoretical underpinning of drivers of tourism based on the travel life cycle (an evolutionary theory). This theory argues that tourism is not driven by economic, social and physical factors, but by the changing nature of the tourism market and changing tourist motivation. In this regard, Lopa and Marecki (1999) postulate that tourism develops in four stages: (i) a period of increasing numbers of tourists, (ii) a period where tourism numbers peak, (iii) a period where tourist numbers stabilise and cease to grow, and finally (iv) a period where the number of tourists declines. Conceptually, Lopa and Marecki's (1999) assertions suggest that the tourism life cycle and development follows an inverted 'U' curve. The theory of tourism development developed by Dann (1977) and refined by Hallab (1999) argues that tourism is driven by the desire to satisfy individual needs and the attraction of tourist destinations. Dann (1977) refers to this as the Push and Pull theory. Another important conceptual framework is the tourism-growth nexus hypothesis, which seeks to show how tourism interacts with economic growth by determining the causality between variables (Odhiambo, 2011; Sokhanvar, Çiftçioğlu and Javid, 2018).

According to Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2013), both inbound and outbound tourism in Africa is influenced by incomes in the country of origin and destination, land mass, trade agreements, language and religion or former colonial ties. However, Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2013) showed that tourism infrastructure did not play an important role as a determinant of tourism visits. This is in contrast to the findings of Estache (2004), Moscardo (2005) and Adeola and Evans (2020) who argue that infrastructure and other complementary services like finance and communication play an important role in tourism development. In addition, at micro-level, the lack of safety and security of tourists inhibits tourism in most African countries (Gauci, Gerosa and Mwalwanda, 2002). Prideaux and Master (2001) and Castillo-Manzano, Castro-Nuño, López-Valpuesta and Vassallo (2020) also highlight safety and security as important in developing the tourism market. Thus, negative publicity on tourist injuries adversely affects tourism in the host countries. In this regard, the perceived characteristics of the tourist destination play an integral role in determining the tourist visit and length of stay (Barros and Machado, 2010). Another factor that promotes tourism is lower levels of corruption in the destination country as well as political stability. According to Das and Dirienzo (2010), there is evidence that reduced corruption positively impacts tourism competitiveness across nations, but largely in developing countries.

A panel study on 33 countries by Habibi (2017) established that demand for tourism is influenced by factors such as political stability, accommodation options and income. The study also revealed that tourism campaigns and health and safety issues played a role in the number of tourists visiting Malaysia. Peace is related to political stability and Pratt, and Liu (2016) found evidence that peace (measured by the Global Peace Index) influences demand for tourism in medium to high-income countries although no relationship was evident in low-income countries. Furthermore, the study showed that tourism benefited from peace rather than influencing it. At a broader macroeconomic level, Martins, Gan and Ferreira-Lopes (2017) found that increased global GDP per capita, a relative decline in domestic prices and depreciation of the domestic currency increased demand for tourism as measured by the number of tourist arrivals and expenditure in the host nation. Consequently, increases in domestic prices tend to reduce tourist consumption in destination countries (Chao, Lu, Lai, Hu and Wang, 2013).

Different studies have used different measures of economic growth, including GDP growth, and GDP per capita, resulting in mixed findings (Untong, Ramos, Kaosa-Ard and Rey-Maquieira, 2015; Martins, Gan and Ferreira-Lopes, 2017). For instance, Odhiambo (2011) showed that tourism development in Tanzania leads to improved economic growth in the short run but in the long term, economic growth influences tourism development. Brida, Cortes-Jimenez and Pulina (2016) found evidence that international tourism, in particular, influences economic growth in host nations. In South Africa, Phiri (2016) confirmed the tourism-led growth hypothesis using a linear model based on tourist receipts and bidirectional causality employing a nonlinear cointegration model.

Tourism can be seasonal, and evidence shows that climate plays an important role in tourist visits, especially in areas endowed with an attractive natural environment (Hadwen, Arthington, Boon, Taylor and Fellows, 2011). According to Heung, Qu and Chu (2001), attractions and climate are key considerations for holidaymakers. Related to climate is the broader issue of the environment which tourists consider as important (Giddy and Webb, 2018). In this regard, tourists want to embark on outdoor activities and interact with nature. Danish and Wang (2018) concur, and provide evidence that tourism has negative effects on environmental quality as an investment in tourism leads to increased carbon emissions. Policy-makers that participated in Hambira and Saarinen's (2015) qualitative study in Botswana acknowledged the importance of tourism in economic development but expressed concerns that it resulted in environmental degradation. Hoogendoorn and Fitchett (2018) also found evidence that tourism is a major global driver of climate change.

Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018) conclude that inequalities across the globe affect tourism demand and suggest ways in which marginalised populations can benefit from inclusive tourism in terms of both production and consumption. These include measures that enable travel and enhance competition, making tourism more accessible to such populations.

It is evident from the existing literature that there is no consensus on what drives international tourism. Studies have used different methodologies, variables and proxies to contribute to this discourse, but the findings remain inconclusive. While both time series and panel data techniques and in some cases, descriptive approaches have been adopted, the results fail to show exactly what drives tourism, especially in the South African context. Consequently, Streimikiene and Bilan (2015) and later Asongu, Nnanna, Biekpe and Acha-Anyi (2019) note the need to identify the forces that drive tourism, including supply, demand, motivation and the negative social, environmental effects such as crime, noise, pollution, etc. Montes and Bernabé (2020) provide further evidence that violent crime in particular, reduces the number of tourist arrivals from both developed and developing countries. This means that proper policing and safety play an integral role in attracting tourists to any destination country. This study excluded the characteristics of tourists' country of origin and focused on macroeconomic, socio-political and environmental factors.

The following section discusses the data sources and choice of methodology.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

The study used annual data available in the public domain for the period 1995 to 2017 with the frequency determined by data availability. Data was unavailable at a higher frequency. The choice of variables was informed by previous studies as discussed in the literature review. The study used world GDP per capita denominated in United States Dollars (WGDP), tourist arrivals (TA) and tourist receipts denominated in United States Dollars (TR), which were all obtained from the World Bank Database. In addition, it employed crime statistics with intentional homicide per 100 000 used as a proxy for crime (Crime). Intentional homicide is regarded as an appropriate proxy due to the violent nature of crime in South Africa publicised in the media (Asongu, Nnanna, Biekpe and Acha-Anyi, 2019). The data was obtained from the World Bank Database. Macroeconomic variables like economic growth (Growth), obtained from the World Bank Database. Macroeconomic variables like economic growth (Growth), South Africa's GDP per capita, Real Exchange Rate (RER) and inflation (CPI) were obtained from the South African Reserve Bank website. To capture country risk, a composite multi-dimensional proxy country risk index[1] was computed from political, financial, and economic risk factors obtained from Bloomberg.

Unit Root Tests

In line with previous studies of this nature, the variables (i.e., South Africa's GDP per capita, real exchange rate, tourist arrivals, tourism receipts, crime statistics, carbon dioxide (CO2), world GDP per capita and global peace index) were converted into their natural logarithm for the purposes of reducing positive skewness and within-group variability. Thereafter, prior to testing for a long-run relationship among these variables, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test was conducted. The null hypothesis of the ADF test is that the log variable has a unit root (non-stationary) against an alternative hypothesis that the log variable is stationary. For confirmatory purposes, the Kwiatkowski, Phillips, Schmidt and Shin (KPSS) (1992) stationarity test was applied whereby the null hypothesis that the log variable is stationary against an alternative hypothesis that the log variable is non-stationary (has a unit root) was tested. Considering that most financial time series are integrated of order one, it was expected that the log series would have a single unit root (Brooks, 2019). It was essential to capture the seasonality effect in these variables; hence, the ADF and KPSS tests were conducted, including both the intercept and trend terms (see Brooks, 2019).

In addition, it was essential to ascertain the optimal number of lags that were employed in the stationarity and cointegration tests. The optimal number of lags was determined by the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). Given the relatively short period of analysis, the maximum number of lags was set at two.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Bounds Testing Approach

Testing for Cointegration

From the preliminary tests conducted it was evident that the variables in this study were not integrated of the same order. Therefore, the Johansen's (1988) cointegration procedure was inappropriate since it requires variables to be integrated of the same order. Consequently, this study employed the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) bounds testing approach to examine the long-run relationship among the variables as it accommodates variables that are not integrated of the same order (Pesaran, Shin and Smith, 2001). Moreover, the model is more robust and performs better for small sample sizes, as used in this study, than conventional cointegration techniques by Engle and Granger (1987) and Johansen (1988) (Pesaran and Shin, 1998). The following section details the bounds testing approach to cointegration and error correction models developed within an ARDL model to ascertain whether a long-run relationship exists among the variables. For robustness, both the natural logarithm of tourist arrivals and log tourist receipts were employed as the regress and interchangeably.

The ARDL bounds test has a null hypothesis of no cointegration against an alternative hypothesis of cointegration among the variables. The hypothesis is tested using an F-statistic (Wald test) for the joint significance of lagged regressand and regressors. Pesaran et al. (2001) provided the upper and lower

[1] For the purposes of brevity, the methodology used to compute the country risk index is available from the authors on request.

bound critical values that are compared with the computed F-statistics. The lower critical bound suggests that there is no cointegration among the underlying variables, whereas the inverse holds true for the critical upper bound. The null hypothesis of no cointegration was rejected when the calculated F-statistic exceeded the upper critical bound but accepted when the F-statistic was lower than the lower critical bound. In cases where the F-statistic fell within the upper and the lower bound critical values, the result was interpreted as inconclusive (Pesaran et al., 2001). With that in mind, the following univariate ARDL model was estimated:

$$\Delta T_t = a_{01} + b_{11}T_{t-i} + b_{21}X_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{q1} a_{2j}\Delta X_{t-i} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where T denotes tourist receipts or tourist arrivals. X signifies the regressors that comprise South Africa's GDP per capita, real exchange rate (USD/ZAR), crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita, global peace index, consumer price index and country risk in their natural logarithm, respectively; and ε_{it} represents the identically and independently distributed disturbance term. À priori, it was expected the null hypothesis would be rejected, implying the existence of a long-run relationship between tourism proxies and the aforementioned regressors *ceteris paribus*.

Error Correction Model

When the null hypothesis of no cointegration was rejected, this suggested a long-run relationship among the variables. Both long-run (LR) and short-run (SR) information is incorporated within the specification of the ARDL error correction model (ECM). Accordingly, to obtain the short-run dynamic parameters, an error correction version model associated with the long-run estimates was estimated. The resultant ARDL ECM estimated by the OLS method is specified as follows:

$$\Delta T_t = a_o + \sum_{i=1}^{p} a_{1i}\Delta X_{t-1} + \lambda ECT_{t-1} + e_t \quad (2)$$

where λ signifies the speed of adjustment; and *ECT* represents the error correction term that is derived from the extracted residuals in the long-run equation. The error correction term shows how much of the disequilibrium is being corrected, that is, the extent to which any disequilibrium in the previous period is being adjusted in T_t. As such, a positive coefficient indicates divergence, while a negative coefficient indicates convergence to the long-run equilibrium. a_{1i} is the short-run dynamic coefficients of the model's adjustment to long-run equilibrium. For the purposes of brevity, both the independent and dependent variables are defined in Equation 1.

Short-Run Model

There are, however, cases where the *F*-statistic was lower than the upper critical bound values or in between the lower and upper bound critical values and it was concluded that there was no cointegration and an inconclusive result, respectively. In such cases, a short-run model was appropriate. In what follows, a univariate short-run model estimated by the OLS method is shown:

$$LnT_{i,t} = \alpha_o + \beta LnX_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (3)$$

where β is the parameter of interest which measures the percentage change in tourist arrivals or tourist receipts as a result of 1% change in the lagged explanatory variable. For the purposes of brevity, the independent variables have been defined in Equation 1.

After estimating the SR model and ECM, the Breusch-Godfrey (BG) Lagrange Multiplier Test for serial correlation, White's test (WT) for heteroscedasticity and the variance inflation factors test for multicollinearity were conducted. In addition, the stability of the models and coefficients of the ECM and short-run model were checked using CUSUM tests.

Existing literature shows evidence of mixed and inconclusive findings to generalise the interaction of both economic and non-economic factors and inward tourism. Thus, this study makes the following hypotheses:

H1: Inward tourism is negatively affected by crime, country risk and appreciation of the domestic currency against major currencies (United States Dollar used as a proxy) (see Montes and Bernabé (2020) for crime, Martins, Gan and Ferreira-Lopes for currency (2017), and Habibi (2017) for country risk).

H2: Inward tourism has a positive relationship with carbon emissions, domestic and global economic development and increases in inflation (see Danish and Wang (2018) for carbon emissions, Phiri (2016) for economic development, and Chao, Lu, Lai, Hu and Wang (2013) for inflation.

Results and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Tourist arrivals	23	15.80	0.25	15.32	16.15
Tourist receipts	23	22.31	1.60	15.32	23.14
SA GDP *per capita*	23	10.51	0.57	9.57	11.33
Consumer price index	23	3.86	0.48	3.08	4.64
Real exchange rate	23	4.49	0.10	4.28	4.65
Crime statistics	23	3.69	0.24	3.39	4.17
Carbon dioxide	23	12.98	0.13	12.78	13.17
World GDP *per capita*	23	8.93	0.29	8.57	9.30
Country risk	23	3.94	0.11	3.52	4.10

The figures were converted into their natural logarithm and rounded-off to two decimal places

Table 1 shows that the mean natural logarithm of tourist arrivals (15.80) was relatively lower than that of tourist receipts (22.31). However, volatility, as measured by standard deviation, of the natural logarithm of tourist arrivals was lower (0.25) relative to that of tourist receipts (1.60). This suggests that there was more uncertainty related to tourism activity in South Africa as measured by the tourism receipts proxy as opposed to the tourism arrivals proxy.

Unit Root and Stationarity Tests

Table 2: ADF Unit Root Test

Variable	ADF I(0)	ADF I(1)	ADF I(2)
Tourist arrivals	-2.64(0.2676)	-3.57***(0.0588)	
Tourist receipts	-1.15(0.7956)	-2.81(0.2105)	-3.91**(0.0324)
SA GDP *per capita*	0.12(0.9952)	-2.54 (0.3082)	-4.92*(0.0048)
Consumer price index	-3.79** (0.0393)		
Real exchange rate	-2.83(0.2024)	-3.40***(0.0802)	
Crime statistics	-0.13 (0.9904)	-3.75** (0.0413)	
Carbon dioxide	-2.43(0.3532)	-4.08**(0.0226)	
World GDP *per capita*	-2.09(0.5220)	-2.97(0.1635)	-6.54*(0.0002)
Country risk	-9.49* (0.0000)		

, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% significance level, respectively. In brackets () are MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values. ADF test critical values at the 10%, 5% and 1% significance levels are -4.467895, -3.644963 and -3.261452, respectively.*

Table 3: KPSS Stationarity Test

Variable	KPS I(0)	KPSS I(1)	KPSS (2)
Tourist arrivals	0.14***	0.04	
Tourist receipts	0.22*	0.08	
SA GDP *per capita*	0.25*	0.15**	0.05
Consumer price index	0.05**	0.18	
Real exchange rate	0.09		
Crime statistics	0.17		
Carbon dioxide	0.10		
World GDP *per capita*	0.15**	0.16**	0.05
Country risk	0.11		

, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% significance level, respectively. Critical values tabled by Kwiatkowski, Phillips, Schmidt and Shin (KPSS) (1992) at the 10%, 5% and 1% are 0.119, 0.146 and 0.216, respectively.*

The results from the ADF unit root test show that only the consumer price index and country risk series were stationary in levels as the null hypotheses of the unit root was rejected at the 5% and 1% significance level, respectively. The other variables, including crime statistics, real exchange rate, tourist arrivals and carbon dioxide were stationary in first differences while SA GDP *per capita*, tourist receipts and world GDP *per capita* were stationary in second differences.

Employing the KPSS (2002) test, the results differed slightly. The consumer price index and country risk series remained stationary in levels as confirmed by the ADF unit root test. However, the carbon dioxide and real exchange rate series were found to be stationary using the KPSS (1992) stationary test, contrary to the conclusion reached using the ADF unit root test. Similar to the ADF test, the world GDP *per capita* and SA GDP *per capita* series were found to be integrated of order two using the KPSS

(1992) stationarity test. The rest of the results corroborated the conclusions reached by the ADF test, as can be expected.

Cognisant of the fact that the stationarity and unit root tests showed that the variables were not integrated of the same order, conventional cointegration test procedures, for instance, Johansen's (1988) and Engle and Granger (1987), were rendered inappropriate consistent with the argument by Pesaran et al. (2001). Instead, the ARDL procedure was appropriate for this study. The findings from the ARDL procedure are discussed in the following section.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Bounds Test for Cointegration

Table 4a: ARDL Bound Test for Long-Run Relationship

The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of tourist receipts			
Regressor	**ARDL**	***F*-Statistic**	**Outcome**
SA GDP *per capita*	(1, 0)	37.16	Cointegration
Consumer price index	(1, 0)	29.68	Cointegration
Real exchange rate	(1, 1)	10.41	Cointegration
Crime statistics	(1, 0)	5.87	Cointegration
Carbon dioxide	(1, 1)	38.25	Cointegration
World GDP *per capita*	(1, 1)	10.04	Cointegration
Country risk	(1, 0)	10.66	Cointegration

Critical values provided by Pesaran et al. (2001) are 6.84 and 7.84 for the lower and upper bound at the 1% significance levels, respectively, and 4.94 and 5.73 for the lower and upper bound at the 5% significance levels.

Table 4b: ARDL Bound Test for Long-Run Relationship

The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of tourist arrivals			
Regressor	**ARDL**	***F*-Statistic**	**Outcome**
SA GDP *per capita*	(1, 1)	8.39	Cointegration
Consumer price index	(1,2)	2.89	No cointegration
Real exchange rate	(1,2)	0.63	No cointegration
Crime statistics	(1, 1)	5.27	Inconclusive
Carbon dioxide	(1,0)	1.40	No cointegration
World GDP *per capita*	(1,2)	3.68	No cointegration
Country risk	(1,0)	1.06	No cointegration

Critical values provided by Pesaran et al. (2001) are 6.84 and 7.84 for the lower and upper bound at the 1% significance levels, respectively, and 4.94 and 5.73 for the lower and upper bound at the 5% significance levels.

Table 4a shows that the null hypothesis of no cointegration between tourist receipts and country risk, world GDP *per capita*, carbon dioxide, crime, consumer price index, real exchange rate and South African GDP *per capita* at the 1% significance level. These findings are in line with those of Martins, Gan and Ferreira-Lopes (2017), Odhiambo (2011), and Brida, Cortes-Jimenez and Pulina (2016) who showed that increases in world GDP *per capita*, the relative decline in domestic prices and depreciation of the domestic currency increased demand for tourism as measured by expenditure in host nations. However, the result of the ARDL bound test for cointegration differed when the tourism activity proxy of tourist arrivals was employed as the regressand. As shown in Table 4b, the null hypothesis of a long-run relationship between South African GDP *per capita* and tourist arrivals was rejected at the 5% significance level. These results are similar to those of Odhiambo (2011) and Phiri (2016) who confirmed that tourism leads to economic growth. However, the null hypothesis of no cointegration between tourist arrivals and other hypothesised variables (i.e., world GDP *per capita*, country risk, carbon dioxide, real exchange rate and consumer price index) could not be rejected at all significance levels. Lack of cointegration between tourist arrivals and country risk is in contrast to findings by Das and Dirienzo (2010) and Habibi (2017) who assert that political stability and reduced corruption leads to increases in tourist arrivals. The ARDL bound test results were inconclusive on whether or not a long-run relationship exists between crime and tourist arrivals as the *F*-statistic was between the upper and lower critical bounds. These findings show that the long-run relationship between tourism activity and the hypothesised variables might be sensitive to the proxy employed. Thus the hypotheses that inward tourism is negatively affected by crime, country risk and appreciation of the domestic currency against major currencies are not confirmed. In the same vein, the hypotheses that inward tourism has a positive relationship with carbon emissions, world GDP and inflation are rejected. However, the hypotheses that inward tourism has a positive relationship with domestic is accepted.

Long-Run and Short-Run Relationships

Table 5a: Error Correction Model

The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of total receipts

Regressor	ECT	SR	LR	BG	WT	Adj- R^2
SA GDP	-0.14	0.29	0.29	0.36	0.64	0.04
CPI	-0.24	0.40	0.72	0.32	0.04	0.10
RER	-0.12 ***	1.10*	1.99	0.26	0.12	0.53
CS	-0.55 **	-1.57	-2.37*	0.17	0.39	0.43
CO2	-0.08	0.99	-2.44	0.49	0.39	0.07
WGDP	-0.34***	1.87*	1.20*	0.77	0.09	0.43
CR	0.16**	1.34	-10.30	0.48	0.39	0.31

, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% significance levels, respectively.*
ECT = Error Correction Term
BG = Breusch-Godfrey Lagrange Multiplier Test for serial correlation
WT = White's test for heteroscedasticity

After finding a long-run relationship between tourist receipts and the aforementioned hypothesised variables, an ECM was estimated for each model. Table 5a shows that the error correction term was statistically significant at the 10% significance level and entered with a negative sign, as can be expected, when the real exchange rate, crime and world GDP *per capita* were regressed against tourism receipts. This suggests that when there was a deviation from the long-run equilibrium, there was an error correction mechanism that restored the cointegrating relationship between tourism receipts and real exchange rate, crime and world GDP *per capita*. Although the error correction term of country risk was statistically significant at the 10% significance level, it entered with a positive sign, suggesting that a short-run deviation from the long-run equilibrium was not restored. In comparison, the error correction term coefficient for the South African GDP *per capita*, carbon dioxide and inflation model was statistically insignificant at all significance levels. This suggests, contrary to expectations, that there was no mechanism that corrected any disequilibrium from the cointegrating relationship between these variables and tourist receipts.

As shown in Table 5a, the short- and long-run coefficient of world GDP *per capita* were positive and statistically significant at the 1% significance level, suggesting that an increase in world GDP *per capita* would result in increased tourist receipts. This was in line with expectations because an increase in foreigners' *per capita* income increases their propensity to consume South Africa's tourist products, *ceteris paribus*. Furthermore, the real exchange rate short-run coefficient was statistically significant at the 1% significance level. Theoretically, appreciation of the South African rand against the US dollar, as the benchmark currency, will increase the cost of South Africa's tourism products and should yield lower tourist receipts. However, contrary to expectations, the real exchange rate coefficient was positive, suggesting that appreciation of the South African rand against the US dollar would increase tourism activity in the short run.

In the long run, the crime statistics coefficient was negatively related to tourist receipts and statistically significant at the 1% significance level. This provides strong evidence that a decline in crime in South Africa could result in a surge in tourist receipts, *ceteris paribus*, as can be expected since tourists are likely to be attracted to a destination associated with less crime. In other words, the results show that a surge in crime might impact tourism activity negatively, all else being equal. This finding is in contrast to that of Asongu, Nnanna, Biekpe, and Acha-Anyi (2019) who found that the number of homicides did not significantly reduce the number of tourist arrivals. However, Montes and Bernabé (2020), argue that crime in a tourist destination country is a major deterrent to tourist arrivals from both developing and developed economies.

Table 5b: Error Correction Model

The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of tourist arrivals						
Regressor	**ECT**	**SR**	**LR**	**BG**	**WT**	**Adj. R^2**
SA GDP	-1.26***	0.85***	0.85***	0.03	0.39	0.66

, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% significance levels, respectively.*
Figures have been rounded off to two decimal places.
ECT = Error Correction Term
BG = Breusch-Godfrey Lagrange Multiplier Test for serial correlation
WT = White's test for heteroscedasticity

As shown in Table 5b, there was an error correction mechanism between the long-run relationship of tourist arrivals and GDP *per capita* in South Africa. The results of correction of disequilibrium were, however, weak considering that the error correction term was statistically significant at the 10% significance level. There was evidence suggesting that an increase in South Africans' *per capita* disposable income will result in an increase in tourist activity in both the short and long run, *ceteris paribus*, as shown by the positive and statistically significant SA GDP *per capita* coefficient. However, the evidence was weak, considering that the coefficient was statistically significant at the 10% significance level.

Since the ARDL bound test failed to find a long-run relationship between tourist arrivals and other hypothesised covariates, a short-run model was estimated. The first lag (previous year) and second lag (previous two years) of the consumer price index coefficient were negative and statistically significant at the 10% significance level. This is in line with expectations since a decline in the price of goods and services will increase real income, resulting in more consumption of tourism products, all else being equal. Comparatively, the first lag (previous year) of the real exchange rate was negative and statistically significant at the 10% significance level which suggests that when the South African rand strengthens against the US dollar, there will be a decline in tourist arrivals. This is because it becomes more expensive for foreign tourists to consume South Africa's tourism products. Contrary to expectations, the world GDP *per capita* coefficient was statistically significant at the 5% significance level, which implies that an increase in foreigners' *per capita* income would result in a decline in tourist arrivals. The findings could imply that foreigners view South Africa's tourism products as inferior such that an increase in their *per capita* income would reduce their consumption of the country's tourism products in the short run.

Furthermore, the coefficient of the crime statistics entered with a negative sign and was statistically significant at the 5% significance level, implying that an increase in the crime rate would result in a decline in tourist arrivals in the short run as would be expected. However, contrary to expectations and the existing literature (see Danish and Wang, 2018), the findings suggest that country risk and carbon dioxide do not determine tourist arrivals even in the short run considering that their coefficients were statistically insignificant at all significance levels. Thus, in the short run, the hypotheses that inward tourism is negatively affected by crime, country risk and appreciation of the domestic currency against major currencies cannot be rejected. However, country risk is statistically insignificant, as depicted in Table 6 below. Likewise, the hypotheses that inward tourism has a positive relationship with carbon emissions is confirmed, although statistically insignificant.

Turning to model diagnostics, the findings show that there was no problem of serial correlation across all models as indicated by the Breusch-Godfrey Lagrange Multiplier test for autocorrelation since the null hypothesis of no serial correlation could not be rejected at all significance levels. Moreover, the models did not suffer from heteroscedasticity as the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity could not be rejected at all significance levels according to the White's test. [2]

Table 6: Short-Run Model

The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of tourist arrivals					
Regressor	**Coefficient**	**BG**	**DW**	**White Test**	**Adj- R**
Consumer Price Index	(L1) -1.48*** (L2) -1.16 ***	0.12	2.28	0.12	0.86
Real Exchange Rate	(L1) - 0.73 *** (L2) - 0.42	0.15	2.54	0.15	0.82
Crime statistics	-1.16**	0.38	2.25	0.04	0.89
Carbon dioxide	0.34	0.35	2.34	0.82	0.84
World GDP *per capita*	(L1) -1.41** (L2) 0.52	0.47	1.76	0.27	0.90
Country Risk	-0.02	0.28	2.40	0.58	0.83

, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% significance levels, respectively.*
Figures have been rounded off to two decimal places.
ECT = Error Correction Term
BG = Breusch-Godfrey Lagrange Multiplier Test for serial correlation
WT = White's test for heteroscedasticity

CONCLUSION

This study sought to establish the factors that drive long haul inward tourism in South Africa using time series econometric analysis. It found that in the long run, tourism is influenced by the country's GDP per capita regardless of whether the quantity or tourism receipts are used as the regressand. Furthermore, if the dependent variable is tourism receipts, the following factors influence tourism – domestic GDP per capita, consumer price index, real exchange rate, crime statistics, carbon dioxide, world GDP per capita and country risk. However, only domestic GDP per capita influences international tourism arrivals, while crime statistics result in an inconclusive decision. In addition, all the

[2] For the sake of brevity, the results of CUSUM tests and variance inflation factors are not reported in this article, but are available from the authors on request. Generally, the results suggested that the models did not suffer from the problem of multicollinearity and parameter instability.

above variables influence tourism arrivals in the short run. Of interest is the crime variable that has a negative coefficient that is statistically significant, which indicates that violent crime leads to a decline in tourism arrivals in South Africa. However, carbon emissions and country risk, which includes political stability, do not influence tourism receipts and arrivals in the short run. The findings have policy implications as evidence shows that a holistic approach is required to increase tourist receipts in South Africa. Such an approach entails focusing on critical factors that influence tourism like GDP growth and reduced crime as inflation and exchange rates are already well managed through the country's monetary policy. Tourism interventions should thus, be deliberate and incentivised at a macro level to attract international tourists who earn the country the much needed foreign currency and create a substantial number of direct and indirect jobs.

Future research should focus on panel data that includes the largest tourist origin countries and South Africa in order to understand what affects tourism in tourist origin countries fully.

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A TALENT VALUE PROPOSITION FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC STAFF IN A SOUTH AFRICAN HEI

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ABSTRACT

Despite some inroads made into the concept of talent value proposition (TVP), many higher education institutions are yet to appreciate the importance of having a strong TVP as a strategy for attracting top academic talent. The main objective of this research was to develop a unique TVP framework for academic staff in a South African Higher Education Institution (HEI). A compelling TVP appears to be neither a strategic nor operational priority for managing academic talent in many South African HEIs. A qualitative research approach was adopted, using semi-interviews to collect data from management (N=12) of a merged South African HEI. The findings resulted in an integrated TVP framework for academic staff by incorporating the elements of organisational branding (OB), employment branding (EB) and talent life cycle (TLC) processes. Management should therefore take cognisance of the key elements of OB and EB coupled with TLC processes that are needed to create an appealing TVP for academic staff members. This research contributes an integrated framework that higher education management can utilise to implement an appealing TVP that will attract and retain academic talent.

Keywords: academic staff, employment branding, organisational branding, talent life cycle, talent value proposition

INTRODUCTION

Despite some inroads made into the concept of TVP, many organisations are yet to appreciate the importance of having a strong TVP as a strategy for attracting top talent (Aloo & Moronge, 2014; Thompsen, 2010). TVP is the equilibrium of recompenses and advantages employees obtain in exchange for their effort at the workplace (Posthmus, 2015; Ng & Ngai, 2015). Posthmus (2015) proceeds to outline that a TVP is not founded on ambition, but is rather based on the actual state of the organisation, which must be capable and prepared to deliver the assurances extended to high prospective employees.

Yet it appears that a compelling TVP is neither a strategic or operational priority for managing academic talent in many South African HEIs (Hazelkorn & Moynihan, 2010). Schierenbeck (2013) suggests that institutions of higher learning should provide a TVP that is desirable to prospective

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candidates, over and above the monetary compensation levels. Available research in African HEIs suggests a lack of TVP as an approach to improve the general performance and sustainability of these institutions and South Africa is no exception (Saurombe, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2017a; Saurombe, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2017b; Makondo, 2014; Onah & Anikwe, 2016). Furthermore, most HEIs merely use separate talent management techniques of OB, EB and TLC (Pampaloni 2010; Sehgal & Malati, 2013; Schweyer, Newman & De Vries, 2009), which could lead to the incongruence and conflict of the techniques applied.

This study explored three specific constructs namely, OB, EB, and TLC which were previously investigated individually by the researchers within the same HEI and were integrated in this study, to establish a TVP framework that is specific to the needs of the HEI.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today's employees may often feel as though they are not compensated or recognised enough for all their efforts and consequently, it has become increasingly necessary to have systems in place that ensure that those who put maximum effort in will receive the maximum benefits (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). When employees are disappointed with the methods of their employers or when lack of commitment is displayed on the part of employers, such employees are more likely to be reluctant to perform their work to full capacity and thus the achievement of organisations' vision and mission are hindered (Amzat, 2015). Since the mission of the merged South African HEI is to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university and to implement its expertise in an innovative way by living its values, striving for sound management and pursuing transformation, while being locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognised, as stated by Van der Merwe (2013), this mission has necessitated the recommendation of a TVP model specific to the institution, by the researchers.

Trost (2014) realised that when TVPs are more generalisable, this accentuates the difficulties related to implementation and diminishes effectiveness even when successfully implemented. In the past, HEIs have typically viewed TVP as a concept more relevant to corporate organisations, however, currently finding themselves in the war for talent even with corporate organisations, over the last decade or so, HEIs have become more cognizant of TVP as a source of competitive advantage (Saurombe 2014; Callaghan, 2015; Schulze, 2015). HEIs have also realised that it is not enough to borrow from corporate based TVPs as TVPs that are customised are usually more effective than those that are general (Singh, 2015). This motivated the researchers to develop a TVP for the HEI and specifically for academic staff of the South African HEI rather than for all employees of the HEI, in order to increase applicability and effectiveness.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

To establish an institutionally specific TVP for academic staff in a South African HEI.

Research Objectives

- To explore an appropriate organisational brand for academic talent management in the South African HEI
- To explore an appropriate employment brand for academic talent management in the South African HEI.
- To explore an appropriate TLC for academic staff in the South African HEI.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining TVP

TVP − popularly known as Employee Value Proposition (EVP) − is a term used to describe the equilibrium between the TLC that are gained by employees in compensation for their input or performance in the workplace (Blokdyk, 2018). Castaneda (2014) also describes a TVP as the degree or extent of restitutions and gains that are enjoyed by staff members in return for their effort at their workplace.

Organisational Branding and TVP

Thompsen (2010) states that the marketing-associated notion of an organisational brand is encapsulated as an organisation’s vision of who the organisation desires to be, conveyed not solely by means of palpable emblems, construction and outward proclamations, however also in the expressing of its mission, policies and ethics. The organisational brand delineates the organisational culture and the TVP mirrors that culture to a particular group of recruits in a personalised and devoted manner. To this end, the researchers interviewed the management of a merged South African HEI in an attempt to determine what institutional brand they believe is perceived by current academic staff and whether they believe the institutional brand is attractive to academics in general.

Employment Branding and TVP

In the perspective of Armstrong and Taylor (2014), the TVP of an organisation can be articulated as an employment brand, referring to the “picture painted” by an organisation as a respectable employer. Thompsen (2010) states that it is imperative to make the employment brand parallel with the TVP and to establish a TVP before an employment brand is developed. Blokdyk (2018) asserts that EB fosters a TVP that corresponds with both the desires of employees, as well as what is expected of them by their employer. The researchers therefore interviewed the management of a merged South African HEI to solicit their views on how they think their employment brand is perceived by academic staff and whether it is attractive enough to attract and retain academics.

Talent Life Cycle and TVP

Kurganova (2014) describes a talent life cycle (TLC) as an organisation’s relationship with its employees as described in six phases, namely planning, attracting, identifying, selecting, deploying and managing. In the constantly growing information economy, and particularly with stringent labour markets, the TVP is rendered undeniably fundamental to expert skills and talented workers due to the reality that there is a high probability of there being vehement rivalry where they are concerned (Reilly & Williams, 2006). The TVP is mainly concerned with attraction and retention of employees; constructs which lie at the core of TLC. Gabay (2015) iterates that except in the event that all the phases of the employee life cycle emphasise an unequivocal employee value proposition, the discrepancy between a brand’s assurance and the actual state of employment would result in disengagement and heightened turnover.

Organisational Branding and Employment Branding

The researchers argue that OB and EB are closely related, not only each to TVP, but to each other as well. This argument is supported by some of existing literature. Amzat (2015) states that employment brands are designed to be in accordance with the organisation's product and organisational brand. Assimilating an organisation's employment brand into its organisational brand will create a brand stronghold, that is, a talented structure of individuals cooperating with one another to sustain similar organisational goals and accomplish positive results from their exertions (Biraghi, S., & Gambetti , 2015). The importance of making OB parallel with EB becomes increasingly imperative when considering intensifying intricate personalities of stakeholders who have substantial bearing on organisational brand management (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010).

Organisational Branding and Talent Life Cycle

Gripp and Bloodhart (2011) believes that an organisation can grow into a brand-motivated business by operationalising its convincing, competitive peculiarity at all phases of the TLC that is, transforming employees from being hearers, to being believers, and in the long run becoming the perpetual epitome of the brand. Since talent management has the ability to positively influence an organisational brand, this implies that the appropriate management of each stage of the TLC for academic staff would promote the overall organisational brand of a merged South African HEI in a manner that will yield a heightened competitive advantage in the market within which the institution operates.

Employment Branding and Talent Life Cycle

Auger, Devinney, Dowling, Eckert and Lin (2013) believed that the labour market at the time was transforming and prospective talent was becoming increasingly ready to contemplate a lesser remuneration rate whilst pursuing employment with a more reputable organisation. In like manner, the superior brand bears a positive influence on current employees as well (Bhasin, 2015). Stefanie, Janina and Buttgen (2012) are of the opinion that several employment qualities must be established in an attempt to determine an employment brand; these qualities produce operational, efficiency and psychological gains.

RESEARCH APPROACH

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approaches describe the strategies and the processes for research that extend across the stages from wide suppositions to meticulous techniques of data gathering, analysis, as well as interpretation (Cresswell, 2014). The choice of a research approach is further determined by the nature or essence of the research problem that is under investigation, the understanding of the researcher(s), as well as the people that the study affects or intends to reach out to (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study, motivated by the fact that the population of individuals in managerial positions is small, therefore a qualitative inquiry was considered more practical and relevant. Furthermore, a quantitative inquiry would not allow an in-depth assessment of TVP from a managerial perspective as a qualitative inquiry would. Deeper insights were uncovered through the qualitative investigation which was conducted in this study, which was in alignment with the objectives.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

This research used a case study strategy, which was considered most pertinent in exploring the real-life interests of human beings (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Because this research was qualitative in nature, the case study strategy used tackled the relationship between literature and research in an inductive manner, in accordance with Bryman (2016). The qualitative case study approach in this research falls within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm (Yin, 2012). In this instance, the ontological belief is that reality is local and specifically constructed.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research setting

The research setting in this study entailed a sample comprising 12 managerial staff members of a specific merged South African HEI. These participants were geographically spread across three different campuses of the institution. The participants were interviewed in person at their offices and in cases whereby the researchers could not travel to areas that were not within reasonably close proximity, the researcher took advantage of virtual interviewing methods such as telephone and Skype, with the approval of participants, for greater convenience.

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Permission to carry out this research was sought and obtained from the relevant authorities of the institution by means of a letter of request, prior to the collection of data. Upon obtaining permission, the main researcher approached interview candidates personally, requesting an interview, and interviewees were required to give consent before answering any of the researcher’s questions. The other two researchers contributed to the research design, literature review and conceptualisation of the overall study.

Research participants and sampling methods

Participants were interviewed, one after the other until saturation was reached. This study made use of purposive convenience sampling, meaning participants were selected based on their willingness, relevancy and availability to take part in the data collection process.
Twelve (12) individuals in managerial positions participated in this study. The table below shows the demographic delineation of the research sample:

Table 1 Sample Demographics

Participants	**Gender**	**Race**	**Qualification**	**Job Level**
1	Male	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Executive management
2	Male	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Senior management
3	Male	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Executive management
4	Female	White	Doctoral degree	Senior management
5	Male	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Executive management
6	Female	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Senior management
7	Female	White	Doctoral degree	Senior management
8	Male	White	Doctoral degree	Executive management
9	Female	White	Doctoral degree	Middle management
10	Male	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Middle management
11	Female	Black/African	Doctoral degree	Executive management
12	Male	White	Doctoral degree	Senior management

The majority of the participants were male. The demographic distribution of race constituted of more black/Africans in the sample. All the participants in the sample have doctoral degrees.

The demographics also showed that only one out of the five participants in executive management is female. At senior management level, we have three out of the five participants being female. One out of the two participants in middle management is female.

Data collection methods

Data collection of qualitative data involved one-on-one interviews. This was meant to allow for more insightful meanings to emerge from the findings something that quantitative data would not have accomplished. The interview participants were requested to delineate their experiences and perceptions where TVP is concerned.

Data recording

An impeccable record of collected data needs to be kept in order for the researchers to know where the data emanated and the steps that were followed in collecting it (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The researchers have preserved all data gathered pertaining this study, with a detailed account of the process followed for transcription and the way the themes and sub-themes were derived from the transcript.

Strategies employed to ensure data quality and integrity

The researchers employed the following strategies in ensuring the quality and rigour of this research (Hadi & Closs, 2015):

- Triangulation – the researchers gathered the data for this study from three different tiers of management in order to minimise any possible bias of information.
- Self-reflection – the researchers clearly stipulated her role within this study and was cautious of any bias that could have resulted from personal or subjective viewpoints.
- Peer-debriefing – the researchers engaged another researcher who had no direct stake or involvement in the study as the research was conducted, to promote reliability and dependability.
- Extensive description – the researchers also provided extensive descriptions concerning the research setting, sample traits, including the data gathering and analysis techniques in this study, to render the findings more credible and generalisable to other similar research settings, to an acceptable extent.
- Lengthened engagement – the researchers further gained the trust of the participants by being involved with them for a substantially long period of time (the researchers continued to interact with participants throughout the data analysis process until the conclusion of the study), thus a comprehensive volume of information was obtained.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used in this study. The researchers used open, axial and selective coding by first reviewing the data to discover the large domains that could be discerned from it; subsequently breaking down the open codes that had been derived from the data into more extensive groups in a manner that allowed the identification of relationships among codes; then finally the researcher identified the trends, processes and classifications occurring among the axial codes to generate the findings encompassing a TVP that is specifically relatable to the merged South African HEI (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Reporting style

The findings of this research are displayed in a table, showing the theme and various emergent sub-themes in this study. The theme and sub-themes are substantiated by verbatim quotes from the interview participants' responses in this study. This was done in accordance with the contemporary qualitative research approach which entails the validating or supporting knowledge of the assumptions made in particular research settings (Bowen, 2009).

FINDINGS

The researcher noted four themes from the interviews as depicted in Table 2, including sub-themes and their frequencies.

Table 2 Frequency of Themes

	Themes and sub-themes	**Frequency**
Theme 1	**Organisational Branding**	**78**
	Reputation and image	14
	Organisational culture and identity	13
	Strategic vision	5
	Corporate social responsibility	12
	Work and surrounding environment	28
	Merger implications	6
Theme 2	**Employment Branding**	**178**
	Fringe benefits/incentives and remuneration	45
	Leadership and managerial support	38
	Work/life balance and flexibility	15
	Performance management and development	25
	Occupational health and safety	28
	Job security	18
	Fulfilment and purpose	9
Theme 3	**Talent Life Cycle**	**165**
	Talent mind-set	8
	Talent preparation and acquisition	11
	Talent development	71
	Talent performance & recognition	37
	Talent retention	38
Theme 4	**Talent Value Proposition**	**69**
	Importance of TVP	26
	Mutual expectation	15
	Implementation challenges of TVP	28

Theme: Organisational Branding

The findings indicated that mainly the reputation and image that the institution exudes and the working and surrounding environment are the elements that make up an attractive institutional brand for academic staff members in the HEI. The culture and identity, long-term strategy, social responsibility, and merger implications also emerged as important however, these sub-themes occurred less.

Sub-theme: Reputation & image

The findings provide evidence that shows that the management of the institution believes it to be of a reputable calibre: *This is one of the top research universities in the country*. (Participant 3).

The findings suggested a link between Reputation, Corporate Social Responsibility and loyalty translating into enhanced retention: *When we work for an institution that has an honest standing tradition and we can now be loyal to that, including the contribution that the institution makes to our national well-being and my reason for being committed and loyal to the institution is because of its values and its attributes towards nation building*. (Participant 8).

Sub-theme: Work and Surrounding Environment

The findings displayed that the participants in this study largely agreed that a favourable working atmosphere is really an imperative the work performance of academic staff: *When the employee comes into the university, they expect that they will be allowed to operate in a very conducive atmosphere with all the facilities around uninterrupted internet access, access to the library, getting access to online research and things like that*. (Participant 2).

The findings suggested a link between Talent Development and Work and Surrounding Environment: *So you see that we give an opportunity for someone who wants to develop and grow professionally and academically, I think it is an ideal environment for that, so whoever wants to come, either to develop, or even to come and study usually it's a very good environment*. (Participant 10). The findings implied a link between Work and Surrounding Environment and Retention: *If I stayed here for two or three years and I wasn't comfortable with the environment, I would have gone away*. (Participant 5).

Geographic location as a factor that academic staff members consider important emerged, further revealing a relationship between Talent Acquisition and Surrounding Environment: *I know it's a rural town and it's small, but it's close to all the big things that you need. I mean, we are 60 kilometres from Jo'burg, we are 70 kilometres from O.R Tambo, we are in the industrial heartland of Gauteng, so that's why people like to come to this campus*." (Participant 12).

Theme: Employment Branding

Fringe Benefits/Incentives and Remuneration, as well as Leadership and Managerial Support proved to be the main elements that constitute an attractive EB for academic staff members in the merged HEI. Work/Life Balance and Flexibility, Performance Management and Development, Occupational Health and Safety, Job Security, and Fulfilment and Purpose are other sub-themes that occurred less.

Sub-theme: Fringe benefits/incentives & remuneration

Equitable remuneration emerged as a key element in the employment agreement between employer and employee. The findings implied a link between Remuneration and Retention: *I know people that have come here and run away why, because they came just because of money and when the money is not trickling in the way they want, they leave*. (Participant 5).

The findings showed that the institution provides several fringe benefits/incentives outside of the basic remuneration package in order to better attract and retain academic staff members: *My wife is studying her Master's in Law right now, so we support your spouse and about four kids for seven years each, no fees, no nothing, they just study if you have talent in your house that you want to upgrade, so you can see that it goes beyond just you alone, they even give your family, your wife can study and your children can study*." (Participant 10).

The findings suggested a link between fringe benefits/incentives and talent performance and recognition: *I think our system that we brought in that 1 article is equal to 1 overseas trip. So if you speak to lecturer A, he went to Miami now for the first time and also lecturer B and they're coming to my office and I just ask them how was your trip and it's like I can't get them out of my office so the opportunity that if you work hard, you can go on an international trip and you can go meet other researchers and you can network and you can start with research*." (Participant 7).

Sub-theme: Leadership & managerial support

The participants in this study seemed to believe that the management of the Institution are indeed committed towards their academics and give them the necessary support: *It seems to me; well my experience is that it is a total commitment from management to talented academics.* (Participant 8).

The findings suggested a link between leadership and flexibility is discovered: *They don't want to be bogged down by bureaucracy, they want to be independent, they want to make their own decisions… The researcher and the academic must be assured that they will be able to do their work and not a massive administrative thing that's being added to their portfolio*. (Participant 12).

The management of the institution in this study believes that academic staff really value and require support from their employer, thus suggesting a link between leadership and managerial support and talent development: *You can't expect them to get their PhD's for example if you don't create and give them the resources to do that and also to manage your talent is to grow them, to assist them in their growth path and to assist them with their career planning*. (Participant 7).

The level of commitment from management also proved to have a direct influence on whether employees in the institution choose to leave or stay: *You know, the minute a staff member gets frustrated or stressed with the manager they are more likely to resign*. (Participant 1).

Theme: Talent Life Cycle

The findings suggested that talent development and talent retention are mainly the elements to be considered for an effective and functional TLC for academic staff members in the HEI. Talent mind-set, talent preparation and acquisition, and talent performance and recognition also emerged, however, to a lesser extent.

Sub-theme: Talent development

The findings showed that participants believe that academics, especially interested and superior calibre academics in the Institution, are provided with good opportunities for development: *You're given even a chance to develop yourself, so if you if you have got your own specific skills or specific areas that you feel you're an outstanding person in, you're given that opportunity to express it and you're facilitated to express it*. (Participant 10).

Another participant explains how the development of academic staff members, facilitated by management, is essential to enhancing the TLC of the Institution: *It is important because we don't live forever and as blacks we've never been so committed into developing and mentoring the young academics, so if we right now, if we start mentoring and we start developing talent amongst our young ones, we are sure of the succession plan, we're sure that the standards will never go down because you have an interlink between, or an interface of mixing the older ones with the younger ones and with that mixture, you bring a very strong brand of a staff member…* (Participant 11).

Sub-theme: Talent retention

Several participants opined that HEIs generally focus more on acquiring talent, rather than effective retention strategies: *I think that we spend a lot of money attracting people, in terms of recruitment, but I think not all organisations do a lot on the retention side…* (Participant 7).

The participants in this study generally indicated that they felt that there is still much room for improvement in terms of sound retention strategies: *I think we could do better in terms of retaining our academic staff*. (Participant 6).

The findings in this study suggested an association between fringe benefits/incentives and remuneration and talent retention as many participants believed that money and incentives influence academic staff retention significantly: *Salary wise, it is a concern for most of our academics, that's why they tend to leave our institution*. (Participant 6).

A link between fulfilment and purpose, work/Life balance and retention was suggested by the research findings: *I believe it's only the sense of procreation, loyalty, or wanting to work with students that can actually retain the academic staff members, especially those that have extended family members, whereby the person has been enabled by the extended family members to reach this point of professionalism and it's payback time, so the person will now be pressurised not to remain for R500 000 at a university so the person will choose to leave*. (Participant 8).

Overall, the participants felt that retention in the institution is relatively good however, the poaching of high calibre developed staff came up several times, demonstrating a connection between talent development and retention: *…remember when you develop them, what happens, they get stolen by others, they move away. So you also have to think for yourself that can I really train people in a rural Institution like this one and do you think UCT will leave them alone and Wits and UP? No ways!* (Participant, 11).

This findings also suggested a link between leadership and managerial support, and retention, illustrating that the nature of leadership and support from management directly affects retention of academic staff: *The people that could resign because of the Vice-chancellors must be the deputy vice-chancellors but I cannot have a lecturer resigning because of me, so it's the line management. The lecturer may resign because of the school director, and the school director may resign because of the Dean, and maybe the Dean can also resign now because of the deputy Vice-chancellor*. (Participant 1).

Theme: TVP

The findings indicated that the Importance of TVP, the mutual expectation in the TVP and the implementation challenges of TVP are important elements to be considered when constructing a customised TVP for academic staff in the HEI.

Sub-theme: Importance of TVP

The general feedback received from the interview participants implied TVP to be important: *Yeah, that's very important, the psychological contract, you know*. (Participant 1).
Some participants believed a TVP to be pivotal in acquiring talent, thus depicting a link between Talent

Preparation and Acquisition, and TVP: *…if these things such as TVP are not well placed, then we're not going to attract good workers or academic staff*. (Participant 2).

Others believed a TVP to be important in terms of giving academics the room to grow in their respective fields, thus unearthing a relationship between Talent Development and TVP: *I think that it's very important for the sake of managing your talent, and to do the career planning so that they're given the opportunities*. (Participant 7).

Furthermore, the participants underlined that a TVP is not only essential for academic staff but also all the staff members of HEIs: *I don't think it is something that the institution really pays attention to showing people how they can develop their talent but in the faculty you will find that there are still personal development plans…so I think maybe you should also say for the support staff there should be something similar*." (Participant 9).

Sub-theme: Mutual expectation

This study's participants agreed that a TVP should benefit both the employer and the employees. They emphasised that it is essential for a TVP to be implemented so that this mutual benefit is explicitly expressed, thus unravelling a link between the Importance of TVP and the mutual expectation: *It is essential because HEIs are populated by individuals who have their own interests and reasons why they joined those and largely academics are people that want to grow, be promoted and then as management we must send them proper structures and policies, that can actually help them get what they want out of academia*. (Participant 3).

Most of the participants highlighted that a TVP is what will make the expectations from both the side of the employer and the employee, more clear and understandable: *Well, in my view the TVP is sort of what do the academics bring to the table and what do I give to them in return*. (Participant 12).

The findings suggested a link between leadership and managerial support, and mutual expectation: *We're trying to make sure that we provide for them, we address their needs and sometimes it's not very easy you know because when you're talking about commitment to TVP, there are those you can't commit to because they are also not committed to you, so you know when you embrace, you receive a hug, that's a principle, so when we see an upcoming academic who is really committed, we support them*. (Participant 11).

Sub-theme: Implementation challenges of TVP

Some participants indicated financial limitations to be a possible challenge: *I think one challenge might be that maybe even if there is a will, but things that need financial support might also have a constraint in terms of whether we have the budget for that. Sometimes you will see that there is no way management could actually run some programs because there is no such financial support, so that can be a challenge*. (Participant 10).

Other participants also indicated that implementation could be a challenge if either of the parties did not perceive TVP to be of importance: *I also think you'll have to run an awareness campaign sort of, where you explain to lecturers why it's important and how they can benefit from it because it mustn't just be a top down approach whereby management must sort of force it down on them*. (Participant 9).

Other participants also implied a link between organisational culture and identity and implementation Challenges of TVP: *I know the VC (Vice-Chancellor) has a dream that this University should have one culture and I've said to him it's a fantastic dream and I wish him all the best, but to change a culture, you don't just switch something off or switch something on to get a culture. A culture develops over time*. (Participant 12).

The findings suggested an association between the implementation challenges of TVP and merger implications: *Then the other challenge is also that for anything that needs to be implemented, you need all of us to agree as campuses, therefore it takes time to actually implement things across the system*. (Participant 3).

Another association that the findings of this study suggested was between work and surrounding environment and implementation challenges of TVP: *Another challenge maybe relating to the, could be the fact that the environment now is not as conducive as before, the strikes and all that could be a challenge because amongst the three campuses, we are the ones that are burning our property, and now with that an academic staff might decide to go to another campus where there's nothing of this nature*. (Participant 11).

DISCUSSION

The participants agreed that three sub-themes namely the Importance of TVP, mutual expectations and implementation challenges of TVP, are crucial for consideration when ensuring that an effective and well-suited TVP is constructed and implemented. The most common sub-themes of OB that are critical for consideration in order to guarantee an appealing brand of the institution were work and surrounding environment, as well as reputation and image.

Reputation and image was the second most mentioned phenomenon amongst the participants, who agreed that the reputation and image of a HEI is pivotal in terms of ensuring an institutional brand that will appeal more to academic staff members. In line with the findings, Aloo and Moronge (2014) state that the motivation to attain a global reputation as a universal superior calibre institution is linked with the pursuit for global name acknowledgement in an attempt to spark interest in the best academics, international students, and top-notch research and training assignments.

The sub-theme of work and surrounding environment was the most popular among the participants in this study, who indicated the importance of a conducive and appealing internal and external environment where OB for academic staff members in the HEI is concerned. Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure and Meek (2013) allude that although the academic field is characterised by positive perceptions, the academic operating circumstances and the administration and leadership of HEIs should perpetually be given precedence for the sake of creating a favourable working atmosphere and culture which supports effectiveness and protects the welfare of academic staff, the institutions, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education. Stoeger (2012) opines that the development of talent is largely influenced by how conducive the working environment is. Smart (2010), mentions that a favourable working atmosphere complements the retention of employees. Frueh (2014) adds that the surrounding environment is also vital in producing a sense of assimilation to the organisation; therefore, the geographic area of an organisation is a factor that affects the acquisition of talent.

The most common sub-themes of EB critical for ensuring a desirable employment brand of the Institution were Fringe benefits/incentives and remuneration, as well as Leadership and managerial support. Knapp and Siegel (2009) express that remuneration rates and benefits, or incentives are a critical facet of the employment contract. Some scholars contend that remuneration and fringe benefits are less gratifying to senior faculty members as opposed to other elements such as collegiality and managerial support, however, they as well require market related compensation scales (Kramer, 2010).

A study conducted by Teichler (2011) indicated that academic staff perceived a supportive university as one that supports academic activities within the institution and provides opportunities for the professional development of staff members. Antoniou, Cooper, Chrousos, Spielberger and Eysenck (2009) also reveal the findings of a study whereby inadequate or no support from middle managers resulted in psychological disorders and turnover among healthcare employees.

The most common sub-themes of the TLC of academic staff members in the Institution that are crucial to take into account were talent development and talent retention. Blackmore and Kandiko (2012), concurrent with Beaton and Gilbert (2013), and Dale, Holland and Matthews (2016) state that several HEIs now have developmental strategies in place like workshops, which are pertinent to academic activities such as teaching, learning, research for academic staff members. Wilkinson and Lubas (2016) feel that making provision for the foreseen or anticipated needs of an organisation necessitates a deliberate approach by management towards succession planning and management undertakings
.

According to Weems (as cited in Jean-Marie and Lloyd-Jones, 2011) it seems as though most HEIs tend to place more emphasis on acquiring talent, rather than retaining it. This relates to this study's findings. Wolhuter and Wiseman (2013) states that although HEIs have improved in their remuneration scales over recent years, they still continue to be trodden by the private sector, which offers much more competitive salaries than them, thus making the retention of academic staff in higher education more challenging as described by the participants in this study. Kochan and Dyer (as cited in Price, 2011) express that organisations that encourage the professional advancement of their employees stand the risk of losing them to rival organisations that would not have invested at all in those employees.

The fundamental elements of TVP to consider when determining the most appealing offering of value to academic staff members by the institution were the importance of TVP, mutual expectations and the implementation challenges of a TVP. In accordance with the findings of this study, Nagpal (2013) states that it is important to have a well-established TVP as this would aid with the attraction of talent. Turner and Kalman (2014) allude that a TVP is important because it demonstrates the opportunities available for talent development. Martin, Burke and Cooper (2011) express that the TVP is what establishes the mutual expectation and benefit between the employer and the employee. Holbeche (2015) further elaborates that fostering a setting where both institutions and their workers significantly benefit is the most robust and trustworthy foundation for a relationship of employment in today's rapidly changing worldwide economy.

A shortage of financial resources can be a limiting factor to the management and implementation of a TVP. Cogswell (2015) states that it is not only imperative that senior management buy into the TVP for the sake of endorsing it, but also for deeply inculcating it within the organisation, therefore a lack of management buy-in to the TVP would circumvent the implementation process.

A FRAMEWORK FOR THIS RESEARCH

The models depicted in Figures 1 and 2 suggest an ideal TVP of the merged South African HEI. The model suggests that these OB and EB are what attracts academic talent to the Institution. The models then imply that the next phase of development towards the greater TVP, would be managing this talent through the application of a TLC. At last, the model depicts that after the OB, EB and TLC processes have unfolded within the institution, these concepts then collaborate towards the establishment of a TVP for academic staff members.

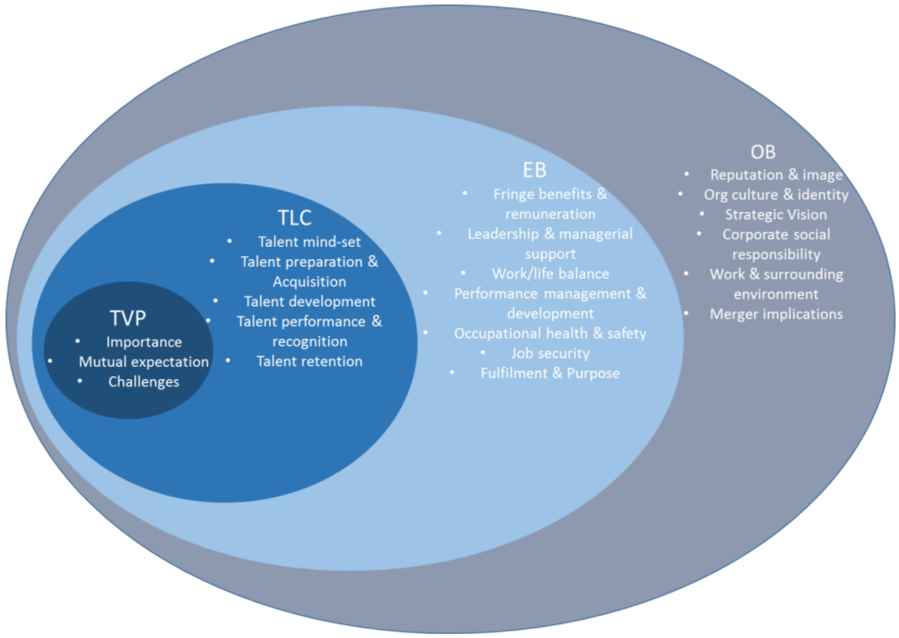

Figure 1: A TVP onion model for this study.

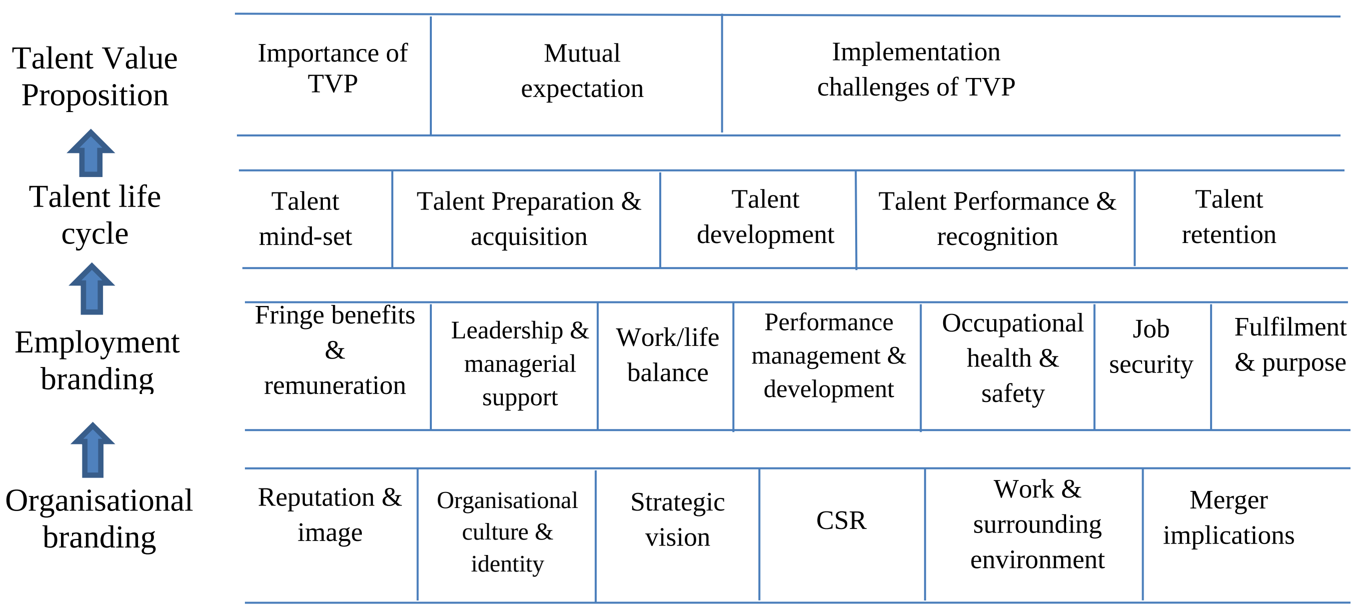

Figure 2: A proposed TVP model for the HEI

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present research makes important theoretical and practical contributions. This study adds to the limited empirical knowledge that exists on the TVP of HEIs and the implications thereof for the effective talent management of academic staff members. This research also presented an integrated framework that higher education management can utilise to implement a TVP that will attract and retain academic talent. Management should note the key elements of OB and EB, coupled with TLC processes, required to create an appealing TVP for academic staff. The TVP should benefit both the employer and the employees.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since this study was qualitative in nature, this restricted the ability to render the findings applicable to another population. Thus, the findings in this study can to a large extent only be considered reliable and valid for the specific institution that was investigated. The hectic nature of the work of individuals in HE management positions led to several targeted individuals declining to participate due to time constraints. The researchers recommend further quantitative inquiry among the other academic staff of the institution to gain their perceptions on the state of TVP in the institution and capture what is important to them. The HEI should consider applying this study's framework as a standard TVP for its academic staff members.

CONCLUSION

TVP is fundamental to the success of an organisation's employer brand and to achieve real success, the employment brand of an organisation should epitomise the overall personality of the organisation and be embedded within every facet of the employment experience. Therefore, generally, the TVP signifies the way an organisation would like to be perceived by current and prospective employees and expresses the mutual expectation and benefit of the employment contract. TVP further denotes what employees are anticipated to contribute in exchange for what they also stand to gain, which is why a TVP is imperative to an organisation's EB.

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