

AFRICA UNIVERSITY  
(A United Methodist-Related Institution)

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
21ST CENTURY. CASE OF UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,  
ZIMBABWE EAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE (2019-2022)

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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## **Abstract**

This study sought to understand how technological communications can be used to advance leadership developments in church a case of United Methodist Church. The church is failing to fully utilize the benefits of technology to leverage on the communication technologies to advance leadership development. The study used a case study of United Methodist Church Harare East district and focused on Zoom and UMConnect as communication technologies. This study used a qualitative approach. A case of Harare East was used and snow balling sampling method was used to select a sample size of 30 respondents. Open ended questionnaires were used to collect information from 30 participants and interviews were used to get information from 10 pastors. Thematic data analysis technique was used to analyze the qualitative data. The results indicated that the UMC church was failing to fully utilize the communication technologies to advance leadership development. This is mainly because the leaders are not getting the support from the church for them to be able to use these technologies effectively, 70% of the leaders lack either at least one of the following reliable network connection, knowledge on how to operate the technologies, reliable gadgets that support the technology or power. The study recommends the church to support the leaders by providing the support they need in order to enjoy the benefits of communication technologies.

**Key Words:** Technological communications, Leadership advancement, 21st century

## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree.

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## **Dedication**

I am dedicating this thesis to my kids Anesu, Anotidaishe, my parents, Enock, Elizabeth, Kay and Dick Bowers, Rev Dr John Lindsay and my church, The United Methodist Church.

## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

|      |                                 |
|------|---------------------------------|
| AU   | Africa University               |
| CL   | Clergy Leaders                  |
| LL   | Laity Leaders                   |
| UMC  | United Methodist Church         |
| ZCC  | Zimbabwe Council of Churches    |
| ZEA  | Zimbabwe Episcopal Area         |
| ZEAC | Zimbabwe East Annual Conference |
| ZWAC | Zimbabwe West Annual Conference |

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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study explores the response of United Methodist Church (UMC) Zimbabwe East Annual Conference (ZEAC) use of communication technology in advancing leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Embracing technology is the most vital component of success for directors who aspire to be leaders. With the use of the latest technology tools, it is very easy for leaders to lead employees and achieve organizational goals (Sethuraman, 2014). One may take a look at how you can use technology to your benefit and also get addressed as a cool leader. Griffiths (2012) positions that the use of technology has birthed a new leadership style, a style that empowers and inspires people to take up the most compelling business opportunities be it in the political arena, social arena, economic arena or religious sector. UMC ZEAC has owned up this task and is employing it to all its local churches hence, further details will be unraveled in the entire study so as to come up with a critical appraisal of the matter and possible recommendations basing on the findings by the researcher.

### **1.2 Background of the study**

Communication Technology can be delineated as the integration of technology into communication practices. It is also the transfer of information or messages among people and/or machines with the use of technology. It refers to all the technology that is utilized to handle telecommunications, broadcast media, and network-based systems. In simpler terms, when one conveys something orally or through other natural practices, it is called communication. When one then utilizes manmade technology to convey messages to other people or machines, it is now called communication technology. Communication technology also encompasses the tools that are used to

send, receive and process information. The Methodist Protestant Church remained a strong church until 1939, when it united with Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to become the United Methodist Church (Patterson, 1984). The United Methodist Church was formed in 1897 and has been operating in Zimbabwe since 1908. Initially, it was a provisional conference until it became a full conference in 1960. Due to the increasing membership through evangelism programs, the UMC was divided into 2 conferences namely Zimbabwe East Annual Conference (ZEAC) and Zimbabwe West Annual Conference (ZWAC). The 2 conferences currently form the UMC Zimbabwe Episcopal Area and are both under the leadership of Bishop E K Nhwatiwa since 2005. The governance of the UMC ZEA is guided by the Book of Discipline which is anchored on the teachings and writings in the Holy Bible. The book of discipline is revised often as circumstances allow, catering for the changing world environment without losing its anchor on the Holy Bible. Any changes effective to the Book of discipline are in line with the guideline set in the book which allow for exhaustive debate and consultation before final adoption of agreed amendment. The latest version of the book of discipline was revised in 2019 and is available online at [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org). The UMC is an Episcopal church, implying that it is led by Bishops. It is not individuals but Conferences, boards and committees that make decisions that govern the church. The United Methodist Church has endeavored to become a community in which all persons regardless of racial or ethnic background can participate in every level of its connection life and ministry. According to John Wesley (2007), the American Revolution profoundly impacted Methodism. John Wesley's loyalty to the king and his writings against the revolutionary cause did not enhance the image of Methodism among many who

supported independence. Wesley's ordinations set a precedence that ultimately permitted Methodists in America to become an independent church.

According to JWZ Kurewa (2018), for UMC in the Zimbabwe area, Joseph Crane Hartzell was responsible for opening Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Rhodesia. He then constructed a church building in 1912, but with the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act (1931), which was a demand by white Rhodesian farmers for the separation of white and black land, the African congregation was moved to what is now known as Hilltop UMC in Sakubva, Mutare.

Since its birth, the United Methodism has experienced a number of changes in its life and structure. The UMC has become increasingly aware of itself as a world church with members and conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe and United States of America (USA). While its membership in Europe and USA has declined noticeably since 1968, membership in Africa and Asia has grown significantly. At some instances, the church leaders were detained by the Rhodesian security agents during the protracted war for liberation which ended in 1980 in Zimbabwe. Through technology advancement, the appointment of Bishop Ralph Dodge marked a turning point in the Africanization of the church the Zimbabwean society (Muzorewa, 2012). Pertaining to Mbithi (2018), the landmark achievements of the UMC today is illustrated by the establishment of Africa University today, emergence of various churches within the UMC as well as the three big missions which are Old Mutare Mission, Nyadire Mission as well as Mutambara Mission. Thus, depicting the response of UMC on the use of technology for leadership development. The response to use of technology within the UMC ZEAC is further revealed by its response to the national calls, for instance, the “#march for peace” that was called upon for by the Zimbabwe Council of churches (ZCC) in conjunction with First lady of Zimbabwe, Dr Auxilia Mnangagwa (Kumuterera,

2018). The intention of this march was to advocate for peace as well as praying for peaceful elections that were ahead. Furthermore, several sources of denominational news coverage provide comprehensive global coverage that spans many languages and cultural contexts to ensure leadership development in the 21st century in the UMC ZEAC. Among those are the UMNews.org, the UMC Connect only to mention but a few. Whether its boots on the ground response to natural disasters or global pandemics or the transforming beauty of the human experiences, these sources are there.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The benefits of embracing communication technologies in UMC church are not clear. The church adopted communication technology during COVID-19 era to advance leadership development but their benefits were not seen in fact they were a lot of leadership related issues. In 2022 the church lost 105 of its congregants due to conflict between leaders and the laity and also the church lost more than hundred thousand US dollars due to misuse by the leaders. The constantly evolving technology has left no area of business untouched. Surpassing all the confinements, technology is now impacting all areas of life in all parts of the globe. No matter what the size of the organization, technology can be seen happily waving at us from all corners (Patel, 2022). The United Methodist Church (UMC) has a long history of concern for social justice, including speaking out against racial discrimination, advocating for and working towards equality to be communicated to the public. This study seeks to investigate the use of communication technologies in advancing leadership development.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

**1.4.1** To evaluate the efficacy of the use of communication technology in UMC ZEAC

**1.4.2** To scrutinize the usage of communication technological tools in advancing leadership development in UMC ZEAC

**1.4.3** To examine the initiatives engaged by the UMC ZEAC in expanding its technical tools.

**1.4.4** To recommend solutions towards the efficacy and sustainability of employing communication technology for the expansion of its leadership development

## **1.5 Research Questions**

**1.5.1** How effective is communication technology in UMC ZEAC

**1.5.2** What is the role of communication technology in advancing leadership development in UMC ZEAC?

**1.5.3** What modes of technology are being employed by UMC ZEAC in advancing leadership development?

**1.5.4** What solutions can be incorporated by the UMC ZEAC to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of technology within the church?

## **1.6 Assumptions**

1.6.1 Communication Technology is quite effective in UMC ZEAC as shown by the response rate of the congregants

1.6.2 To liberate leaders and facilitate freedom for employees to work with ease and to work from a distance

1.6.3 Communication technology like use of zoom and UM Connect

1.6.4 Online educational videos, use of social media platforms, virtual stimulation

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of the society considering that technology has become the ‘new norm’ in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and everything is becoming digitalized worldwide. Koshy et al (2008) note that, it has been clearly demonstrated that video conferences like zoom and UMConnect as modes of communication can influence positive behavior around the transmission of information and procedures and the implications for this technology are immense. Programs can be initiated to address issues to do with wellness, urgent matters in the church in different contexts. Users can be educated in a convenient, efficacious and low-cost fashion with information that is custom created for the intended use. Most UMC churches in Zimbabwe have been helping rural communities in a very remarkable way, but they have been lacking the capacity to communicate with their congregants effectively. The study will try to unravel how UMConnect support the conveyance of information in the UMC Zimbabwe East Annual Conference. Through this research, educators and other denominations would be able to employ appropriate strategies and methodology as utilized by the UMC ZEAC in ensuring a smooth flow of information transmission so as to attain a vibrant and more attentive congregation for an effective leadership development. Furthermore, there will be no bias on this research as there is record tracking on zoom as well as on UMConnect.

### **1.8 Scope or Delimitation of the Study**

In terms of timeframe, the study looks only at the period from December 2019 until December 2022. Geographically, this research paper is confined in Zimbabwe, particularly in the Mashonaland East province. Due to the restricted period of time available to undertake this study, the scope of this analysis cannot cover everything within the authorities of the United Methodist Church from its establishment to the

current state. A broader and more comprehensive study with a longer time period for research will improve the quality and depth of the present work.

### **1.9 Limitation of the Study**

The limitation can be that United Methodist Church is a highly spotlighted denomination with a greater multitude and, therefore, the issue of communication is significantly sensitive. To curb this, the participants will be assured of confidentiality, including that of the participating individuals. Another limitation to the study is the accessibility and convenience of the information required by the researcher. Despite the preparedness of the researcher to carry out a study of this nature, the researcher assumed that participants would give the required information; she also acknowledged possibilities of non-cooperation by some research participants because of the sensitivity of the required information. In order to prevent biases, the researcher used zoom meetings and UMConnect apps which have record tracking.

## **CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter unveils literature review informing this study. This is done by referring to a corpus of literature discourses by several scholars pertaining the UMC response to the use of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with particular emphasis on UMC ZEA in Zimbabwe. According to Aveyard (2010) literature review is a “comprehensive study and interpretation that addresses a specific topic.” This is further noted by Davis and K. Murphy (2015) as well as Vicente Saez and Martinez (2018) who all postulate that the purpose of literature review in the study is to gain an understanding of the existing research relevant to a particular area of study as well as presenting that knowledge in the form of a written report. As such, this chapter shall present the literature ordered in the following sub themes: brief background of communication in the UMC ZEAC, the nexus of the church and the state in leadership development, use of social media tools as well as Macro environmental analysis. In addition, the chapter will also reveal the theoretical framework informing this study. The Uses and Gratification theoretical lense has been utilized to broaden the understanding of the response portrayed by the people to the use of technology in the leadership expansion within the UMC ZEAC. By way of conclusion the chapter will give a preview summary of all the issues covered.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework is depicted as a conceptual model that establishes a sense of structure that guides one’s research or it simply is one’s presentation of a theory that explains a particular problem. The purpose of theoretical framework is to demonstrate that the relationships one proposes are not based on their personal instincts but rather formed from facts obtained by authors of previous researches. It is of paramount

importance in research because it assists in clarifying one's implicit theory in a manner that is more clearly defined as well as reducing biases that may sway one's interpretation. The theory employed in the study is the uses and gratification theory since it places special emphasis on the needs, motives and gratification of media users. It further states that media consumers are passive consumers to mass communications; rather, they play an active role in media consumption.

### **2.3 To evaluate the efficacy of the use of communication in United Methodist Church Zimbabwe Episcopal Area (UMC ZEA)**

Communication is a varied and vital part of any organization, and it is emphatically true for the United Methodist Church in Mashonaland East Province (Hodges, 2019). One should note that the church does not subsist on its own but rather works hand in hand with the state. This can be seen by the national prayer conducted by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, whereby churches were encouraged to pray for peaceful elections ahead (Kumuterera, 2019). The United Methodist Church has done much to ensure the growth of the church itself together with the surrounding communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Another instance is that of the Ebenezer crusade or convention that was done by the UMC at the National Sports Stadium where it celebrated 117 years since its existence and quite remarkable Ministers and other denomination leaders were present to grace those celebrations. "Effective communication is empowering, delivering timely and reliable information, building relationships and providing platforms and channels that connect people," said Jennifer Rodia, who is a chief communication officer for United Methodist Communications.

## **2.4 The nexus of the church and the state in leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The church and the state works hand in hand with each other for the development of the country. In a world full of brokenness and injustice, the people of the United Methodist Church believe that everybody has a role to create a better world (UMC Book of Discipline, pg. 126). This can be attested to by the Presidential Mantra, “Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo,” implying that it is those same congregants in the church who ensures the growth of the country. This also relates even to the technological aspect, whereby roads are being established and electricity is being restored although it is challenging at times. The President of Zimbabwe solely believes that it is the church which strives to empower the citizens and educate them on the benefits of a peaceful nation; hence, he always turns to the church for assistance.

### **2.4.1 Communication methods employed**

Several communication methods are being employed to ensure that all congregants have taken heed of the information. These encompass the Daily Christian Advocate, live streaming, news reports, press conferences, social media platforms and podcasts as well as language interpretations.

### **2.4.2 Denominational sources (News reports)**

Several denominational sources provide a comprehensive coverage on what is transpiring within the church. Instances of them are the UMNews.org and the UMC Connect. This news is conveyed through podcasts, blogs and other forms. UMCConnect is an abbreviation for United Methodist Connection video system. This is a system that permits people to interact via video and audio in real time. A variety of UMC

Conference leadership, agencies and churches utilize UMConnect for their meetings, trainings and businesses. This further enhances leadership development as all will be incorporated at the same time, especially in this digitalization epoch that we are in.

#### **2.4.3 Press Conferences and Live streaming**

The response of the people on the use of technology in the Mashonaland East province is so overwhelming. Several press conferences have been held to ensure leadership development within the church and among them encompass one held at Africa University some time in 2019. Also, continuous video conferencing software like zoom meetings are also enhancing leadership development in the church at large. Scholars have it that zoom meetings have notable pros which encompass it having the largest meeting participants as well as an abundance of business-oriented and user-centric features. Zoom meetings and UMConnect have become the modern communications for the dispersed members in the new norm (Ferguson, 2020).

#### **2.4.4 Podcasts and Good News Magazine**

The use of podcasts and magazines within the UMC in the Mashonaland Province is really insightful as it helps most congregants to be aware of the proceedings of the church. According to Green (2005), the United Methodist Church is evangelizing and social networking through podcasting. Podcasts are believed to be a wonderful way to think about and grow in any aspect of life as well as adapting to the order of the events at that certain time. Hence, magazines and podcasts also assist those who do not have access to internet get to know the information sent at a certain time.

#### 2.4.5 Language Interpretation

The UMC Communications also respects the political rights of its congregants as mandated in the constitution of Zimbabwe. According to the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act 20, chapter 4 (63) (1) provides for freedom of language for every citizen. The United Methodist Communications staff trained the commission members to use the devices like searching for information required as well as highlighting passages for further interpretation. The issue of languages is paramount since the church has diverse persons, that is, some who are visually impaired, the deaf and the illiterate (Woods, 2006). Freedom of language for every citizen or individual ensures a peaceful environment and an exercise of democracy where all persons are not restricted to what they need to say as long as it is not vague.

#### 2.4.6 Macro environmental analysis

The key factors that compromise this analysis are political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal. Relevant factors with significant impact on the operations of: the UMC in Zimbabwe encompass:

- a) Political Factors:** Relative political stability that is, we can send messages of peace during elections as portrayed by the response of the people who took part in the March for Peace that was organized by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the First lady Dr Auxilia Mnangagwa.
- b) Economic Factor:** Relatively stable and manageable inflation, high unemployment rate, community based economic empowerment programs high liquidity in the market slowing the economic growth, widening gap between rich and poor, relative fraternity in monetary policies, high interest rates and capital costs

- c) **Social Factors:** widening gap between rural and urban life, rural to urban migration, domestic violence, divorce, suicides etc., commuter families' Diaspora, unavailability and unaffordability of drugs, abuse of human rights, moral decay, emergence of child headed families, prevalence of HIV & AIDS and non-communicable diseases.
- d) **Technological factors:** negative impact of the internet
- e) **Environmental factors:** Global warming, deforestation, land degradation, droughts, global pandemics, water and litter pollution, stream bank river cultivation, hyacinth
- f) **Legal Factors:** Health and safety wear required by legislation, compliance with labor laws, ignorance of the inheritance law, poor enforcement of consumer law, delayed justice delivery system.

## 2.5 Organization and emerging technologies

Organizational learning professionals are adjusting to the emergence of technology as a dominant factor in training and development (Ladyshevsky, Geoghegan, Jones, & Oliver, 2008). Early research identified the limited integration of technology into training and development, with most technology infusion focused on sales, marketing, or technology content. It was a time when integration of advanced technological approaches into training and development mainly focused on sales, marketing or technology content (Webber, 2003) and the landscape was too new to draw any real conclusions about its impact (Arbaugh, 2000; Cini, 1998; Vicere, 2000). Over time delivery models shifted to account for technology's larger organizational significance and calls for more dynamic training and development needs (Riha & Robels-Pina, 2009). While organizations have begun leveraging technology for more skill-based needs, the full impact of learning technologies as a key to leadership development have

not been fully explored. Slow adoption of technological advances into leadership development is not surprising. Technical utility often outpaces non-technological organization practices. In recent times, organizations leveraging technological advances have redefined how we share photos, raise money (crowd source funding), access transportation (ride share networks), and secure travel accommodations (peer-to-peer short term rentals) while multiple, previously long-standing business models became obsolete (McCafferty, 2016). The disruptive nature of technology has led to consistent calls for its further integration into routine practices of developing leadership, management and other critical soft skills for organizational success (Adams, 2007; Shelley, 2015). Potentially the most challenging obstacle of technology disruption to leadership development is the people factor. Developing clear objectives, adopting appropriate strategies, effective deployment, and routine evaluation pose considerable challenges for organizations as they scramble to simultaneously manage emerging technologies and evolving leadership needs. With those considerations in mind, the authors recognize much attention has been given to the theoretical considerations at the intersection of technology and leadership. However, even researchers who delved into this area concede it warrants more consideration for implementation and execution rather than theory (Standifer, Thiault, & Pin, 2010). This chapter explores the impact of emerging technologies on leadership development, with specific discussions of organizational learning and effectiveness, leveraging technology for leadership growth, and promising strategies for leadership development.

### **2.5.1 Leveraging Technology**

Leadership growth training and development has continuously evolved as a critical driver of organizational growth. Research has shown digital advances technology

disruptions spawn new expectations for learning experiences (Boyce, LaVoie, Streeter, Lochbaum, & Psotka, 2008; Cercone, 2008; Ladyshevsky, Geoghegan, Jones, & Oliver, 2008). Numerous factors must be considered to fully embrace a more digital, technologically savvy model for leadership development. Primarily, organizations need to address their strategy to design and deliver leadership trainings to lessening the likelihood of failure (Beer, Finnstrom, & Schrader, 2016). Specifically, organizations need to consider new workforce dynamics and the continual technology disruption affecting individual industries and organizations (Ladyshevsky, Geoghegan, Jones, & Oliver, 2008). For some organizations, this likely means embracing an open-source mentality and approach toward leadership training (Jesuthasan & Holmstrom, 2016). Additionally, organizations must strive to maximize the alignment between new technologies and desired outcomes. Strong alignment of this areas has been linked to productivity gains of up to 70 percent (Colfax, Santosa, & Diego, 2009). Widespread technology adoption into leadership development must also include clear digital learning strategies. There is a consistent message in research leadership and education literature that it is not enough to simply apply traditional strategies to virtual environments (Al-Ani, Horspool, & Bligh, 2011; Riha & Robels-Pina, 2009).

It is critical for organizations to leverage technology to offer more functionally-driven, just-in-time training to meet employee leadership development needs (Younger, 2016). Human resources leaders play critical roles in cultivating leadership in organizational members, thus, these same leaders must give the pertinent attention to digital learning strategies and leadership development. Researchers and practitioners alike have called for more strategic learning development approaches that shift away from transactional experiences and administrative services (Kerfoot, 2010; Lawler, III

& Boudreau, 2012). This is underscored by findings indicating that nearly 90 percent of respondents indicated and affirmed the importance of leadership training in their organization, while less than half of survey respondents indicated a lack of clarity around who is definitively responsible for leadership development within their organization (Fulmer & Hanson, 2010). Leadership training may also require a more effective use, and application of technology. Web 2.0 technologies represent a significant shift in the maturity, and interactivity of web-based technology platforms (Sasidharan, 2015). Taking advantage of faster, and more improved network infrastructure, dynamic hypertext markup language (HTML), asynchronous web development languages (JavaScript and extensible markup language (XML)), Web 2.0 technologies (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WordPress, and others) offer more collaborate, real-time digital communication platforms (Marchille, 2009; Sasidharan, 2015) Studies on learning web 2.0 usage and learning effectiveness suggest popularity of these technologies stems from ease of deployment and growing familiarity. Additionally, when these platforms have been strategically incorporated into development activities, user response has been positive when measures against stated learning objectives (Do-Hong, Wilkins, & Dunaway, 2011). Organizational Learning and Effectiveness Leveraging technology to drive productivity is essential to maximizing team and organizational effectiveness. This concept of organizational effectiveness is key to promoting strong, and successful leadership (Conceicao & Altman, 2011). Successful leaders thrive in organizations where their systems clearly define roles, responsibilities and relationships. Said organizations are prone to more malleable structures (Beer, Finnstrom, & Schrader, 2016) and continuous learning cultures (Conceicao & Altman, 2011). It is within these organizations that technology and technology leaders are accepted as a constant, yet evolving partners critical to the

organizational system. Organizations that embrace the standing technology partnership experience greater levels of trust, open communication, and leadership coaching (Brookes, 2009; Colfax et al., 2009; Kerfoot, 2010).

### **2.5.2 Leadership advancement styles**

**Common Leadership Development Approaches** There are many ways in which approaches to leadership development may be classified. Based on experience over several decades with approximately 100 major organizations in 8 countries it is argued that the 2 dimensions broadly and primarily influence the leadership development approach adopted namely: The prevailing level of context disruption as perceived by leadership characterized as, radical, incremental or, stable; and the level of importance placed by leadership on investment in strategic leadership development characterized as, high priority or not a priority. Senior leadership attitudes to development have significant impacts on the investment in leadership development. In the late 1970s the CEO of a multi-hundred-million-dollar turn-over division with a strong command and control culture operating in a legislatively imposed placid monopolistic context, concluded that any support for or investment in leadership development increased employee market value and likely make retention more difficult, in any case he reasoned, if leadership competences were not available in-house they could always be purchased on the open market. Failure to invest and support leadership development even in relatively stable contexts can result in a variety of issues that impact performance: In the absence of development support high achievers are more likely to seek an alternate organizational context more favorable to their personal development, this tends to leave behind those less capable and less achievement orientated, Failure to view investment in trial and error development during periods characterized by

placid contexts as insurance against future radical change leaves the organization's competitive future potentially vulnerable.

### **2.5.3 Trial and Error Leadership Development**

Supported trial and error development involves observing the behavior of experienced senior leaders within a supporting culture guided by development objectives strongly supported by the leadership team leading to questioning of key assumptions, listening and experimenting on a trial and error basis to determine what works and what does not work given a context. While self-directed trial and error development is characterized by an organizational culture that is hostile to learning error, fosters low learning risk taking and therefore low learning productivity therefore learning that does occur tends to be self-directed. Trial and error leadership development tends to be more effective in relatively stable contexts possibly the consequence of prolonged excess of demand over supply or the result of some form of monopoly. There are situations in which trial and error leadership development alone may not be feasible: Short-term democratically elected leadership roles that involve custodianship over significant assets and large permanent staff may not provide sufficient time to learn on the job for the term elected. In such situations, long-term senior administrative staff may, counter to the governance intent, assume de facto leadership role. Senior academic appointments that are based on outstanding performance in their specialist field, appointed to leadership role involving responsibility for hundreds of faculty members and thousands of students or, leadership of a research institute involving large

#### **2.5.4 Programmed Leadership Development**

In January 2014, McKinsey published an article based on a survey of the causes of weakness in leadership development programs. The causes identified aligned closely with firsthand experiences over the past several decades. The article opened with the following observation: “For years, organizations have lavished time and money on improving the capabilities of managers and on nurturing new leaders. US companies alone spend almost \$14 billion annually on leadership development. Colleges and universities offer hundreds of degree courses on leadership, and the cost of customized leadership-development offerings from a top business school can reach \$150,000 a person”.<sup>5</sup> The article then goes on to highlight a range of specific areas of weakness in leadership development that reduced its effectiveness: Context matters - It is important to recognize that context is a critical determinant of successful leadership. A brilliant leader in one situation does not necessarily perform well in another. Learning by doing - Adults typically retain just ten percent of what they hear in classroom lectures, versus nearly two-thirds when they learn by doing. By applying learning, Burgeoning leaders, no matter how talented, often struggle to transfer even their most powerful off-site experiences into changed on-the-job behavior. Through changing mental models, becoming a more effective leader often requires changing behavior. Although most companies recognize that this also means adjusting underlying mental models, too often organizations are reluctant to address the need for such changes, the root causes of why leaders continue to act the way they do.

#### **2.5.5 Mentoring/Coaching Leadership Development**

The concept or role of mentoring appears to have originated from Homer’s *Odyssey* where Mentor was a friend of Odysseus and the guardian and tutor of his son, Telemachus.<sup>11</sup> Mentor guided leadership development typically signifies a

relationship in which, during a period of rapid change, a more experienced leader becomes responsible for assisting the accelerated development of a less experienced leader through introductions, role modeling and advice given explicitly stated development objectives. Mentoring benefits are dependent on the right mentor/mentee match being made; the mentor benefits by gaining different perspectives and improved empathetic capacity, while the mentee benefits from the experience, sponsorship and connections of the mentor.

There can be confusion between the roles of mentoring and coaching. Introductions that extend the mentee's network connections and the provision of advice tend to be associated with mentoring, while, facilitating coachee self-discovery of priorities and facilitating the application of knowledge to identified practice challenges tend to be associated with coaching. It is not unusual for leadership development in periods of prolonged context stability to be characterized by ad hoc trial and error development followed in periods of radical disruption in which individual operational leaders directly initiate some mix of mentoring and coaching. This approach to leadership development emphasize learning by doing and learning through the interchange of ideas between practitioners from different contexts who, are prepared to bring a fresh perspective to a leadership practice challenge given their experience in other contexts. Before heading up the Management Science Department at Manchester University in the late 1950s Sir Reg Revans, had developed an approach 'Action Learning' as a basis for productivity improvement at the UK Coal Board and many regard him as the 'Father of Action Learning', learning by doing is now an integral component of all leadership development.

### **2.5.6 Simulation and Gaming**

Multiple researchers have reconnoitered the impact of replication via experiential software and multiple, online game environments as a catalyst for leadership development. Researchers, practitioners, and corporate educators agree simulation is an effective learning experience. They credit gaming simulations for providing vital insight to leadership practices for distributed teams (Lisk, Kaplancali, & Riggio, 2012), enhancing the pedagogical experience when paired with appropriate instructional materials (Standifer, Thiault, & Pin, 2010), expanding the capacity for meaningful data collection about leadership development and leadership education (Showanasai, Lu, & Hallinger, 2013). Simulation explorations have also revealed that participants who were less likely to self-identify for leader roles in real life environments excelled in gamification leadership experiences (Hemp, 2008). Findings from human resource professionals and learning executives show simulation and gaming are being used to promote behavior change, reinforce skills, practice execution and maximize exposure to content (Roberts, 2014). Organizational and education researchers found the collective awareness nature of simulation and gaming environments positively impacts leadership relationships (and hence leadership development) by reinforcing accountability and trust (Goh & Wasko, 2012; Hemp, 2008). Although simulation and gaming experiences foster the previously mentioned benefits, these approaches may not yet provide full insight to particular leadership approaches. For example, in Kaplancali's 2008 unpublished Doctoral dissertation (as cited in Lisk et al., 2012) on multiplayer online gaming, no consistent links were found between transformational leadership behaviors and leader motivation to lead or leader self-efficacy.

### **2.5.7 Social Media**

The relevance and magnitude of social media must also be considered in relation to leadership training. While social media has become a regular context for exploring leadership behavior (Chang & Kim, 2011; Hwang, 2012; Park, 2013) and learning (Burzynska & Krajka, 2015; Roberts, 2014), executive leaders have been slow to fully embrace the tools for leadership development. The identified benefits of low cost and flexibility (Bertoncini & Schmalz, 2013) may be at odds with empirical findings and practical discoveries that the highly facilitative, deep listening leadership skills that can be developed with social media approaches require multi-channel, asynchronous, unfiltered engagement (Traeger, 2012). Further adoption of social media into leadership development and organizational learning strategies requires clear alignment with learning objectives and further evidence of learning effectiveness from its use.

### **2.5.8 Blogs**

Practitioners and researchers continue to explore the leadership development impact of online journals, commonly known as blogs. The ease of publication and integration of blogs propels its growth in use (Gonzales, Vodicka, & White, 2011). The personal, reflective nature of blog activity appeals to learning professionals as a medium for building community (Palloff & Pratt, 2007) and deepening leadership understanding (Raffo, 2012). Empirical investigations of blog activity suggest it prompts spikes in knowledge transfer (Ladyshevsky, Geoghegan, Jones, & Oliver, 2008), but may not necessarily lead to significant differences of analysis between related leadership constructs (Raffo, 2012). While blogs may provide a unique medium for leadership reflection, full leverage of its utility for organizational learning and leadership development may require more detailed strategy, rigorous instruction and structured frameworks (Cercione, 2008; Lawler, III & Boudreau, 2012).

## **2.6 Impact of information communication technologies to the church**

There are several studies on the impact of information and communication technology in church communications for growth. Sturgill (2004) discusses the scope and purpose of church web sites for church communication. Andrade (2007) in his exploratory and interpretive research examines the anticipated consequences of information and communication technology (ICT) on six remote rural communities located in the northern Peruvian Andes, which were provided with computers connected to the Internet. The study reveals that individuals' exploitation of ICT is related to how individuals overcome difficulties and make the most of available ICT tools and that complementing existing social networks through ICT reflects the interaction between the ICT-mediated information and virtual networks with the local existing social networks. The study concludes that any ICT intervention in a developing country requires at least three elements to be effective: a tolerable physical infrastructure, a strong degree of social texture, and an activator of information.

Ihejirika's (2010) research in the field of media religion and culture, made extensive comparative analyses of the Catholic and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and their different communication strategies highlighting the appropriation of the new information and communication technologies by these two Christian denominations in Nigeria. The study describes the Pentecostal denomination as seeing media technologies as an extension of the church pulpit while the Catholic Church as generally exhibiting a somewhat cold attitude towards these instruments of mass communication and remained largely a print-based church, investing most of her communication energy in the print media and in oral catechism. This attitude goes back to the advent of the cinema which the Catholic Church's hierarchy then saw as having the potential of corrupting faith and moral. Surprisingly, Ihejirika's research

revealed that of all the technologies of mass communication, none has been so instantly accepted and embraced by the Catholic Church in Nigeria as the new information and communication technologies (ICT) and goes on to reveal some novel pastoral initiatives using the new information and communication technologies using the new information and communication technologies

Chandler (2004), in her research on exploring cross generational attitudes and opinions on the use of multimedia in the Christian church, investigated the attitudes and opinions across generations regarding to the relatively new implementation of multimedia into the church worship service, compared to traditional teaching techniques. Before collecting the data, it was believed that the younger generation would be more in favor of multimedia use, because of their exposure and familiarity with multimedia in their everyday lives. It was predicted that the older generation would be in favor of maintaining a worship service with traditional teaching techniques. The research findings supported both hypotheses and also revealed that both age groups share many of the same concerns and viewpoints regarding multimedia and its implementation. An interesting philosophical study by Cheon (2011) on communication for life in cyberspace-a Christian ethical quest in reference to the Korean situation, raises awareness that all living beings are the communicating subjects, not objects to be communicated to; and attempted to establish a communication value named 'communication for life' which provides a new perspective on communication.

Williams (2008) in his study of a Baptist local church in the USA found that that there is a changing worship experience with the emergence of media technology and contemporary worship in evangelical churches. Wyche (2010) in her work in the investigation of religion and computing in mega-churches graphically shows how

church members and leaders use ICT in ways that ties to their Protestant Christian faith. Feijter (2006), metaphorically, illustrated the situation of Christianity and the need to communicate in today's world, which is saturated by electronic media, in his research on the art of dialogue in religion, communication and global media culture just as it was during the days of the first Christian missionaries in the first century. Gunton (2011) in the research on religious information literacy and using information to learn in church community explores the nature of informed learning in the context of the church as a learning community.

The study anticipated that insights resulting from this exploration may help church organizations, church leaders and lay people to consider how information can be used to grow faith, develop relationships, manage the church and respond to religious knowledge, which support the pursuit of spiritual wellness and the cultivation of lifelong learning. Ukah (2003) studied the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria. In the research on local identities and global processes in African Pentecostalism, he noted that information technology also played a role in the church globalization. Today the Redeemed Christian Church of God makes global broadcast of her programs through their television station. Many church leaders see the Internet as God's solution to world missionary logistics challenges. Commenting on the Internet evangelism day, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, National President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, Pastor Word of Life Bible Church and the current chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) says IEC (2011).

## **2.7 Developing ICT strategies**

In contemporary Nigeria, there are several factors that need to be considered in designing an information and communication technology (ICT) strategy for church missions today. Firstly, studies in most of the Assemblies of God churches in Nigeria

and Nigerian Churches, Bolu (2004, 2011) show that young people make up the lion share of church membership with some churches as high as seventy percent! Secondly, in Nigeria internet bandwidth is fast increasing with the huge quantity of terrestrial bandwidth flowing into the country. Scholars show the international internet bandwidth defined as the contracted capacity of international connections between countries for transmitting internet traffic, and Nigeria is now fast moving to the top 50 in the world. Thirdly, internet bandwidth in Nigeria is fast becoming a commodity. Some shows the bandwidth expected to have been brought in Nigeria before the end of 2011. By the end of year 2011, a total of about 7TB would have been lit in Nigeria from the paltry 0.5 TB nearly 2 years ago. Nigeria may now be going for capacity of over 45Mb per thousand. Also, a price, which was over \$50 in 2005, has dropped to less than \$10 in 2011.

### **2.7.1 ICT tools utilized in the Church**

ICT tools embraces any communication device like radio, television, phones, computer, microphones, speakers, radios, projectors and televisions, CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) among others. Different ICT tools are used in varies contexts including: education, health care, business sectors, churches among others. ICT tools have inordinate potential to enhancing transmission of the gospel and creation of Christian wisdom in the new information age. The advent of the internet has led congregations using computer technologies to augment and promote their ministries such as worship, fellowship, pastoral care, education, mission evangelism. Technology has played a vital role in the spread of Christianity throughout history. There is a changing worshiping experience with the emergence of ICT since various ICT tools are used in churches during worship to provide visual sermon outlines, display songs and music as well as showing illustrative video clips. The preacher can make teaching

and preaching easy by providing visual sermon outlines on a projector through a computer. This may help the people to follow and internalize the message being delivered and it assists them to connect with the congregation wherever they may be.

In addition to the above, ICT is used in Sunday school classes to enable children to take part in an interactive encounter within realities of Biblical teachings and play games that enhance biblical literacy. ICT is majorly used during worship to make the ministry more effective, attractive and applicable to the lives of the congregants, especially the young who are quite familiar with ICT. It is through the web that people find personal, social and religious information. As a result of these, religious institutions have devoted more resources in order to improve their presence in the web. Pastors use ICT for sermon preparation, worship and running of teaching materials during service. Ministries utilize intranet for internal communication and the internet to reach wider audience.

Majority of the Christians use WhatsApp when communicating with other church members. In addition, most of the respondents use soft copy Bible when ministering in their churches. ICT has filtered through the society because it has become a tool to aid humans in almost any task in the contemporary church. There are three main uses for ICT in the church currently which are presentation, multimedia and communication. Presentation involves displaying songs, sermon or notices in church services whilst multimedia refers to all other uses of audio, video, or other media that is produced through ICT. These may be used to add to the worship experience, to show video clips or to record parts of meetings. ICT is used by some churches and other Christian institutions to resource other churches.

### **2.7.2 Attitude towards ICT**

Some arguments are made for and against the use of ICT in churches. However, ICT must be applied in wisdom as a panacea to problems in the church. According to Kundi (2020), there is a worrying trend amongst some churches, where ICT is seen as a necessity for successful ministry. Jewell (2017) claims that digital technologies have nothing to do with the explosive growth or decline of churches in Latin America. There is a strong lesson that growth of the church is based on something more than adding technology. On the other hand, there are still churches that see ICT as being inherently bad. This can come from confusion over the role of technology where it tends to create human hearts and minds bent on control when worship should instead place the focus on the divine. Nonetheless, ICT can be made to serve humans in their worship in a similar way that music technology has aided corporate worship in much religious worship. As observed by some scholars, there is fear of ICT in some churches where ICT is over analyzed so that excuses are found not to use it. Although some very good questions are raised, it appears that presentations in worship services have improved worship in many churches. Balance is needed in the arguments about the use of ICT in churches. Additionally, there is lack of awareness of the possibilities of using ICT in some churches. Many books are still being written to persuade churches of the benefits of using ICT and churches now have access to much greater experience of the benefits and practical problems of using ICT, but not all are giving proper thought to how ICT could be used as this may be due to a lack of resources or commitment to ICT.

### **2.7.3 Positive impact of ICT**

According to Malik (2020), ICT plays a vital role in church globalization. The internet has proved to be one of the most efficient and reliable means of communication

globally with little or no restrictions, which Christians cannot ignore. ICT enhances communication speed. Through ICT, messages are sent through e-mail to the congregants, new converts or to anyone efficiently. With internet connections, any information can travel fast and it saves time and is cheap. Using the internet is cheaper than the other modes of communication such as telephone, mailing or courier services. Computers are also reliable such that information can be accessed and retrieved from anywhere and at any time. This makes it a dependable mode of communication and with the advancement of ICT, information can be shared by people all around the world. People can share and exchange opinions, news and information through discussion groups and forums on the internet. This permits knowledge sharing which will contribute to the development of a knowledge-based society. ICT technology has also created the term paperless environment, implying that information can be stored and retrieved through the digital medium instead of paper. Internet offers fast information accessibility and versatility and it has become a borderless source for services and information. Through the internet, jobs have been created and it happens through having ICT technicians who helps maintain the computers, fix hardware and install software only to mention but a few.

#### **2.7.4 Negative impact of ICT**

ICT has made people peculiar and introvert where they tend to choose online communication rather than having real time conversations. Additionally, it has led to moral decedent and threats to the society. Some ICT users utilize ICT tools for fraud, pornography, hacking phones among other vices. Health challenges have also resulted from ICT, for instance, a computer may harm users if they use it for long hours frequently. Computer users are also exposed to bad posture, eyestrain, physical and mental stress. Furthermore, some jobs have been lost as a result of computers being

used to do the same work that people used to do, for instance, many factories now have fully automated production lines. Instead of using people to build things, computer-controlled robots are now used. There have been negative critics of Christian doctrines, teachings and values in ICT and this has led to manipulation of those who use ICT platforms for spiritual growth. Additionally, huge network of people from diverse backgrounds expose users to negative behavior.

The use of inappropriate images, pornographic literature and videos brings harassment of users. This has made some Christian leaders to avoid ICT platforms. ICT tools and platforms are very expensive to purchase and maintain as this has discouraged many churches into embracing ICT for use in their churches. To add on, full time workers in a church may be made redundant because the church may not afford to pay them after buying a high end presentation system. The church must endeavor to clearly understand the role of ICT in order to make great use of it and even those using it should strive understand its role and priority. In view of the above, the church should elude making the technology a higher priority than its leadership. According to Melovic (2023) there has been inadequate ICT infrastructure, restricted ICT skills and training, limited access to technical support, deficiency of ICT policies in church and budget constraints that hinder the integration of ICT in church activities. Lack of internet connectivity also contributes to the slow use of ICT. In addition, lack of regular access to the computers in churches makes it harder to prepare ICT based sermons. Furthermore, there is irregular power supply in the churches and high cost hardware and software. This makes it challenging for the church leaders to acquire appropriate ICT facilities in churches.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature pertaining to the impact of communication technologies in advancing leadership development and various technologies like blogs, social media were seen to have an impact on leadership development. The literature also showed various technologies are available for leadership development. Lastly various approaches to leadership development were reviewed.

## **CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the methodology used for data collection in order to answer the broad research question. This section describes the research design, approach, population is defined, the sample calculations, data collection procedures and ethical considerations are discussed in detail in this chapter. The purpose of this section is to explain how data is to be collected and from whom and showing the ethical considerations to be observed.

### **3.2 The Research Design**

A research design is a procedure that delineates the information gathering process. It calls attention to an arrangement that enables the researcher to gather the information needed, examination and translation of perceptions and discoveries. It makes the study as productive as conceivable by giving most extreme data with negligible consumption of exertion, time and resources (Agrawa, 2013:2). Kumar (2008) sets that research design is incredibly fundamental since it requires the recognizable proof and advancement of methods and strategic courses of action required to attempt an investigation, just as accentuating the significance of value in these strategies to guarantee their validity and objectivity.

The research design is probably going to advance in light of participants' needs, and, in this way, it is not generally conceivable to completely advise members regarding potential dangers or advantages that may follow over the span of the study (McCormack, Carr, McCloskey, Keeping - Burke, Furlong and Doucet (2012:33). MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) further characterize research design as a plan for choosing subjects, look into locales, and information assortment techniques to respond

to the research question. They further demonstrate that the objective of a sound research design is to give results that are deemed to be credible. Durrheim (2004) opines that, research design is a vital system for activity that fills in as a scaffold between research questions and the execution, or usage of the research methodology. Creswell (2007) shows that the research design process starts with philosophical hypotheses that the enquirers make when choosing to conduct a study.

This study adopted case study as the research design. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident,” Yin, (2009). By using the case study, the researcher gains particular understanding or insight into the utilization of technology by the members of the UMC ZEA in Mashonaland East province. Case study allows the researcher to look into the phenomena within the context. McCormack and Carr (2012:34) posit that, “qualitative studies involve the collection of large amounts of information from participants about themselves, their families, and/or the environments in which they live. Such rich descriptions are necessary so that the experiences, or “true life-world views, of participants are realistically contextualized and portrayed”.

Farquhar (2012) further argues that, “case studies are empirical investigations, in that they are based on knowledge and experience, or more practically speaking involve the collection and analysis of data”. Bhattacharjee (2012:40) argues that “the strength of this research method is its ability to discover a wide variety of social, cultural, and political factors potentially related to the phenomenon of interest that may not be known in advance”. However, there is criticism on the use of case study and one prime

criticism of case study is that it lacks objectivity, but the researcher is usually immersed in cases which are often described as subjective.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative research methodology**

Qualitative research reveals its subjectivity by relying on individual interpretation of events and in so doing uses methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews. Kalu and Bwalya (2017) posit that, “Qualitative research promoted the understanding of human experiences and situations, individuals’ cultures, beliefs and values. It is particularly useful for exploring complex phenomena that are difficult to measure quantitatively.” Qualitative research is more flexible than quantitative research, that is, it allows greater spontaneity and alteration of the communication between the researcher and the study respondents.

According to Punch (2004), “qualitative methods are the best we have of getting the insider’s perspective, the actor’s definition of the situation, the meanings people attach to things and events. It involves employing multiple data gathering methods, especially participant interviews, and uses an inductive approach to data analysis, extracting its concepts from the mass of particular detail which constitutes the data base. Qualitative research provides insights and understanding, while quantitative research tries to generalize those insights to a population (Perry, 1998). Qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. Detailed data is gathered through open- ended questions that provide direct quotations. The interviewer is an integral part of the

investigation Jacob (1988). This differs from quantitative research, which attempts to gather data by objective methods to provide information about relations, comparisons, and predictions and attempts to remove the investigator from the investigation Smith (1983). Weinreich (2009) delineates that, qualitative methods produce rich and comprehensive data that is informed by raw information from the participants in their natural context. This is one of the strengths of qualitative research approaches.

### **3.3. Population**

Creswell (2012:42) portrays a population of the study as people who have similar characteristics. Creswell further characterizes target population as people (or a gathering of associations) with some common characteristics that the study can identify and investigate. Samples of the population are utilized to speak to a population since it would be difficult to gather data from every unit or subject in a populace. Along these lines, population alludes in less difficult terms to those components inside which an example of study is drawn from. In this study, the population comprises of church leaders, District superintendents, staff members and members of the church community. The population for this study includes 60 pastors and 90 laity leaders in the Harare district.

#### **3.3.1 Sample**

Creswell (2012: 142) describes a sample as “a subgroup of the objective populace that the scientist intends to investigate representing a larger population. In a perfect circumstance, one can choose a sample of people who are a representation of the whole populace”. The researcher utilized this in light of the fact that Zimbabwe Episcopal area is a huge region subsequently a sample of people disclosed their perspectives and

they represented opinions of the entire population. A sample of 10 interviewees and 30 laity leaders was created to respond to opened ended questionnaires.

Babbie (2001) asserts that the use of sample sizes in research is a technique widely used in social sciences as a way to gather information about a population without having to measure the whole population. Hence, a sample becomes a subset of the population being studies as it represents the larger population and is used to draw inferences about that research population. The benefits of using these approaches include richness of data and deeper insights into the phenomena under study.

The researcher employed three sampling techniques that are, purposive and snowball. Creswell (2012:206) concurs that, “purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon”. It does not need to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide that information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Allen (1971) in Tongco (2007) asserts that it is especially important to be clear on informants’ qualifications when using purposive sampling such that if somebody who wishes to visit the community and conduct the same research should be able to produce similar results. The researcher selected people, and this helped to understand the phenomenon.

In Snowball sampling technique, the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses them as referrals to contact with others. Snowball sampling was also used in conjunction with purposive sampling. According to Bernard (2002) in Tongco (2007), Snowball sampling involves asking an informant to suggest another informant as well. Creswell

(2012:146) argues that in snowball sampling, the researcher asks participants to identify others to become members of the sample. This helps the researcher to get a balanced analysis of the phenomena. The participants who were selected were influential as they gave a detailed analysis.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1. Interviews**

Alsshenqet (2004) quotes Dorneyei (2007) who argues that an interview is ‘a natural and socially acceptable’ way of collecting data as it can be used in various situations covering a variety of topics. Interviews can be structured, semi structured or completely open and unstructured. The researcher targeted thirty respondents who include staff members, community members in order to gather information. It was vital to target this number because of the area which the church offers its services to. In these interviews the researcher used various methods such as taking notes, using email, or use voice recording. The researcher used face to face interview which proved to be effective in gathering data. The researcher shall interview the UMC staff comprising of Bishop, and pastors. A sample of 10 pastors including the bishop was used.

#### **3.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews**

The researcher used the qualitative research method through employing the use of semi-structured interviews which are sometimes known as focused interviews. Semi-structured interviews are a data collection method inhabitant under the qualitative research method, and rely on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. Creswell (2012:46) quotes Fontana and Frey (200:645) who described

semi-structured interviews as “one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings”.

The interviewer can use prompts to entice the interviewee to consider the question further that is if the interviewee is struggling to fully respond to questions. In the research some respondents could not actually comprehend the questions, as the interviewer used prompts to make the question clearer to the interviewee. The researcher discovered that semi-structured interview also has the advantage of probing the respondent to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of enquiry introduced by the interviewer. The researcher therefore, had the opportunity to decide in advance what important areas to cover but was open and receptive to unexpected information from the responded. Hence, the researcher found semi-structured interviews very useful in gathering the necessary information given the flexibility nature of the technique. The researcher will then use open-ended questions for the interview on the use of communication technology in advancing leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **3.4.3. Observation**

Creswell (2012) describes observations as, “the process of open-ended, raw data by watching individuals in their natural setting.” The researcher opted for observation as a data collection method because it captured the reality on the ground regarding to the behavior of the persons utilizing communication technology as it takes place. The researcher went into the websites, Facebook pages and other social media platforms to attain the data needed for analyzing the research findings. Bhattacharjee (2012:106) agrees that, “observational methods in cooperate direct observation, where the analyst is a nonpartisan and inactive outside onlooker and is not engaged with the wonder of

enthusiasm, and member perception, where the researcher is a functioning member in the marvel and her information sources or minor nearness impact the wonder being considered (as in action research).” As a type of data collection, observation has the two focal points and disservices. Points of interest incorporate the chance to record data as it happens in a setting, to examine real conduct, and to identify the people. Furthermore, a procedure of deliberately recording verbal and non-verbal conduct, the researcher used observation during the research as it brought many insights into the study.

#### **3.4.4 Secondary Source**

The researcher had the privilege of published and unpublished thesis, scholarly journals articles, and books. These were useful in gathering information on the use of technology in leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Case of UMC ZEAC (2019-2022).

#### **3.4.5 Validity and reliability**

The validity of a questionnaire relies first and foremost on reliability. If the questionnaire cannot be shown to be reliable, it cannot also be valid. The overriding principle of validity is that it focuses on how a questionnaire or assessment process is used. Reliability is a characteristic of the instrument itself, but validity comes from the way the instrument is employed. Creswell (2012:159) defines validity as the improvement of sound proof to exhibit that the test translation coordinates its proposed use. Bond (2003) further contends that, “validity is first on the brain of those creating measures and that real logical estimation is premier in the psyches of the individuals who look for valid results from appraisal”. Reliability reflects explicability and

consistency after some time. A test is viewed as being solid when it tends to be utilized by various researchers under stable conditions, with reliable outcomes and the outcomes not shifting. The researcher will ensure that data collection tools are accurate and that they will reflect truth.

### **3.5 Analysis and Organization of Data**

Data analysis is defined as the whole process, which starts immediately after data collection and ends at the point of interpretation of the process's results (Obure, 2002). The whole process includes data sorting, data editing, data coding, data entry, data cleaning, data processing and interpretation of the results. The study utilized thematic analysis as a strategy for information investigation. Thematic analysis is a type of investigation that counts and reports the recurrence of ideas, words, or practices from the available information. Qualitative data is normally founded on the understanding of information which implies that the information requires a few clarifications given the assortment of immense measures of subjective information. According to Ibrahim (2012) thematic analysis is a sort of subjective investigation which is utilized to dissect characterizations and detect subjects or example that identify with the information.

It shows the information in extraordinary detail and manages various subjects by means of translations simultaneously, giving an orderly component in information investigation. Thematic analysis of information permits the researcher to relate the study of the recurrence of a topic with one of the entire setting henceforth making it possible to decide definitely the connection among ideas and contrast them and the reproduced information. Namey et al (2012) argues that, "Thematic goes beyond checking unequivocal words or expresses and spotlights on recognizing and portraying both certain and unequivocal thoughts. Codes produced for thoughts or subjects are

then applied or connected to crude information as rundown markers for later examination, which may incorporate contrasting the general frequencies of subjects or themes inside an informational index, searching for code co-event, graphically showing code connections,”

More so thematic analysis had the advantage that a theme captured something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represented some level of patterned response or meaning within the data. Therefore, the researcher used this approach in relation to data analysis since each statement or idea acquired from data collection contributes towards the understanding and clarification of issues, leading to an appreciation of the whole picture because every statement is valid in understanding concepts whether in single form or as shared with other statements. Concepts are thus constructed to give a full picture of the learner’s perception and actions.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

All scientific activities involve the participation of human beings and have an overt or covert impact on human beings as well as the wider society and environment and social science research is not an exception. According to Biber (2005), social science research has for a long time been concerned with ethical issues in the research process across complex disciplines which involve cultural, legal, economic and political phenomena. Ethical considerations are therefore rules governing a scientific research to ensure that no human rights are infringed. The fact that humans are involved in research necessities the call for researchers to prioritize moral integrity to ensure that the research process and findings are trustworthy and valid. The researcher explained the procedure to the participants how the study will be carried out. The researcher

further obtained consent from the participants that participated in this study. Reassurance was given that the information given to the researcher will be held in confidence. No names were written on the questionnaire so as to ensure anonymity. Participants were made aware of the liberty to withdraw from the study at any given time. Participants were reassured that participation was voluntary and that they would not be prejudiced for not wishing to participate. There was no anticipated physical risk to participants in this study.

Biber (2005) points out ethics which researchers should observe such as informed consent, confidentiality, freedom from coercion, anonymity, non-exploitation, research and should not expose participants to risks and it must promote the principal of beneficence to the participants. When carrying out the research, the researcher managed to acquire informed consent from the participations since they were asked if they were willing to contribute to the study after they were interviewed.

### **3.7 Summary**

This section discussed the qualitative research design approach which is based on the positivism approach since the study's aim to understand the opinions and perceptions of leaders on the use of communication technologies. The study had a population size of 150 leaders inclusive of pastors and laity leaders. A sample of 10 pastors for interviews and 20 laity leaders to respond to open ended questionnaires was calculated. The research instruments to be used were also discussed which include open ended questionnaires and interviews

## **CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study focused on use of technology in leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The previous chapter presented the research methodology used by the researcher to generate, organize and analyze data to the use of communication technologies in advancing leadership. In this chapter, the data generated from the empirical study is presented and discussed in the context of the 4 sub-headings derived from the sub-research questions which guided the current study (see section 1.5). The sub-headings are: To evaluate the efficacy of the use of communication technologies in UMC ZEAC in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to scrutinize the sage of communication technologies in advancing leadership development in UMC ZEAC, to examine the initiatives engaged by the UMC ZEAC in expanding its technical tools and to recommend solutions towards the efficacy and sustainability of employing communication technologies for the expansion of its leadership development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The data generated from the current study are presented following the themes that emerged from the sub research questions. Verbatim clauses from open-ended items on questionnaires and interviews were captured and qualitatively interpreted to establish the participants' thoughts, feelings and viewpoints the use of communication technologies to advance leadership development.

### **4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **4.2.1 Biodata of the research participants**

In this section, the biodata of the research participants of the current study, that is, selected clergy (the bishop and pastors) and the laity leaders (UMC Boards,

administrators, committee leaders, and directors) are presented. The biodata of the research participants portrays the research context in which data were generated in the current study.

**Table 4.1 biodata of the ICT lecturers in this study**

*N* = 20

| <b>Biographical Variable</b> | <b>Variable Description</b> | <b>Open ended questionnaires to laity leaders</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                | Male                        | 70% (14)                                          |
|                              | Female                      | 30% (6)                                           |
|                              | <b>Total</b>                | <b>100% (20)</b>                                  |
| <b>Age</b>                   | 20-25 years                 | 0% (0)                                            |
|                              | 26-30 years                 | 6% (2)                                            |
|                              | 31-35 years                 | 20% (4)                                           |
|                              | 36-40 years                 | 60% (12)                                          |
|                              | Over 40 years               | 10% (2)                                           |
|                              | <b>Total</b>                | <b>100% (20)</b>                                  |
|                              | Bachelor' Degree            | 0% (0)                                            |
|                              | Honor's Degree              | 20% (6)                                           |
|                              | Master's Degree             | 70% (14)                                          |

|                                   |                   |             |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Professional Qualification</b> | <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>(20)</b> |
|                                   | Less than 5 years | 13%         | (2)         |
|                                   | 6-10 years        | 19%         | (4)         |
| <b>Experience</b>                 | 11-15 years       | 25%         | (10)        |
|                                   | Over 15 years     | 43%         | (4)         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>(20)</b> |
|                                   |                   |             |             |
|                                   |                   |             |             |

**Table 4.2 biodata of the clergy (bishop and pastors) in this study**

*N = 10*

| <b>Biographical Variable</b> | <b>Variable Description</b> | <b>Interview participants (Bishops and Pastors)</b> |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                | Male                        | 60%                                                 | (6)         |
|                              | Female                      | 40%                                                 | (4)         |
|                              | <b>Total</b>                | <b>100%</b>                                         | <b>(10)</b> |
|                              | 20-25 years                 | 0%                                                  | (0)         |
|                              | 26-30 years                 | 0%                                                  | (0)         |

|                                   |                   |             |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Age</b>                        | 31-35 years       | 20%         | (2)         |
|                                   | 36-40 years       | 20%         | (2)         |
|                                   | Over 40 years     | 60%         | (6)         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>(10)</b> |
| <b>Professional Qualification</b> | Bachelor' Degree  | 0%          | (0)         |
|                                   | Honor's Degree    | 10%         | (1)         |
|                                   | Master's Degree   | 70%         | (7)         |
|                                   | M Phil's Degree   | 0%          | (0)         |
|                                   | D Phil's Degree   | 20%         | (2)         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>(10)</b> |
| <b>Experience</b>                 | Less than 5 years | 0%          | (0)         |
|                                   | 6-10 years        | 0%          | (0)         |
|                                   | 11-15 years       | 30%         | (3)         |
|                                   | Over 15 years     | 70%         | (7)         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>(10)</b> |

Table 4.1 and 4.2 presents biodata of open-ended questionnaire group and interview group of participants who participated in the current study. The composition of the

open-ended questionnaire group plus interview group by gender present a ratio of male to female clergy, whereby male participants were more than female participants in this study. The majority of the participating laity leaders were 36 to 40 years and minority were in the 26 to 30 year range and over 40 years old (refer to table 4.1). The majority of participating laity leaders were over 40 years of age and the minority were in the 31 to 40-year range (refer to table 4.2).

The tables further reveal that the majority of the participating pastors had a Bachelor's degree as their highest qualification and that few pastors held a master's degree as their highest qualification (refer to table 4.1). Majority of participating pastors held a Bachelor's degree with minority holding Honor's degree and D Phil's degree as their highest qualification (refer to table 4.2).

The tables 4.1 and 4.2 further show that most of the participating laity leaders in the study had between 11 and 15 years of experience with some between 6 and 10 and, over 15 years of leading experience while minority laity leaders had less than 5 years leading experience (refer to table 4.1). The table also shows that most of the participating clergy in the current study had over 15 years with minority between 11 and 15 years' experience. The teaching experience of the participants also showed that they had been in the ministerial field for appreciable periods to have experience of church leadership and also influenced the type of data they provided.

These highlighted biodatas contributed to the credibility, dependability and conformability as well as trustworthiness of the generated findings. In view of the qualifications and experience of the clergy and laity leaders, reasonable inferences were made about the situation regarding the perceived use of communication

technologies in advancing leadership in UMC ZEAC. In the following section, the study participants labeling for easy interpretation of their findings are presented.

### **4.3 Study participants' codes**

Due to the number of open-ended questionnaire and interview participants in this study, all participants were coded for easy follow up of their responses. Therefore, the following codes were used for these categories:

- Clergy leaders 1 to 20 – **CL 1 up to 20**
- Laity Leaders 1 to 10 – **LL 1 up to 10**

The subsequent section presents the findings of the current study the use of communication technologies in advancing leadership.

### **4.4 Discussion and Interpretation**

Sub research question 1: How effective is communication technology in UMC ZEAC in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

This question was meant to find out if the communication technologies (zoom, UMConnect) used by UMC ZEAC achieved the intended purpose they were being used. The question intended to find out the experiences and the perceptions of both the clergy and laity leaders (directors, committees etc) they had using these online platforms as they attended to various meetings, trainings. This research question was addressed by question one on the interview guide and 1 on the open ended questionnaire. The results from the open ended questionnaire are presented below:

The open ended questionnaire findings indicated that the communication technology had their own challenges. This made it difficult for the laity leaders to attend all the meetings, trainings, workshops as was expected. The results show that the laity leaders

faced a number of challenges which include poor network connection, which made it difficult for them to connect, lack of data bundles to connect, lack of gadgets and also lack of knowledge on how to operate the technology. This made it difficult for the laity leaders to join these online platforms. The support infrastructure for the communication technology is lacking to make these communication technologies effective because the majority of laity leaders failed to connect to 60% of the meetings. Below are some of the responses from the laity leaders:

“Zoom and UMC Connect are good communication tools but they require good network and subscriptions for one to connect and I failed to join most of the meetings because I lacked these two things and from the meeting one can actually see that most of the leaders were have challenges of participating online”**LL1**

“Zoom and UMC Connect require good reliable network for them to function properly and certain cell phones. We know very well that people in rural areas might not have these two which made it difficult for them to join. The communication technologies used made it difficult for everyone to join and most of the times the majority did not join” **LL3**

“The technologies used are good but with one network connections it was difficult for me to join most of the times. Where I stay there is poor network and I was forced to move to areas with better network during the meetings and sometimes I would lack data for me to connect. I

failed to join most of the meetings and also the technology is difficult to operate” **LL4**

These findings also concurred with the findings from the interviews of the clergy leaders (bishops and pastors). The clergy revealed that network connection was the major challenge which resulted to people failing to join the meetings and some being booted out of the meetings. This shows that the network challenges did not spare anyone and it affected the efficiency of the communication technology. The responses also show that the majority of the people lacked the knowledge on how to use these technologies and also data bundles was a major challenge since the church was finding it difficult to fund everyone with data bundles because of Covid-19. The following are the responses from the clergy leaders (pastors and bishop)

“Zoom and UMC connect was a challenge to most of us especially when we started because it was a foreign technology to most of us. Network was a major challenge and most of the people failed to join our meetings “**CL3**

“Use of these technology was a huge challenge 1 because we could not provide data bundles for everyone to connect and most of the people failed to join 2 network in Zimbabwe is quite a challenge in some parts of the town and mostly in rural areas and also most of the church leaders are digital immigrants they do not know how to operate this technology. So it wasn’t that effective.”**CL4**

“Well, ummm I think network was quite bad for most of the people although I had reliable WIFI here at home and also data bundle was quite a challenge for most people which made ineffective because we failed to meet all of us most of the time” CL2

#### **4.5 Discussion of research objective one findings**

The findings on this objective are in agreement with many literatures which indicate that in Africa there is poor network infrastructure. Studies by Makudza et al (2020) indicates that although there has been an increase on network coverage in Africa network connectivity is still poor which makes it difficult for the most of the general population to actively participate in online activity. This study has revealed that most of the people in Africa fail to purchase proper gadgets to participate in online activities for example gaming activities and online learning. However, a study by Tin et al (2021) indicated that the Catholic Church in South Africa has been successfully used the communication technologies in their planning's and meetings.

##### **4.5.1 Research question 2: What is the role of communication technology in advancing leadership development in UMC ZEAC?**

This question was meant to find out if communication technologies were able to advance development of leadership in UMC ZEAC. The communication technologies would support various leadership development initiatives in the church and this question is meant to get the feelings, perceptions of the people involved on how effective these communication technologies were in achieving that. This objective was addressed by question number 2 on the interview guide and question 2 and 3 on the open ended questionnaire.

The findings from the interviews indicates that due to the various challenges faced by the majority of leaders in connecting the communication technologies failed to advance leadership development. The responses show that the majority of people failed to join the workshops, trainings, retreats and meetings which were important to leadership development. The results also show that it was very difficult for those who were conducting the trainings online to ensure that those who were attending were attentive and understood the concepts being addressed. This shows that the communication technologies failed to advance leadership development, below are some of the responses from the clergy leaders:

“During COVID-19 we would have online trainings to further leadership skills of the clergy but they were a bit long and it resulted in some being booted out because of lack sustainable batteries and unreliable network and even data. This happened more often and 70% of the times these training, retreats which help in our leadership would be attended by less than 25% of the people “**CL3**

“Usually retreats are important for Clergy leaders because they help us to self-evaluate our leadership styles and strategies to achieve our goal and those of the church. During COVID-19 it was difficult to join in to a retreat of 4 hours long online and concentrate whilst you are at home or office without disturbance and sometimes network would just disappear or run out of bundle” **CL 4**

“For me I benefited a lot of the online trainings we received via Zoom and UMC connect. I had reliable network connection and good power supply which enable me to be connected but I don’t speak for the majority of the clergy though”

The findings are also similar to those from the laity leaders. The laity leaders indicated that although quality presentations were made in the online classes, workshops and various training they failed to join these sessions. UMC always provides trainings and workshops to their new and old leaders on how to lead their church. During COVID this was done online and the laity leaders indicated that the majority of the failed to attend because of various challenge from network issues, lack of data bundles and the knowledge to connect which made them miss most of these training, retreats, workshops to advance their leadership development. The following are some of the responses to the open ended questionnaire:

“Training, workshops and retreats on leadership development were done online and sometimes they would take long up to 5 hours per day and our batteries failed to last that long, also the network is not reliable to sustain those long durations. So we ended up missing a lot of information. Although we benefited but I feel it was 30% success” **LL3**

“The advance of leadership development during COVID was a bit affected because of failure of the majority of people on attending the trainings and retreats because of the challenges mentioned earlier” **LL4**

“I was able to attend most of the trainings and they were so beneficial and I enjoyed them in the comfort of my home. I benefited but however in most of these trainings or workshops was less than 30% and I know of some who never attended because of network challenges “LL14

#### **4.6 Discussion**

There is literature which supports the findings on this objective. Chege (2020) research on impact of information technologies in schools in Zimbabwe revealed the use of online communication technologies is not successful in Zimbabwe because of lack of proper network infrastructure and also the perceptions of people. Another study by Malik (2021) on the use of communication technologies shows that these technologies help in advancing leadership development by enabling online lessons to equip their leaders. These findings contradict our findings in this study which shows that these technologies did not support leadership advancement.

Sub-research question 3: What are the initiatives engaged by the UMC ZEAC in expanding its technical tools.

This question was there to reveal the strategies which were used by UMC ZEAC to ensure that the leaders adopt and embrace the communication technologies during COVID-19. The strategies used help on the rate of adoption and chances of success of these technologies. UMC must have done something to ensure that these technologies have been adopted. This was addressed by question 4 on interviews and question 5 on open ended questionnaire to get adequate perspective on the adoption of these technologies.

The findings from the interviews done to the clergy indicated that a few inadequate initiatives were put in place to encourage the adoption of these communication technologies. This resulted in most of the leaders facing challenges and failure to use these technologies. The results show that the secretaries were tasked to create accounts for zoom accounts and UMC Connect for all the leaders and provide assistance on connecting to meetings. Help from the secretaries was limited since people were not meeting during COVID-19. This failure led to poor adoption and use of the communication technologies. The following are the responses from the clergy leaders:

“When the church instructed leaders to use this technology for meetings, trainings and workshop, it was after the pandemic had hit. The church leaders were not prepared for this so they were no time for the church to put adequate strategies in place to help in proper adoption of these technologies which resulted in adequate poor initiatives being put in place. The church leaders instructed the secretaries to create zoom accounts and UMC Connect accounts and share the credentials. Some secretaries had no adequate knowledge on operating these technologies which resulted in leaders seeking help from their relatives and friends” **CL9**

“There was no initiative put in place to help with the transition from the church’s side, we were just told that we will be meeting online and the secretaries gave us our accounts and links we used to join the meetings online and we faced a lot of challenges connecting online”. **CL2**

“It was difficult for us to connect especially during the first days because there was no adequate support from the church we got the

accounts which were created by our ummm secretaries and then we were told to connect. The secretaries would try to give instructions on WhatsApp since we were not allowed to meet but it was inadequate because they themselves had no adequate knowledge on the use of these platforms” **CL5**

The results from the questionnaire which we filled in by the laity leaders also revealed the same issues of inadequate initiatives from the church to encourage the use of these technologies. The responses show that the secretaries created accounts for all the leaders for both Zoom and UMC Connect for them to connect and that’s the only support which was given. The leaders ended up getting help elsewhere from family and friends. This means that not enough support was given to the laity leaders also for them to use these technologies effectively. This explains why the use was so ineffective taking into consideration that the majority of these leaders are not young people who are technology natives. The following are some of the responses from the laity leaders on open ended questionnaire:

“The church did not put measures in place to ensure we adopt and use these technologies well. Yes, the secretaries created the Zoom and UMC Connect accounts but that was not enough because most of us did not know even how to log in to the accounts which caused a lot of problems and worse still we did not have the required network strength and data” **LL7**

“Because of COVID we were forced to go online without a lot of initiatives from the church and we had to find our own means to ensure

that we use these technologies to ensure the Lord's work was done.”

**LL7**

“The use of Zoom and UMC Connect was prompt and it did not give the church time to prepare because COVID was a disaster. The secretaries created the accounts and gave the credentials to the leaders and no support whatsoever was given after that. This is why there was poor adoption, I think and it was not a success but however I acknowledge that the future is IT and we need to embrace it at the same time the government should improve network connectivity” **LL3**

**4.6.1 Sub-research question 4: What solutions can be incorporated by the UMC ZEAC to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of technology within the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

This last question was meant to establish the solutions faced by UMC ZEAC in the effective use of communication technologies such zoom and UMC Connect by leaders. The role of this question is to get information on how the leaders can successfully implement the use of online meetings amongst leaders to advance leadership development. It was addressed by question 6 on questionnaires and question 5 on the interviews.

The interviews established that the church should provide a lot of support to the clergy. The assistance should include training the clergy on how to effectively use these technologies, providing them with data and equipment to use in form on cell phones and laptops, to ensure that they have WIFI on their offices which more reliable as compared to mobile network. The responses show that if this is to be done it would

ensure that these communication technologies (zoom and UMConnect) would be fully utilized by the clergy since these digital technologies have a lot of advantages of using them which include cutting on cost and the convenience they provide. The following are some of the responses from the interviews with the clergy:

“What the church needs to do is simple. They need to provide knowledge on how to use these technologies to the leaders. Make sure they have the equipment required and also data for one to connect and reliable network connection” **CL9**

“The solution to the challenges faced, the church should invest in the resources need for each and every leader. To ensure that those without the gadgets have them, install reliable Wi-Fi in offices, and most importantly to provide training workshop on how to use the technologies. This will make it easy for leaders to meet and communicate online and encourage leadership development”**CL8**

“Most of the Pastors do not have good phones with good batteries, poor network connections, no knowledge. The church should find a way of supporting these people to ensure that have everything they need “ **CL6**

The results from the interviews also concur with those from questionnaires. They also revealed that the solution was to provide the leaders with the resources they need which include gadgets, WIFI installations, and knowledge on how to operate Zoom and UMConnect. The responses clearly indicate that this will increase the use of

communication technologies amongst UMC ZEAC leaders which will advance leadership development in the church. The following are the responses from open ended questionnaires from Laity leaders:

“Honestly as laity leaders we do not have knowledge to confidently use these technologies and I personally cannot afford the data bundles to continue for long hours and also my network is poor. Therefore, to solve this, the church should find a way of providing these resources to us.” **LL1**

“I find it challenging connecting to Zoom and UMC Connect and most of the time I ask for help, which makes my life difficulty when there is no one to help me. What I need is training on how to operate these technologies” **LL5**

“In my own view the church should install Wi-Fi at our offices so that we go there and connect because network and bundle is a huge challenge and even knowledge on how to operate these gadgets is a challenge especially to people of our age” **LL15**

“I need training on how to use these technologies and money for bundle then I am good to go” **LL7**

#### **4.7 Discussion**

The findings on this last objective agrees with a number studies which shows that for one to participate in online activities they should have proper network connection and knowledge. A study by Nylén and Holmström (2019) indicates that for participation in online activities reliable network infrastructure should be put in place by the government. In Zimbabwe the government and private companies they have been

trying to put proper network infrastructure to enhance digitalization. A study by Makudza (2020) et al also shows that for teachers and lecturers to be able to use the online teaching platforms like Zoom, Google meet they should have proper gadgets which supports the functionalities of the used application, they should also have knowledge of how to use the applications and should have the willingness. This study confirms what Makudza and colleagues found out.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter presented, analyzed and discussed the data generated from the empirical study under the four sub-headings derived from the sub-research questions of the study posed in chapter 1 (see section 1.5). The first section presented the biographical data of the Clergy leaders (bishops and pastors) and laity leaders (directors, committees etc) participated in the study. Generated findings from the empirical study used qualitative method approach presentation to understand the use of communication technologies in UMC ZEAC to advance leadership development. It emerged from the study that UMC ZEAC use of communication technologies to advance leadership was not effective because there is no enough support given to these leaders by the church in form of resources like data bundles, gadgets, training and network connectivity. The results clearly show that if this is to be provided communication technology can improve the advancement of leadership. The following chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study was to assess and describe the use of communication technologies in advancing leadership development. In this chapter, the context of the problem was recapped showing a gist of the whole research report and a summary of findings of the empirical study on each sub research question is presented. The chapter also presents the conclusions of the study providing answers to the whole research problem and recommendations on strategies that can be used to achieve the effective use of communication technologies in advancing leadership development. Finally, the chapter is rounded off with suggested recommendations for further research.

### **5.2 Discussion**

This study revealed that pastors and laity leaders face a number of challenges to use the communication technologies which are current. This is because some leaders face network challenges which make it difficult to connect on Zoom and UMC Connect. This application need strong reliable network which most leaders do not have. The leaders also revealed that they lack knowledge on how to operate these technologies. The biography of respondents clearly showed that most of the leaders are over the age of 35 and most of these people lack the technical skills of operating new technologies hence they find it difficult to join. The respondents also indicated that some of them do not have appropriate gadgets which support Zoom and UMC connect applications. This makes the use of these technological communication channel a bit ineffective for UMC leadership.

The study further revealed that Zoom and UMC connect based communications failed to advance leadership development. UMC leaders conduct trainings, workshops, retreats and meetings as a way of equipping their leaders with knowledge to assist in their leadership in their various capacities. Almost 80% of the leaders failed to attend 30% of these meetings which made it a failure. This is evidence that the technological communication was not able to advance leadership development. The findings also show that the UMC church did not give support the use of technological communications. An organization must support its employees to get desired results. The respondents indicated that the church only created accounts for zoom and UMC Connect and did not give extra support. This made it difficult for most for the leaders to connect. The church should have given support to the leaders to enhance a successful adoption of technological communications.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study indicated that to solve the challenges faced and for proper adoption of these technological communications the church should provide support. The support should be in the form of providing the appropriate gadgets required to support the technological requirements, provide Wi-Fi which is more reliable, and train all the leaders on how to use the technological communications. This will empower the leaders to effectively use the technological communications channels to advance leadership development.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

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

**To the UMC ZEAC**

- The study recommends the Church to increase the efficiency of communication technologies by ensuring that leasers have adequate network, bundle, gadgets and the knowledge required
- The study also recommends the Church to increase usage of communication technologies by supporting the leaders and promoting the extensive use of these technologies in the church.
- The study further recommends the church to come up with more initiatives to support the use of communication technologies to advance leadership development.
- The study recommends the church to provide all the resources needed by pastors to join or connect to their online platforms. The following is needed phones or laptops with good battery life span in case of prolonged online meetings, good, free network facilities to provide reliable strong network connections, to provide backup power to these individuals in case electricity is not reliable and lastly to provide trainings on how to use these facilities to the individuals involved.
- To work closely with the government and network providers to provide good network infrastructure to support these communications

### **The government**

- To invest in good network infrastructure because from the literature review it is clear that network infrastructure has become just as important as road networks to the development of the country's economy.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

- The study recommended that a more comprehensive study on perceived attributions towards the use of technological communication tools by church leaders in advancing leadership.
- The study further recommended that a communication model to be used by churches should be developed to suit their specific needs and set up.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Interview Guide Instrument Interview Questions for Clients**

1. How often do you use UMConnect and zoom meetings at your parish?
2. What do you like about UMConnect?
3. What is your comment on the use of video conferences like zoom meetings to coordinate?
4. How do zoom meetings save you on time, if it does?
5. What do you think about zoom meetings nowadays now that Covid-19 pandemic is no longer a global threat?
6. How would you describe efforts done by the church to convey messages to its congregants?

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide Instrument**

### **Interview Questions for the Clergy**

1. What is your policy on communication with your congregants?
2. What have been your strategies in curbing communication glitches, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic?
3. What have been your hindrances in discharging your duties as an institution?
4. How do you collaborate with other denominations in conveying information to congregants?
5. What have been your challenges at your appointed parish in terms of communication?
6. How have you solved those challenges?
7. How would you describe the efforts done by the congregants in assisting and shaping your leadership? Are they doing enough to enhance leadership development in this 21st century?

### Appendix 3: AUREC Approval Letter



Investing in Africa's future

#### AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUREC)

P.O. Box 1320 Mutare, Zimbabwe, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare-Tel (+263-20) 60075/60026/61611 Fax: (+263 20) 61785 website: [www.africau.edu](http://www.africau.edu)

Ref: AU2905/23  
CHENAYI KUMUTERERA  
C/O Africa University  
Box 1320  
MUTARE

12 June, 2023

#### RE: USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY. CASE OF UMC ZEAC (2019-2022)

Thank you for the above-titled proposal that you submitted to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee for review. Please be advised that AUREC has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above research.

The approval is based on the following. a) Research proposal

**APPROVAL NUMBER** AUREC 2905/23

This number should be used on all correspondences, consent forms, and appropriate documents.

**AUREC MEETING DATE** NA

**APPROVAL DATE** June 12, 2023

**EXPIRATION DATE** June 12, 2024

**TYPE OF MEETING** Expedited

After the expiration date, this research may only continue upon renewal. A progress report on a standard AUREC form should be submitted a month before the expiration date for renewal purposes.

**SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS** All serious problems having to do with subject safety must be reported to AUREC within 3 working days on standard AUREC form.

**MODIFICATIONS** Prior AUREC approval is required before implementing any changes in the proposal (including changes in the consent documents)

**TERMINATION OF STUDY** Upon termination of the study a report has to be submitted to AUREC.



Yours Faithfully,

MARY CHINZOU  
ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER: FOR CHAIRPERSON  
AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

## Appendix 4: Informed Consent Guide

My name is Chenayi Kumuterera, a final year, Masters of International Relations student from AU. I am carrying out a study on. Use of technology in leadership development in the 21 st century. Case of UMC ZEAC (2019-2022)

I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering the questions attached

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study intends to portray the role UMConnect and zoom meetings as communication technology tools can support the transmission of messages and meetings to church members in enhancing leadership development as portrayed by the response rate by the congregants.

You were selected for the study because you are a member from where the survey is taken out of the 24 chosen participants.

Procedures and duration

If you decide to participate you will be interviewed. It is expected that this will take about 5 minutes.

Risks and discomforts will be financial constraints and Data and airtime will provide data and airtime

Describe any reasonable foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences to the subject/participant (including legal, health, economic or psychological and outline how these will be addressed.)

Benefits and/or compensation

Describe any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research. If there are no benefits/compensation please state this clearly. If benefits are to the general population, state this...but don't make unsustainable promises.

Confidentiality

Should include that any information that is obtained in the study that can be identified with the participant will not be disclosed without their permission. Names and any other identification will not be asked for in the questionnaires.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If participant decides not to participate in this study, their decision will not affect their future relationship with church. (participant's organisation or other authority) If they chose to participate, they are free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation without penalty.

Offer to answer questions

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

Authorisation

If you have decided to participate in this study, please sign this form in the space provide below as an indication that you have read and understood the information provided above and have agreed to participate.

Name of Res

participant (please print)

Date

Signature of Research Participant or legally authorised representative

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the researcher including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant, or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, feel free to contact the Africa University Research Ethics Committee on telephone (020) 60075 or 60026 extension 1156 email [aurec@fricau.edu](mailto:aurec@fricau.edu)

Name of Researcher - Chenayi Kumuterera