THE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AT EZEMVELO KWAZULU-NATAL (KZN) WILDLIFE

By

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DECLARATION

I, Philisiwe Yvonne Ndlovu, declare this dissertation is my original work. I have not previously submitted the thesis to any other University for an academic award. I further state that I have appropriately acknowledged all sources used in this study.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines adoption and usage of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) in order to suggest strategies for better utilisation of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This study will therefore attempt to improve focus on the administrative employees' adoption and usage of implemented digital systems and practices, to improve organisational productivity.

The researcher adopted a quantitative approach using online survey to collect data. Data were analysed using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Target respondents were 160 administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as they are directly involved in the adoption and usage of digital administrative systems and practices. The researcher adopted a census of all 160 administrative employees in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

This study revealed that even though the digital administrative systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are adopted to a certain extent. Employees do not wholly adopt them. They mainly prioritise those systems related to their personal information, followed by those related to communicating and conducting meetings. Off concern, is the lack of training provided to employees as one of the factors inhibiting the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices.

The study concludes that, it is highly critical that there is more focus placed on the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. Furthermore, attention should be paid to factors of organisational and individual influence, that have been found in the study to impede the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices aimed at enhancing the productivity and efficiency in the administrative operations at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

This study argues that management needs to enhance communication to employees regarding the purpose and benefits of the digital administrative systems and practices

to be used and adopted. In addition, management at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should prioritise investing in connectivity, as it plays a crucial role in the adoption and usage of digital administrative systems and practices. It is further recommended that management should ensure that the information related to digital administrative systems and practices is easily accessible on the EKZNW website. This will help boost employee productivity and quality customer satisfaction post Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: digital systems, adoption, usage, practices

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ABC	Activity Based Costing
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AU	Argument Automation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COGTA-KZN	Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs- KwaZulu-Natal
COVID 19	Coronavirus
DCCS	Digital Corporate Communication System
DTBP	Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior
DUT	Durban University of Technology
EKZNW	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
ERP	Enterprise Resources Planning
FRI	Fourth Industrial Resolution
HR	Human Resources
HRIP	Human Resource Information Professionals
IA	Intelligent Automation
IBM	International Business Machines
IBM	International Business Machines
IT	Information Technology
PAYE	Pay as You Earn
PCW	Price cooper's Waterhouse
PEoU	Perceived Ease of Use
PMI	Payroll Management Information
PU	Perceive Usefulness
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SAP	System Application and Product
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Services
SSA	Statistics South Africa

TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
UTAUT2	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2
USA	United State of America
VA	Virtual Reality
WFH	Working from Home
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study by outlaying the background of the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices and further discuss the research problem that the study aims to investigate. Then, the researcher further elaborates on the research objectives, the significance of studying this problem, and the study's limitations. Finally, the chapter ends by providing the structure of the thesis.

Hinton (2020) mentioned that digital transformation is uneven as it requires workforces and individuals to access digital systems and practices, one of the most critical being the internet. However, according to Palmer (2022), digital innovation has the ability to decrease costly inefficiencies, increase the workplace experience, ensure greater productivity, improve new product introductions, and provide a digital thread for better transparency and interaction.

All sectors in developed and developing countries have recently had to urgently transition to online platforms due to national lock-down induced by the rapid increase of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). The pandemic led to announcements of global lockdowns, impacting the functioning of all organisations and individuals. For instance, one of the organisations in South Africa, known as the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) which falls within the Tourism and Leisure sector, mandated all administrative employees to work remotely using online platforms as a means of stemming COVID-19's spread.

Studies on adoption of Industrial Technology and Information Communication Technology have been conducted in the setting of hospitality and leisure industries. Nonetheless, there seems to be non-consensual agreement among researchers as to the adoption and usage of digital administrative systems and practices in the hospitality and leisure industry during the time of a pandemic.

Amador (2019: 114) defined remote work as "a style that allows professionals to work outside a traditional office environment. The concept posits that work does not need

to be done in a specific place to execute successfully. Instead, work can be performed digitally". Shifting operations remotely was to ensure the organisation continued to function optimally. Hence, the swift change brought by COVID-19 pressured employees to adopt and use digital systems as they work remotely. In the tourism and leisure industry, peer-to-peer communication and the spread of intelligent devices have transformed administration and finance. It has opened new perceptions for introducing innovative sales and marketing technologies (Zsarnoczky 2018). It has led to the proliferation of digital administrative systems, processes, and practices as a forced move from paper-based administrative operations to online operations. However, it is unknown whether and how organisational employees have adopted these systems.

Embracing the digital platform for administrative functions at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife needs sufficient attention as it can negatively impact the organisation's productivity and customer service. Digitalisation and adoption of digital administrative systems and practices are the current and future areas for hospitality and leisure industry to gain productivity and maximum customer satisfaction. In addition, within the context of the new digital era, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR) that indicate an uprising trend of digitalisation (Wilson & Tinson 2021).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The experience of the researcher, currently working at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, is one of the motivations for undertaking the study. Informal observations indicate that employees face various challenges regarding moving to an online platform. In addition, the organisation is not investing enough towards supporting its employees. Therefore, the challenges associated with the transition to virtual platforms are vast. However, administrative employees must use available digital systems and practices proficiently.

According to Vizaad (2016), general challenges that employees face involve competencies related to digital transformation and the organisational culture involving trials and learning approaches as a corporate thinking process. This study intends to contribute to the better adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife which will help maintain the same level of productivity even if

employees are working remotely. According to Riera (2021), digital tourism has consistently evolved in the past few years due to the emergence of new technological devices that have become indispensable in our day-to-day businesses, such as smartphones, tablets, and wearables. Therefore, assessing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices currently used for remote working at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic is vital. Furthermore, employees are becoming acclimatised to working outside the office, gathering and transacting digitally. Therefore, organisations across the world will move to Working From Home (WFH) as a standard rather than as an exception post-COVID-19 (Riera 2021).

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The lack of focus on adopting digital administrative systems and practices by administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is a concern to administrative operation, especially during the COVID-19 lockdowns. For instance, such as Microsoft Teams and many others have been purchased and implemented by the organisation. However, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's extent of adoption, use and effectiveness during the COVID-19 shutdown period is unknown. Furthermore, the extent administrative employees and other employees enjoy support to use the newly introduced systems is also unclear.

Baig, Hall, and Jenkins (2020) emphasised that the demand for using digital systems remotely is here to stay. As a result, organisations must urgently shift to online procedures, practices, and remote work during the pandemic. In 2019, according to Benli (2019), the world's internet accessibility increased as nearly fifty percent of the world have access to the internet. Harrel and Bynum (2018) however posits that gaps still exist between internet penetration between developing countries and the world's developed economies. As a result, developing countries risk a delay in implementing digital transformation.

Lack of adoption of digital systems and practices by employees may negatively affect productivity in administrative operations. Gaglio *et al.* (2022) indicated that innovation conditional on using digital communication technologies influences labour productivity. In addition, the systems will not serve the purpose they were designed for and thus

led to less satisfied employees and customers. Gutsa (2022) alluded that adopting new technology is not just about keeping employees from leaving. It is about making them happier and giving them more satisfying work lives. According to Lund (2022), digital transformation plays a significant role in catalysing and accelerating positive customer experience and expectations. Also, the study showed that 40% of organisations and their executives believe that investment in digital technology upscales growth and gives a comparative advantage over competitors.

Moss (2022) supported that the pandemic has changed how organisations operate their administration regarding meetings, signing of documents, invoicing, releasing of papers and meeting customer satisfaction. According to Michael *et al.* (2021), administrative employees are the engines of any organisation. They drive the service offered to internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, administrative employees (as engines of the organisation) at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife must accept and utilise digital resources.

Adopting digital systems has numerous benefits. For instance, modern technology offers multiple practices and applications, such as electronic emails and live chat systems, that help manager effectively communicate with employees and oversee projects. In addition, it makes it easier for both administrative employees and their managers to work remotely (Nakrosiene & Buciuniene, 2019) whilst staying safe in the case of a pandemic or any reason for being unable to work from the office.

The widespread problem around the study is the lack of focus on adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife during the COVID-19 pandemic. This issue needs urgent attention as it may affect the service provided to customers and the ability of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to adapt quickly to digital transformation. To close this gap, the researcher will assess the factors that affect adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

1.4 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The researcher aims to assess the embracement of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This study will therefore attempt to improve management focus on the administrative employee's adoption of implemented digital systems and practices to improve organisational productivity. Further, this study

suggests strategies for better adopting digital administrative systems and procedures at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine digital administrative systems and practices in use at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
2. Examine factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study resolves the following research questions arising from the research problem.

1. What are the digital administrative systems and practices used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife?
2. What factors influence the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife?
3. What is the effectiveness of the adopted administrative systems and practices in increasing productivity and quality customer service?

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population targeted for this study were administrative employees operating at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife which falls under the Tourism and Leisure Industry in South Africa. This study adopted census to draw accurate conclusions correlating to the study's plan. A census also known as complete enumeration is a collection of information from all units in the population (Suyanto 2016). Therefore, quantitative data was collected from a census of 160 administrative employees that are operating at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife using an online survey. The online survey was a suitable approach during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it was essential to reduce human contact to curb the spread of the virus. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Science Software (SPSS). It is envisaged that the

findings of this study will make recommendations for improved adoption of digital administrative system and practices in order to enhance productivity and customer service at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Issues of reliability, validity, limitations and ethical considerations were also addressed in the study.

1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Previous studies have examined adopting technology and digital transformation (Zide 2022; Ghaderi *et al.* 2021) within the tourism and leisure sector. There are also studies on factors that influence the adoption of digital transformation and processes (Smidt, 2021; Fanelli, 2021; Jokonya & Wessels, 2022; Dinu *et al*., 2021). For instance, Talukder (2020) notes that organisations need to give clear conditions, which include the amount and type of support given to employees that would affect their adoption of systems.

According to Sharma (2018), most employees resist change because of poor vertical communication. When employees do not understand the idea or vision behind the proposed change, they would be skeptical about initiating change. Sharma (2018) further recommends that effective communication should start from the start of an organisational plan so that everyone would buy into it. Various conversation actions should be coordinated, such as the change information, team conversations, one-on-one meetings, and ways for collecting responses. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden swift, these were impossible to mandate, although employees had to be productive using digital administrative systems virtually.

There are few or no studies indicating the organisation's role in addressing the factors that affect adopting digital administrative systems and practices in the Tourism and Leisure industry. It may be because of the non-focus on the digital administrative systems and practices by management at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Most of the emerging literature in South Africa is in the field of Industrial Technology (IT) and Information Communication Technology (ICT). Examples include Kawula (2019: 54), who studied "farmers' perceptions and attitudes to technology adoption in the Ugu District of KwaZulu Natal", Nyagedza *et al.* (2022), who studied technology application in Tourism events and Nkosana *et al.* (2016), who revealed the challenges

of ICT adoption and utilisation in small rural restaurants. This research tends to focus on adopting digital administrative systems and practices in the Tourism and Leisure Industry.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A detailed understanding of technology adoption in the administrative sector is essential, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, because most operations, including executive functions, are transacting to online processes. Suffice to add that the study's significance stems from a study by Baig *et al.* (2020), aver that organisations fail at effective digital transformation and efficient business administration and growth because they failed to adopt digital transformation.

Results from this study will help management at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife by providing strategies for better adoption of digital administrative systems. It will enhance and improve virtual administration operations remotely and further assist administrative employees in the government and private sectors. It will also benefit interested individuals to adopt digital systems better.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction to the study

This chapter introduces the study by providing a background of digital administrative systems and practices. It also discusses the research problem of the study. Next, this chapter identifies the aims, research objectives and questions of the survey. Finally, it further discusses the rationale and significance of the research.

Chapter two: Literature Review

This chapter's primary focus is to discuss previous literature on adopting digital administrative systems and practices. The literature was reviewed by looking at digital administrative systems and digital procedures' role in organisational operations, specifically in the Tourism and Leisure industry. It starts by highlighting the importance of digital systems and defining the adoption of digital systems and practices in

developed countries to developing countries. In developing countries, its focus is on Africa, then narrowed down to South Africa, the study location. This chapter also discusses factors affecting the adoption of digital systems and practices by identifying the organisational and individual characteristics. Finally, the researcher examined the theoretical framework predicating the study.

Chapter three: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher looks at the methodology applied to answer the research question about adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The study makes use of a research onion approach. This section mainly focuses on the research paradigm, research design, methodology used, data collection method, target population and census. The researcher also discussed the ethical consideration of the study.

Chapter four: Data Analysis

This chapter focused on the interpretation and analysis of research results. First, it provides an introduction and elaborates on the description of the collected data. Then, it tables information about socio-demographics like gender, age, qualifications, experience, and occupation. Finally, it moves further and provides the findings on adopting digital administrative systems and practices.

Chapter five: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter concludes the research. It summarises the study to ascertain if the researcher appropriately addressed the study's research questions. It further discusses the limitations and implications of the study and suggestions for future research related to the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. The researcher also provided recommendations for Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in this chapter.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the need to prioritise adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. It further gave background to the study and emphasised that it originated from the Tourism and Leisure Industry, specifically the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The researcher also discussed the aim, research objectives and research questions.

The problem statement indicated that adopting digital administrative systems and practices is not prioritised at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, especially during the COVID-19 shutdown period. Therefore, the problem originated from digital administrative systems implemented but not fully utilised by employees.

The next chapter will address a detailed background of previous studies on adopting digital administrative systems and practices in developing and developed countries. It delves into the literature on adopting technology, digital strategies, and digital processes. The next chapter will also discuss the theoretical framework used to conduct the research.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the background, the aim, and the purpose of the study. The objective of this chapter is to review the literature associated with the importance of digitalisation, digital administrative systems and practices. In addition, this chapter will also focus on the literature regarding the factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices.

Although there is relatively limited literature explicitly addressing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices, the existence of literature regarding digital strategies, processes and methods and the adoption of technology provide the theoretical background to this study.

This chapter will end by addressing the application of the various digital administrative systems and types of digital practices used by organisations and sectors across the world and finally provide an overview of what currently exists in the literature on the development of digital administrative systems and practices.

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITALISATION

According to Gupta (2020), digitalisation enables and improves organisational processes via leveraging digital technologies, digitised data, and conversion of information into accessible digital data. He further stated that digitalisation holds excellent potential for sectors, specifically the tertiary sector, individuals, and society worldwide, in this case, the Tourism and Leisure industry. However, the possibility to capitalise on the promises of digitalisation largely rests on having an agile and right-skilled employee (Borg *et al.,* 2018). Bergere (2017) supported this by stating that digitalisation is already amongst human beings. It is a continual partner in every aspect of business and everyday office administration. The results can be noticed and identified everywhere. Digital systems and gadgets work together with employees, information is being processed and distributed in seconds, and with just a few clicks, employees across the world can communicate strategies in real-time (Benson 2021).

According to Lisbeth (2017), a remarkable output can be accessed by organisations that digitalise their operations. However, the outcome is more significant when such organisations invest more in digitalising their administration operations of businesses, such as enhanced data collection, increased profit, reduced costs, employee productivity and overall better customer experience.

Molin and Brandt (2023) stated that in a country such as Sweden. The lack of digital activities results in growth challenges in most primary sectors. He further specified that the tourism and leisure industry's digital speed is as much as five times faster than a traditional business. However, organisations without digital administrative systems and digital processes presence are most likely to fail on a fast-moving strategy (Cancalves *et al.,* 2020). It is more likely that sectors that do not adopt digital administrative systems and practices and expand on them will find it difficult to succeed in the marketplace. Early adopters of digital systems and digital processes have a comparative edge over their competitors. Through testing and learning, the tourism and leisure industry can be in an excellent position to leverage insights that can potentially upscale systems adoption and implementation faster (Mattauch, 2017).

2.2.1 Evolution of digitalisation within the administrative section

Emphasising on the importance of digitalisation, Scholnick (2021) mentioned that the urgency of marketplace competition has long been the driver for making digital transformation a priority for enterprise organisations in every industry. The First Industrial Revolution began in England in year 1750 and It is one of the most distinguished turning points in human history (Haradhan 2019). Through the evolution of technology the hospitality and leisure industry has benefited from the introduction of internet technology in the 3rd industrial revolution in terms of hotel operation. For instance, the increase in usage through online reservation systems (Wong, 2015). It is now important that the Tourism and Leisure industry prepares itself for evolution of digital transformation in the fourth industrial revolution and beyond (Schweb 2016).

Georgieva (2022) highlighted the scale at which digital transformation will continue to grow in the future. Technologies such as quantum computing and communication, artificial intelligence (AI), intelligent automation (IA), blockchain, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) will become more prominent and increase in capability.

Technology has finally progressed to the point where we can take the advantages of all the systems that came before and use them in a cohesive and unified way to create a better customer experience platform, delivering revenue and productivity outcomes (Scholnick 2021).

2.2.2 Digitalisation in developing and developed countries

Healthcare organisations globally use remarkable advanced technology in curing (Gupta 2020). Still, substantial parts of their employees, such as their administration, only use rudimentary or no technology and stand out as the sector that is amongst the least digitised (Johansson 2022). New technologies help the hospitality, communication, and information technology industries. Still, only digital champions can use these digital systems to truly link and unit along the end-to-end value chain (Marthinusen 2020). They take the entire approach, uniting important technologies worldwide and with strategic associates. As a result, the hospitality industry must get maximum savings and productivity gains from digital systems implementations (Marthinusen 2020).

In South Africa, Mngxati and Haas (2019) reported that digital innovations could produce more than trillions in value for the tertiary industry and society over the next years by using digital innovations in crucial retail industries, financial services, hospitality, and manufacturing. However, Sita (2020) highlighted that it is essential to note the difference between the digital economy and digital technology. Sita (2020) further mentioned that the transformation economy is a term for all economic processes, transactions, interactions and activities based on digital innovations.

The transformation economy is different from digital technology in that digital technology is based on internet access. In contrast, the transformation economy involves any of the many digital platforms used in today's financial world. Borg (2019 :94) highlighted that "Sweden launched a programme for the digital revival of the public sector, and the vision of the programme is to make Sweden the best in the world in the use of digitalisation opportunities". The programme's duty is coordinated by various stakeholders involved in keeping track of progress in different industries of the economy (Banoobhai-Anwar, 2016).

In South Africa, Sita (2020) made an example of Discovery under the tertiary (service) sector, the large South African medical insurance provider that has digitally leveraged its platforms. Discovery manage its platform model across the world with various partners all wanting to take part in a disorderly way. Using this same platform, they have turned to create a new disruptive behavioural administration, banking, and insurance platform. One can do much more. They can reserve flights and accommodation, buy online, and manage rewards (Sita 2020).

In a developing country such as South Africa, Discovery has illustrated that when digital systems and practices are adopted appropriately, the organisation can enhance data collection, increase profit, provide quality customer service, and improve employee productivity. For example, an administrator spends less time collecting information about a client, showing that digital systems can help employees, mainly administrative employees, to be productive and efficient as digital systems can do several tasks simultaneously. However, it is more likely that organisations struggling to adopt digital technology cannot improve their delivery processes. In this case, the hospitality and leisure industry would need to provide a five-star service to its customers. However, that can be difficult without adopting digital administrative systems and practices.

Research findings from several studies indicate that digital administrative systems positively affect businesses' administrative operations if employees appropriately adopt them. For instance, Carolissen (2022) studied the adoption of digital business operating systems and stated that the service sector is moving towards a new digital business operating system.

Jan's findings can help organisations in developing countries address employee acceptance of digital transformation issues. For example, the lack of adoption of digital administrative systems and practices negatively impacts businesses in developing countries such as South Africa, particularly in the Hospitality and Leisure Industry. Furthermore, according to (Lipman 2020), with a traditional office practice, workers can spend hours each day printing and locating proper documentation. Therefore, it consumes time and may result in poor employee productivity.

2.3 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digital Transformation is accepting digital technology to change working conditions by displacing manual processes with digital processes or displacing previous digital technology with newer digital technology (Molin & Brandt, 2023).

Zsarnocszyk (2018) emphasised that digital transformation is in the middle of the essential transformation in our fast-progressing business and office work. Moreover, digital innovations and technological novelties are development engines that show their influence in the tertiary sector across the world.

A study by Yunwoo and Kim (2022) highlighted that digital marketing, digital media and strategy are digital transformations already experienced in South Africa. These digital transformations have also increased innovation in the administrative operations of most businesses (Chan *et al.,* 2019). Organisations that do not invest in digital transformations risk losing brand credibility because of poor administrative functions and may be unable to target the right audience (Molin & Brandt, 2023).

2.3.1 Digital Marketing

It is the portion of marketing that uses the network access and online-based digital innovations such as personal computers, smartphones and other digital media and platforms to market goods and services (Dube *et al.,* 2019). Dube *et al.* (2019) added that in South Africa, digital marketing helps to sell products and conduct marketing and advertising products. It incorporates all the attempts, approach and tools utilised to sell products via digital mediums. In addition, it includes leveraging digital channels such as google, twitter, outlook, and other websites to connect with current and potential clients.

Ruby Digital is a well-known real estate digital marketing agency in South Africa. The Company's top priority is to help other businesses achieve long-term results and increase customer loyalty with frequent communications. Ruby Digitals adopted digital marketing because of the return on investment they have experienced. If it weren't for digital marketing, the organisation would still be using the traditional way of printing and personally selling the brand to the audience, which is time-consuming and costly.

Ruby Digital is an example that when Organisations invest in digital systems and practices, administrative operations can run effectively in a developing country such

as South Africa. For example, digital marketing can assist Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife by improving its online marketing to better market the organisation. At the same time, employees work remotely through online search engines so that administrative employees can save time and increase productivity in their operations.

2.3.2 Digital Media

Digital media means any media encoded in machine-readable formats. It can be created, viewed, distributed, modified, listened to, and preserved on a digital electronic device. In South Africa, digital media is operational in e-newspapers and magazines (print media), Television (TV) broadcasting media and the internet, which is part publishing and part promoting media (Arbanas *et al.,* 2023). Although traditional and digital media are blurred, consumers want more flexibility and freedom in consuming content. Price Cooper's Waterhouse (PcW), a printing company in South Africa, confirmed that digital media are often provided more immediate results than traditional media, which has a lag time. That permits workers to make immediate operation transformation to get maximum productivity.

It also gives digital media a boost over traditional media, where it usually consumes time to notice the results of a campaign. As a result, organisations still using traditional media can only run campaigns using single creatives simultaneously and experience a profit loss. In addition, using a digital media platform can assist Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in retaining quick feedback from customers rather than awaiting a report generated manually by administrative employees.

2.3.3 Digital Strategy

It utilises internet to increase business performance, introduce new products, or develop current operations. It set out an organisation's direction to create different competitive advantages with innovation (Chaffey 2023). A business that applies a digital strategy stands a competitive advantage in reaching out to its audience online because most people view content online via smartphones, laptops, desktops, and other "smart" or technological system devices.

If people spend most of their time online, that is where the target is (South Africa, Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, 2020). Having a cohesive strategy allows the service sector, in this case, the hospitality and leisure industry, to reach its target audience more effectively, using the platforms their potential clients prefer to spend their time on, such as Google, social media, and emails. For example, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife must prioritise digital strategy for the organisation to communicate with its clients online while working remotely.

2.4 DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE PLATFORMS

Retail, manufacturing, and hospitality industries use digital administrative platforms that allow online administrative operations involving wholesome communication between the organisation providing the service or product and the individual or group benefiting from such service. According to Samuel (2019), enterprise leaders and organisations can leverage digital technologies to upscale their business efficiency, effectiveness, reach and customer satisfaction. Companies can build digital platforms and create new business operational models when they leverage digital transformation.

Marthinusen (2020) attested that most organisations in South Africa have progressed from using the internet economy based on internet connectivity to the digital economy, where all economic processes, transactions, interactions, and activities depend on digital administrative platforms. This activity is more than just commercial transactions and includes collaboration between organisations, facilitating partnerships, hosting meetings, and enabling most business operations to be performed online (Watts 2020).

If it not for digitalised administrative platforms, the slight increase in the economy experienced in South Africa before the pandemic due to fundamental changes in retail distribution channels for goods and services (business-to-consumer sales) would not have been encountered (Kassu 2019). Traditionally, a consumer would purchase from a local store, but now they transact this buying and selling online. Dhruv (2021) stated that digital platforms have also opened businesses and business owners to markets that would have been inaccessible. Clearly defining the difference between digital systems and digital platforms is essential.

Dhruv (2021) alluded that a digital system is a service an entity consumes to be used by an end-user. On the other hand, a digital platform is a form of business with more benefits that connect two or more parties to a company that can, later, attract many end-users.

2.5 DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

According to Isabel (2021: 115), “digital administrative systems are several mechanisms which convert what is in a traditional office (that relies on the use of paper) into electronic processes to create a paperless office”. In addition, most digital administrative systems provide future-proof cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions. It powers the next generation of business, such as the System Application and Product (SAP) system, myESS system, Payspace system and Dynamic system (Avenyo *et al.,* 2022).

Anon (2020) defined an online administrative system as any system that offers online organisational needs such as e-communication, e-booking, e-invoices, e-signing, and e-coupons. The advanced capabilities of digital administrative systems can boost tourism and leisure efficiency and productivity by automating repetitive tasks and better using time, money, and resources (Anon 2020).

Certain benefits come with digitalised systems that result in a paperless office, such as easy access to data, less expensive client communication and reduced daily data storage as opposed to the traditional office where employees spend more on administrative operations. Although to describe a few, below are the different types of digital administrative systems used in the hospitality and leisure industry in South Africa, it is of high importance to assess the digital organisational system acceptance and employee attitudes toward using these systems.

2.5.1 System Application and Product system (SAP)

Junnarkar and Verma (2017) wrote that SAP is one of the world’s leading software producers for managing and administrating business processes, developing solutions that enable effective data processing and information flow worldwide and in South Africa. In addition, it uses ERP software applications to increase the achievements of

the organisation's resource planning, execution control and administration control. Junnarkar and Verma (2017) further stated SAP facilitates integrating and synergising functional departments such as administration, product planning, marketing, advertising, etc.

As proven by Whittle (2010) that businesses that use the SAP system are at an advantage in eliminating the traditional process of sales and distributing, where an administrator had to personally go to a store and request a quotation, place an order, and await delivery which might take a week and time-consuming. With an SAP system, everything is done online, from quotes to electronic invoicing. Therefore, this system is suitable for administrative operations at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife as it ensures accuracy in procuring goods and services.

2.5.2 MyESS system

According to Margatama (2017), Employee Self Service (myESS) is an application that provides digital labor force services and personnel information management. Employee self-service increases employee responsibility and saves time and money as it automates HR routine tasks such as the administration of leaves (Verlaan, 2016). Therefore, the total adoption of myESS can help an administrative employee at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to spend less time ensuring the accuracy of employee information in the database. Furthermore, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife can improve by introducing software that can handle multiple operations to ensure that administrative employees are productive. For instance, the inclusive storage of employee personal information.

2.5.3 Payspace system

Margatama (2017) defined the payspace system as an improved solution to help the tertiary sector to operate in the modern digital era where administrative workers and employees have access to information at the touch of a button. Swanepoel (2022) further emphasised saving more time using the payspace system, a simplified data-capturing system that can be used anytime, anywhere, with multi-device access.

Melissa (2020) highlighted that the payspace system allows businesses or HR administrators to access employee data anytime and can help them automate many

payroll-related tasks. It includes managing employee IRP5 for tax purposes which can be a massive drain on Human Resource Administrator's time.

Other benefits identified by Rasmussen (2017) are the handling of monthly employee tax submissions (PAYE, UIF, tax certifications), other annual reconciliations, and various other statutory deductions, as well as the capability to produce compliance reports. The proper adoption of a payspace system in the tertiary sector, in this case, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, can result in a reduction of costs, as Melissa (2020) showed that the payspace system simplifies data capturing.

2.5.4 Dynamic system

Radebe (2016) defined a Dynamic system as an integrated Web-based Human Resource and Payroll Management Information System (PMI) designed to meet the needs of organisations that wish to automate their HR and payroll requirements. Examples include the generation of pay slips and ensuring compliance and security of information. Furthermore, this system maintains an employee database with relevant payments and deductions. In addition, it has easy integration with digital biometric devices and other enterprise resource planning solutions with real-time reports and business intelligence.

Forrester (2015) mentioned that the McKinsey organisation in the United States of America successfully adopted a Dynamic system to upgrade its Human Resources and Payroll. There is quite a lot of administration work involving paperwork in any organisation's Human Resources division, should it still be using a traditional method. The full adoption of a dynamic system will help Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife administrative employees guarantee efficiency, accuracy, and productivity in generating digital pay slips, ensuring accuracy in deduction calculations.

2.5.5 E-Communication Microsoft Teams and Zoom

Hamarshe and Bsharal (2020) mentioned that many communication leaders are already experimenting the digital transformation in industries such as financial services, real estate, and hospitality in South Africa. The aim is to integrate various digital systems, such as mobile apps, social media, *etc.,* into improving communication and enabling employee-to-employee networking and collaboration.

Digital Corporate Communication Systems (DCCS) such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Video conferencing, and administrative employees must adopt WhatsApp and Instant massaging in the Tourism and leisure industry in South Africa. In this case, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife as the need for remote work arises.

Administrative operations (such as the convening of meetings) are performed remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If DCCS systems are not correctly adopted, it will simply mean that administrative operations will stop. The full implementation of digital corporate communication systems can help Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife ensure that essential communications continue even if employees are working remotely.

2.5.6 E-bookings

Bonoobhai-Anwar (2016) defined e-booking as a term that also refers to an online booking system. The software facilitates easy bookings and payments by guests through the website of the business provider. It gives organisations the best tools to run and scale their operations all in one place.

A study by Illyana (2018: 28) indicated that “every hotel’s goal is to sell more accommodation units and make a profit. However, without an online booking system, administrative employees will have to rely on phone calls and walk-ins only to make reservations, emphasised that an online booking platform is a necessity for the Hospitality and leisure industry”. Furthermore, Illyana (2018) concluded that instalments are also considerably soften with e-booking.

Administrative employees can require their potential guests to pay when they book, increasing the organisation’s income and not worrying about payments and the administration of safekeeping payments when guests arrive. Hotels that use e-booking operate 24 hours (Mensah *et al.,* 2020). However, if this system is not adopted, administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife will still be using a manual method. They would only operate a few hours during the day, which means less profit as administrative employees at the Reservations department may need to stop operations and go home, resulting in poor productivity and customer service.

2.5.7 E-Invoice

Chamberlain (2021) mentioned that electronic invoices contain invoice data in a structured form automatically imported into the buying organisation's accounts payable system. They typically include a visual presentation of the invoice date. However, they can be temporarily rendered during processing or transposed into graphic formats (Tony 2019).

Kunsman (2021) explained that originations that have started to send and receive e-invoices are already on their digital transformation journey and are critical in ensuring that organisation operations are efficient and scalable to support future growth. Full adoption of e-Invoicing can improve financial and administrative operations at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife because it offers total automation, which in turn enables higher levels of efficiency and productivity, as well as significant financial savings in terms of resources, as reviewed by Hernandez-Ortega (2016).

2.5.8 E-Signature

An e-signature or electronic signature is an efficient, legally binding way to get approval on electronic documents (White 2019). Secure and verifiable, it can replace a handwritten signature virtually or digitally (Karanikolas 2019). However, in developing countries, most employees still use a traditional way of signing documents, which involves printing the paper and placing a handwritten signature (White 2019).

Balfoort (2021) reviewed that an electronic signature benefits administration operations as it increases employee productivity and delights job candidates by enabling them to access e-sign documents from anywhere easily. Furthermore, the total adoption of e-Signature will help Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to improve its data management in terms of storage (cloud storage) and retrieval of digitally signed documents by administrative employees whilst working remotely.

2.5.9 E-Coupons

Illyana (2018) defined e-coupons as a digital analogue of paper coupons used to give customers discounts or gifts to attract purchasing products. Accessible through the organisation's website for discounts, refunds and free-of-charge services, e-coupons

can also be benefitted from creating a viral effect through google posts, depending on the use of the promotion engine (Weiner, 2019).

2.6 ADOPTION AND UTILISATION OF DIGITAL SYSTEMS

Adoption of digital systems refers to the process of accepting and implementing new digital tools and systems within an organisation. Successful digital adoption increases productivity, leading to faster return on investment (Ovington 2023). The adoption process of digital systems has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Manavhela (2023) highlighted the adoption of the modern integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that provides a dashboard of real time information from employees' personnel details, progress on procurement processes, status on payment of invoices and service delivery.

The adoption of systems and practices is important for administrative employees before they actually utilise the systems. Goodman (2023) mentioned that digital technology has transformed nearly every aspect of modern life. Travel, work, shopping, entertainment, and communications are just some of the areas that have been revolutionised in recent decades. This transformation means that organisations need to utilise these systems. Gertzen *et al.,* (2022) described utilisation of digital systems as the actual usage of systems and practices once they have been adopted.

It involves using the system to its full potential, integrating it into daily operations and ensuring that all relevant staff members are trained and comfortable to use them. Johansson (2022) mentioned that many tasks can now be done directly by customers rather than having to be done through another person acting as an intermediary, for instance, booking a holiday.

2.7 DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Machin (2021) defined digital administrative practices as employee conduct that an organisation must follow. The methods are typically informed by policy or suggested by Management.

2.7.1 Digital administrative practice informed by human resources, finance, and reservations policy

Mathew and Ward (2018) mentioned that digital policies concern the practice and promotion of the opportunities offered by digitalisation and include regulation of digital and electronic communications, network and information security, frequency policy and issues concerning broadband access and digital infrastructure. In this case, the fiscal policy states digital practices of obtaining quotations and placing orders using an SAP system.

The Dynamic system policy in the HR department offers fully integrated functionality, enabling payroll administrators to process payments and deductions and to access, process, operate and manage all aspects of the organisation's payroll functions. In addition, inquiry, reporting, and analysis tools help managers and administrators to gain a clearer insight into an organisation's resources (Emina 2020).

MyESS system policy allows administrative employees many functions, such as updating their information for home, mailing, and work addresses, instead of being manually operated by administrative employees at the Human resources (HR) department. In this case, an employee must submit relevant official document(s) to their superior and verify it by the HR department. In addition, human resource administrators capture and view employees remaining annual day-off and cumulative overtime hours.

The electronic booking policy in the Reservations department state the processes an Administrator uses to book accommodation for a potential guest online in the hospitality and leisure industry. Other administrative practices can include achieving quality customer service (Mathew & Ward 2018), such as conducting a digital customer survey to gain customer feedback.

Policy-making bodies and policy administrators of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife must consider modern information technology a core driver for improving the efficiency of its administration and encouraging transparency, as reviewed by (Gustafsson, 2017). Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife can improve by yearly reviewing and updating its digital administrative practice policies.

2.7.2 Digital administrative practices stipulated in the literature

A Reyes (2019) review highlighted that digital practices/ processes had changed work locations, especially in developed countries like the United States of America (USA) and Sweden. Sophisticated mobile devices allow work to take place anywhere (Reyes 2016). In the USA, some companies even think of partially eliminating traditional offices (United State, Department of Commerce, 2013).

In the South African context (Bergere 2017) mentioned that Event MB Incorporated company which falls under the tertiary sector in South Africa, had set out practices to be followed for their virtual meeting rooms. Procedures involve reading the plan before the meeting and not working on other duties, such as going through massages whilst in the virtual meeting. Silence all notifications and ensure your mobile phone is on silent. Make certain all attendees are in a quiet place, free from unnecessary distractions. These practices must be assessed in the hospitality and leisure industry, in this case, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as they have been reviewed and proven to improve work efficiency even if employees work in different locations.

Mawela *et al.* (2017) found in their study that the information collected mirrored what was found in the existing literature indicating that South Africa's experiences are like their counterparts in the developing world. For example, in the hospitality and leisure industry, the integration of electronic booking into organisations existing websites or social media pages (Karanicolas, 2019). Electronic bookings help customers view a booking calendar with available appointments when they visit the organisation's website. Practices include providing a booking calendar, updating digital booking forms, and updating payment details. Zsarnoczyk (2018) reviewed the method as an effective way of using an electronic booking system.

There has been a risk where most organisations buy digital systems without using them due to processes not being communicated to employees. For an instant, at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the digital practices are not tabled in organisation policies, as proven by Gustafsson (2017) can result in digital system manipulation, privacy concerns, crime, and terrorism.

2.8 FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES.

This section provides information about the factors that affect the adoption of digital transformation, digital systems, and processes. Mainly organisational and individual factors influence the adoption of digital procedures and practices (Talukdar 2016).

2.8.1 Factors of organisational influence

Tungpantong *et al.* (2012) mentioned that studies have indicated that the adoption of digital transformation depends on organisational policies, approaches, and actions. Therefore, organisations need to provide facilitating conditions, which include the extent and type of support provided to individuals that would influence their use of digital transformation.

Facilitating conditions include training and support, especially for administrative employees dealing with significant business operations. Van-Belle *et al.* (2019) further emphasised that organisational factors include digital strategy, managerial / system support, connectivity, access to devices, company culture, collaboration, and embracing transformation.

The findings from a study by Shoji (2022) encouraged organisations to develop training programs for workers to utilise digital systems more effectively. Organisations must action training and other educational programs that can promote workers to adopt and utilise digital systems.

2.8.1.1 Employee Training

Weinberg (2015) indicated that the benefits and value of training and developing employees affect any business. Highly skilled employees are more motivated and benefit from workforce improvement and engagement benefits in the organisation's overall operations. In addition, advanced technologies are complementary to skills.

Sectors that adopt new technologies (for example, computer-aided design and control) and, at the same time, invest in skills (for example, training in digital transformation and technical skills) must realise more significant productivity gains than those that do not (Farias, 2021).

Demand for highly skilled administrators in the hospitality and leisure industry, in this case, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, is rising with the introduction of new digital systems. Employees need the training to operate systems for the industry's administrative operations to be productive. However, digital transformation progress may occur without new or upgraded employee technical skills (Abu-Shanab 2017).

2.8.1.2 System support

According to (Pinto & Liete 2020), there should be an effective support system and a general tendency to invest in new technologies and provide required training to upgrade employees' skills. Almaiah *et al.* (2022) defined technical support or assistance as providing an employee with information and understanding about new technology in the organisation. He further stated that technical support usually depends upon the individual, individual digital assets and procedures, and the organisation. For example, the IT Department at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife provides employees support with the implemented system.

Technical support is considered the mainstream in realising an individual accepts or adopts the new technology or system with a level of satisfaction. The study concluded that technical assistance is the key to success in the organisation because it reduces the fear factor among the individual of using new technology without having any information or knowledge (Lakhwani 2020). System support in the hospitality and leisure industry in South Arica, in this case, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, is in high demand as the industry is moving towards the new digital era where almost all operations occur online.

2.8.1.3 Connectivity

As Eneizan *et al.* (2018: 78) revealed in his study, "connectivity conditions in the service sector comprise three components: access to digital systems/communication technologies, the ability to use digital systems and the affordability thereof. He further stated adequate ability to use digital systems means the knowledge and confidence to use technology and, more specifically, to perform basic internet activities. The second condition is achieving adequate access and ability through good affordability without significantly disadvantaging the employee's financial position".

However, Lester (2022) had a different view of the connectivity problem, saying that few people are without smartphones, and these are, in themselves, a form of connectivity. He further stated that connectivity is an issue, but the challenge lies in how government sector employees and businesses use their data and who pays for it. Organisations must provide their employees with connectivity to get out all the potential benefits of a 'digital arsenal' and organisational processes and practices using digital tools (Tungpantong *et al.,* 2022).

A study by Ali (2020) stated the importance of access to information using digital systems, given that majority of industries across the world are still developing countries, and over 84 million female population is without internet access. In addition, with a relatively low literacy rate of 67% of women and 81% of men, women 'are disproportionately unable to access information through digital systems due to poor connectivity (Lakhwani, 2020). This factor affects the use of digital procedures and practices in most industries, as reviewed by (Ali, 2021), particularly Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, because even if there are investments towards digital systems, administrative employees will not adopt them without adequate provision of connectivity.

2.8.1.4 Corporate culture

Van-Bella *et al.* (2019) emphasised that as the digital transformation gets underway, the organisation's core values may need refreshing to embed desirable behaviours, such as cross-functional collaboration and continual learning. According to Aljundi (2020), employees' skill sets can significantly improve through continual education, increasing skills, retaining knowledge, and improving ideas generation. It also boosts employee morale and performance. In addition, effective employers will formulate a clear vision of the digital transformation and effectively communicate it throughout the organisation on an ongoing basis (Bersin, 2020).

2.8.1.5 Embracing transformation

To succeed in digital transformation in the hospitality and leisure industry, Alkema *et al.* (2019) recommended that the organisation is kept updated with changing customer needs and be highly disciplined in accepting user-centered ways when designing its offerings. Therefore, employers must create an audacious vision, strategy, processes,

divisions, and culture to encourage employees to innovate and experiment with new technologies and business models (Orser 2018).

Muganda *et al.* (2017) reported that South Africa's economy is continually strained. Hence, digital transformation is a means of survival for businesses operating in the current landscape, especially in the hospitality and leisure industry. Adopting digital systems, embracing transformation and a digital mindset throughout the industry allows it to recover and respond to changes quicker, enhancing and speeding up processes.

2.8.2 Factors related to individual

Borhani (2016) defines individual factors as individuals' cognitive interpretations of innovation and themselves. Daniels (2021) emphasised in his study that individual factors represent users' opinions on new technology and its impacts on employees' work. For instance, it refers to the extent to which an employee is enthusiastic about adopting new technologies for the better or to which they believe they can benefit from applying technologies or digital systems in their work. Van-Bella and van-Dyk (2019: 52) recently found that resistance to change was the most prominent organisational issue identified. Other factors noted by (Walter *et al.,* 2018), such as the level of education, work experience and age, can influence the individual's adoption of technology.

2.8.2.1 Resistance to change

Edwards (2019) states that when employees are unwilling to adapt and adjust to change, it becomes a form of resistance. Employees may publicly resist change, thereby potentially disrupting business operations. A company can further lose revenue when employees resist digital transformation (Musanda, 2019). It may occur when the old way of doing something is more expensive than the new process and when the new policy produces immediate profits. Lisbeth (2017) also highlighted that digital transformation initiatives often fail due to resistance to change because the proposed transformation or newly introduced digital system may break the continuity of a working environment and create a climate of uncertainty and ambiguity (Macharia, 2019).

According to AL-Ameri (2016), further research should focus more on extracting variables related to digital transformation. For example, AL-Ameri suggests identifying employee satisfaction and acceptance levels for new technology / digital systems. He also advocates identifying employee skills and refining them to perform the assigned task effectively. Also, he recommended determining what necessary resources could help the employee to complete the job more effectively with the new technology / digital system, as this factor could assist in identifying indicators of job performance effectiveness. In addition, according to Rosemond and Asamoah (2016), another aspect of the hospitality and leisure industry that can influence the adoption of digital transformation is an inclination to change within the organisation.

2.8.2.2 Work experience

The other factor affecting technology adoption and digital transformation, as indicated in a previous study conducted by Vizaad (2016), is work experience. Borhani (2016) suggested that employees perceive ease of use and technology advantage through their prior experience using systems. Employees' expertise in applying their minds to new technology could positively and negatively affect future technology adoption and digital transformation. This study will testify to the review by Daniel (2016) that employees who had never worked with technology before might feel demotivated to adopt digital administrative systems and practices.

According to Weinberg (2015), estimates suggest that technology is an essential explanation for differences in experience premia. In addition, he found a complementarity between existing human capital and computer adoption. Finally, he provided evidence that younger employees with fewer years of work experience are better able to adapt to new technologies than older employees with more experience.

2.8.2.3 Level of education

The literature review by Abu-Shanab (2017) concluded that people with higher levels of education would use technology more than those with lower levels of education. Relying on data collected by Riddell (2017 :101) on workplace and employee surveys, the study assessed, through instrumental variables, the impact education had on the adoption and use of technology by Canadian compulsory school attendance laws. The author finds that "education increases the probability of using technology on the job.

Employees with more education spend more time using technology and have longer work experiences with technology than those with less education". The need for remote work in South Africa has risen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife must address this factor should it affect the acceptance of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, primarily if employees work remotely.

2.8.2.4 Age

Walter *et al.* (2018) reviewed that older adults are already at a digital disadvantage, as 18% of those over 65 do not have internet access. Propelled by enforced isolation, more senior people increasingly turned to technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, but not all could connect or communicate with friends and family via the internet (Carolyn & Julie 2021). An employer is responsible for ensuring workers know the importance of technological improvements and why some workers may need training (Hecker 2021). This study will examine if older employees are experiencing difficulties adopting new implemented digital systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Various studies have found these factors to significantly impact the global adoption of technology and digital transformation in the tourism and leisure industry. The study findings by Katz (2018) also supported that these factors contribute to adopting digital transformation. The researchers also claimed that if addressed early, there can be a significant change in adopting digital systems by employees in most sectors. Franco and Sebastian (2017) studied operations management and digital technology. Their study concluded that emerging digital technologies have a critical role in the manufacturing, hospitality, and retail industries.

Researchers have studied technology adoption in Tourism and Leisure from a multi-level perspective. For example, Ali (2016) indicated that the increasing reliance on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has caused some significant challenges facing developing countries. Ali further said the success of the tourism industry closely hinges on effective and efficient ICT use and adoption.

While the previous literature covered the types of ICT used in hotels and the adoption of digital operating systems, it did not consider the most used administrative digital

methods and practices in the hospitality industry and how well-adapted these systems are. In addition, the integration with business practice in day-to-day operations also did not consider the most common factors affecting administrative digital systems and practices by hospitality employees in the hospitality industry. This study covers that gap.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Austernmann (2017) defined the theoretical framework as the foundational premise upon which a theory supports the research stands. It introduces and describes the research problem under investigation from the lenses of the selected theory. The researcher premises the research on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theoretical framework

2.9.1 The Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), introduced by Davis (1986), is one of the most widely used models to explain user acceptance behaviour. Ausernmann & Mertins (2017) revealed that this model is grounded in social psychology theory in general and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) in particular. The idea of reasoned action asserts that beliefs influence attitudes, which lead to intentions and generate behaviour (Pan 2020).

The researcher connects the construct to individual factors discussed in section 2.8.2 above, as Pan (2020) highlighted. In the context of technology-based behaviour, several meta-analyses have found a good correlation between an individual's perceived behavioural control and the usefulness of specific technology.

Previous studies have examined the adoption and usage of technology and digital systems using the technology acceptance model. Luciana *et al* (2020) stated that there was a need to investigate the technology acceptance model with digital transformation in retail industries. In addition, Molinillo and Jeputra (2017) recommended that for digital systems to be successful in organisations and small enterprises, assessing the employee's participation in adopting digital strategies based on their acceptance behaviour is essential.

Furthermore, Kudanga (2018) used a technology acceptance model to understand the current overhead system at Durban University of Technology (DUT) as well as perceptions of the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of Activity Based Costing (ABC). Cultural factors are related to individual elements, including the individual's beliefs and trust, their desire to employ a particular information system application and their willingness to participate in the new system (Molinillo & Jeputra 2017).

In this study, the TAM model was used as the theoretical framework for accessing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Hence, the researcher intended to test the individuals Intention to adopt new systems based on two factors, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Though, there are other acceptance models such as Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2). Archie and Benbba (2023) established that the TAM outperformed these models by explaining that it has been used widely (Ismael and Lozrina 2021; Mabaso 2016; Benli 2019).

Enu-Kwesi and Opuku (2020) further emphisised that the TAM model has several adaptations and shows higher acceptance compared to other existing models. The effects of behavior and desire to use a system individually on perceived ease of use. The results of perceived ease of use and usefulness on intentions to adopt digital strategies and the consequences of trust that the adoption of a new system will improve operations in the hospitality and leisure industry in South Africa

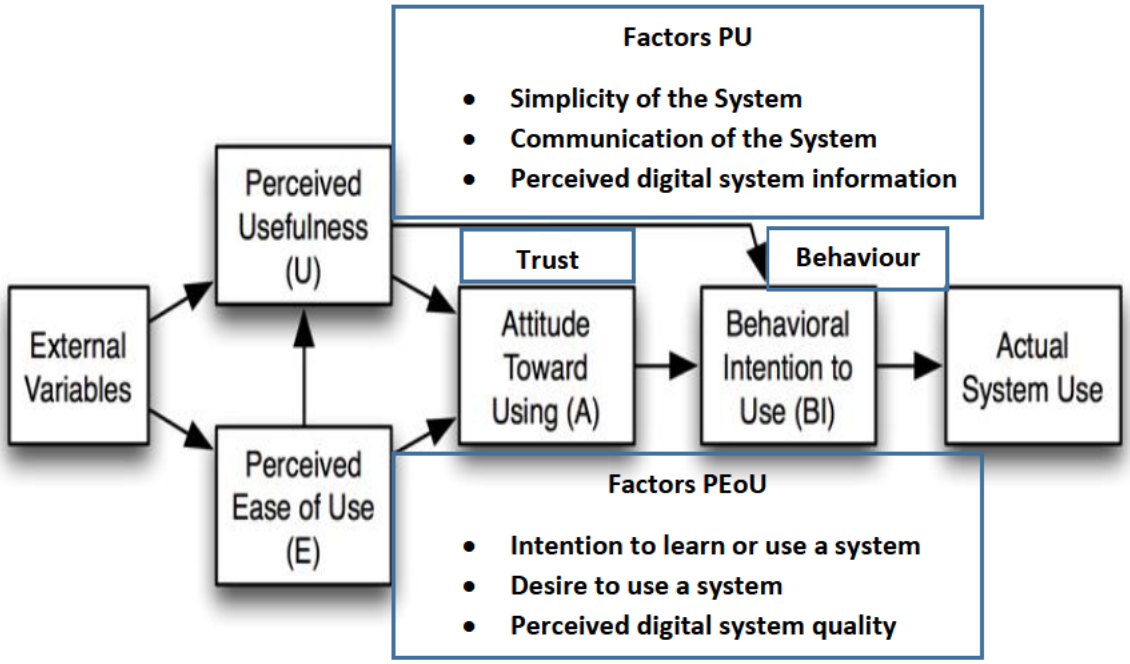
2.9.2 Constructs of the Model

As per Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in figure 2.1 below, the perception of the usefulness of technology, its usability and the overall attitude towards emergent technology influence the behavioural intention of people, which then leads to the actual adoption or non-adoption of the system or technology (Davis, 1989).

The model will assess the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife by looking into perceived usefulness and ease of use factors, as indicated in figure 2.1 below. Among the constructs, perceived effectiveness and

ease of use form an administrative employee's belief in a digital system and therefore predict their attitude toward the digital organisational design, which signifies its acceptance by an employee.

Figure 2.1 Technology acceptance model



Source: Davis (1989)

2.9.2.1 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

According to Davis (1989), it involves a person's belief in the impact of digital systems on their overall job performance. In addition, it means whether someone perceives technology to be useful for what they want to coordinate. Zaman (2020) highlighted that usefulness consists of two classifications which are objective performance measure and subjective performance measure.

Zaman (2020) further indicated that an objective performance measure means whether the employee can interact with the system and has the skills to interact or use the system. At the same time, subjective performance measure includes the preference given by the user to use a system.

The simplicity of the implemented system, when introduced to administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, can affect the acceptance of perceived

usefulness, as reviewed by Bahmanziari and Pearson (2020: 45) in his study. Communication of the newly implemented system and access to information about the digital systems.

2.9.2.2 Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU)

Davis (1989) defined perceived ease of use as the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would be free from effort. If the technology is easy to use, then the barriers are conquered. Sumiyana (2016) stated in his study that the results when testing perceived ease of use showed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and mobility are the variables that positively directly impact behavioural intentions to use MLibrary.

It means that the intention to use M-library will be affected by the extent to which it can increase its users' productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. In addition, using the M-library should also prevent the users from more effort into learning, make it easy to use, and ensure detachment of the time and place.

This study will use factors such as the employee's desire to learn. The researcher will also use a system to test if there is a similar effect on perceived ease of use on all digital systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The researcher will also examine the intention to use a system and ascertain if employees believe using the digital strategy will help them work effectively.

2.9.2.3 Attitude

Davis (1989) defined attitude as individual characteristics which portray either positive or negative behaviour or reflection of feeling and knowledge of a specific concept or subject. According to Pauline (2021), in the psychology study, attitude consists of three components: affect, cognition and behaviour, which refer to people's preferences level, knowledge about the attitude object and reactions and intention regarding the thing, respectively. The study by (Moodley *et al.,* 2020) found that the original TAM model was also used to identify whether the factors found in their research are like those of studies in other countries. Hence it is crucial to use the TAM to assess the adoption of digital systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

2.9.2.4 Effectiveness of the system

Brian (2019) mentioned that having effective administrative systems will allow employees to achieve more with less, get things done in less time, and scale their operations. It also means delivering more value to your clients and defending the organisation against the competition. Waters (2020) revealed that with correct development, deployment and usage of information systems, organisations can achieve lower costs, improved productivity, growth in the top-line and the bottom line and competitive advantage in the market.

2.10 Conclusion

It came to light that digital transformation is spreading wildly in our present day and age. It has become so significant to our everyday lives that we cannot imagine life without it. Also, it has shaped how humans live every day, but most importantly, how they communicate, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Literature revealed that digital systems and digital processes have been implemented in organisations across the world. Key digital systems that emerged from the literature include the system application product system, e-booking system and payspace system. However, the adoption and utilisation by employees is still indefinite.

Literature has been reviewed extensively on factors affecting the adoption of digital transformation and technology adoption by employees and individuals worldwide. However, despite the research in different fields, limited studies address the most current factors that affect the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices, particularly in the Hospitality and Leisure industry during a crisis and strategies to enhance the adoption.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was the literature review for this study. It provided fundamental insights into existing research on adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. The literature review also presented the theoretical framework to guide this research.

This chapter tables the research philosophy, research methodology followed in data collection and processing. It presents the overall description of the procedure, research approach, target population, census, pilot study, data collection techniques and data analysis. In addition, the chapter discusses how the researcher addressed issues of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy is a framework that guides how research should be conducted based on ideas about reality and the nature of knowledge (Collis & Hussey 2014). Moroi (2020) stated that there are two main research philosophies, positivism and interpretivism. These philosophies are normally referred to as paradigms. Antwi and Hamza (2017) stated that a research paradigm is a philosophical framework that the research is based on. It offers a pattern of beliefs and understandings from which the theories and practices of the research project operate. A research paradigm consists of positivist, interpretivism, constructivism and pragmatists. In positivist, reality is independent of researchers who can observe reality objectively. In interpretivist, reality is seen as highly subjective because it is shaped by human perceptions (Collis & Hussey 2014; Moroi 2020). Radhakrishnan (2017) stated that constructivists believe that there is no single reality or truth, but rather multiple realities. While, pragmatists believe that reality is continually interpreted and renegotiated against the backdrop of new and unpredictable situations.

Positivism paradigm was deemed appropriate to this study as it is adopting quantitative approach. This paradigm was suitable because in a quantitative approach the researcher can cover a wide range of situations in a short period of time.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the path through which researchers need to conduct their research (Allison & Joana 2017). It shows how the researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their results from the data obtained during the study period (Bhandari 2022). In addition, the research methodology shows how the researcher achieved the study's objectives.

The objectives of this study were to determine the digital administrative systems and practices currently used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Also, to examine factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices presently used in Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The researcher also sought to assess the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Research methodology discusses the methods used to satisfy the objectives (Islamia 2016). There are two fundamental methodologies (Kimberlee 2019), a qualitative and a quantitative approach. According to Slinger (2020), achieving the desired research outcome would require the appropriate selection of a research methodology (qualitative or quantitative methodology) that will support the research objective.

Bernal *et al.* (2020) mentioned that they employed a qualitative research approach when they conducted a study on understanding the determinants for the adoption of mobile market research. However, the literature reviewed multiple studies where the researcher employed the quantitative approach along with the Technology Acceptance Model, including the work of Granic (2022), Pritha (2020), Cavalcanti *et al.* (2020) and Aruleba *et al.* (2022).

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research early planning stage (proposal stage) observed that a quantitative approach needed to be employed to assess the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This is because, Williams (2021)

stated that the quantitative approach makes it possible for researchers to make accurate and trustworthy findings based on actual data. In addition, Bhandari (2022) highlighted the direct comparisons of results as an advantage for quantitative approach. He further mentioned that the study can be reproduced in other cultural settings, times or with different groups of participants. Therefore, the researcher adopted a quantitative approach. The quantitative data would also allow for pre-determined categories of systems, processes and procedures employees must adopt. In addition, it will be more specific to the administration operation.

3.5 TARGET POPULATION

As defined by McLeod (2019: 11), the target population refers to the total group of humans from which the researcher draws a sample for the study. The population targeted for this study were administrative employees operating at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

It is essential to highlight that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife administrative employees were mandated to move urgently to digital administrative operations due to several COVID-19 cases reported in the organisation. However, the Tourism and Leisure industry plays an essential role in the growth of the economy of the country. Thus, it had to continue operating despite the cases. It was, therefore, vital to study the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices in this organisation.

The target population for this study comprises three regions that form part of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as described below:

1. Administrative employees employed in the East Region
2. Administrative employees engaged in the Head Office, QEP
3. Administrative employees engaged in the West Region

Willie (2022) alluded that objectives clarify the subjects of study directly or indirectly. The findings can be generalised for which group is explained by the study's objectives. Such a group is known as the target population in research. According to Eldredge *et al.* (2015) that all experimental and observational research designs involving human

subjects should define the target population to determine the eligibility of individuals for a study.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Choosing a sampling method is one of the most critical factors in determining the accuracy of the research/survey results, emphasising that if anything goes wrong with the sample, it will reflect in the findings (Golata 2016). Many techniques help researchers gather samples depending on the need and situation. Sampling techniques are classified into two types, non-probability sampling techniques and probability sampling techniques (Bartlett 2019). Probability sampling utilises some form of random selection from a larger population whereby every member of a population has an equal chance of being selected (Ngcobo, 2021). Probability sampling is the most used primary tool in selecting large and representative samples for social research (Castleberry 2021; Mokoena 2022; Sarker and AL-Muaalemi 2022). Mokoena (2022) highlights that there are five types of probability sampling methods namely, simple random; systematic; stratified; cluster and stage sampling.

Non-probability sampling is a method of sampling in which not every member of the population has an equal chance of participating in the study (Myburg 2019 and Ngcobo 2021). There are five types of non-probability sampling used in research, convenience sampling; voluntary; purposive; dimensional and snowball (Mokoena 2022). Hamed (2017) confirmed that the method of sampling used plays an important role in any research inspection. It is because the arrangement and scale of the sample give mass to any results that come out from the study. Hence, various sampling techniques are followed in research, depending on the research problem and objectives (Hamed 2017). However, despite the existence of these sampling techniques, Ashkpour (2019) stated that a census may be used in the study when the researcher needs accurate information for many subdivisions of the population.

3.7 CENSUS

This study adopted a census to achieve objectives of the study. Golata (2016) defined the census as a statistical enumeration method for studying all population members. Census was previously used in the work of Ndebele (2021: 1) who studied

“Management’s support and implementation of electronic documents and records management systems in government departments”. The study was conducted at Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs - KwaZulu-Natal (COGTA). It was also used in the work of Khumalo (2022) and have proven to drawn accurate conclusion from the study. Therefore, all 160 Administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife were selected to be part of this study. The advantage of using a census is that the results accuracy is enhanced as every population is studied before drawing any conclusion (Ndebele, 2021).

The census of administrative employees per occupation that participated in the study is shown in Table 3.1 below, table 3.2 below reflects different disciplines of administrative employees per region at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Figure 3.1 indicates the gender of participants in the study.

Table 3.1 Overall description of Participants in the study

EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE		
Occupation	**Targeted Population**	**Census**
Board Secretariat	04	04
Personal Assistants	15	15
Administrative Officers / Clerks	95	95
Administrative Interns	04	04
Data Captures	42	42
Total	**160**	**160**

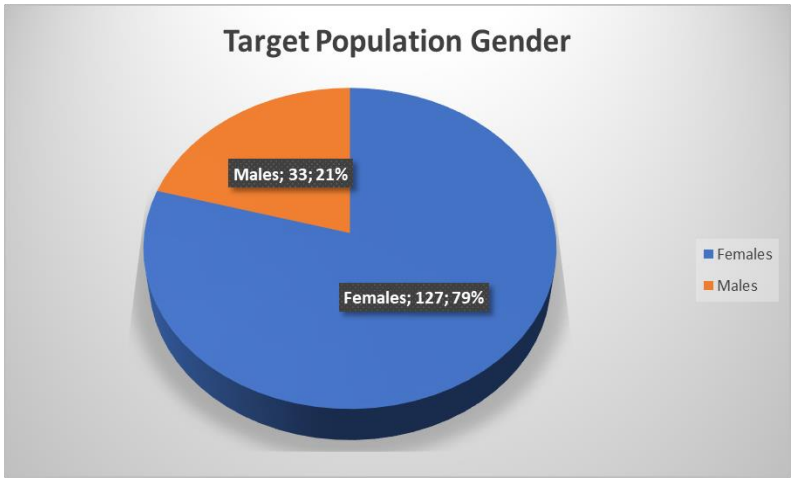
Identifying participants per different occupations in the regions is essential as they can have different experiences with adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Table 3.2 Participants' occupations per region

Occupation	**East Region**	**Head Office, Queen Elizabeth Park**	**West Region**	**Total**
Board Secretariat	-	04		04
Personal Assistants	04	15	05	24

Administrative Officers	18	46	21	85
Administrative Clerks Interns	00	04	00	04
Data Captures	09	27	07	43
Total	**31**	**96**	**33**	**160**

Fig: 3.1 Description of gender of target population in the study



3.8 PRETESTING

Pan *et al.* (2020) indicated that pretesting is one of the critical stages of the survey questionnaire construction process. It is essential to the study's success because, if not properly undertaken, even the most experienced researchers often face difficulties that may negatively impact the study's validity. Stanley (2016: 109) reviewed pretesting as "the stage in a study where the questionnaire is tested to evaluate the reliability and validity of the survey instruments before their final distribution".

For this study, pretesting of the survey was conducted on other staff members who are not part of the census but like the targeted study participants. The participants were finance staff members at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and assistant lecturers at the DUT (Engineering and Tourism Department).

The pretesting stage allowed the researcher to revise the study instrument to ensure the appropriateness of the questions (Babonea 2018). The researcher also confirmed that questions did not make participants uncomfortable and confused. It also helped the researcher assess the time each participant would take to complete the survey.

For example, respondents did not understand questions 21 and 25 on the instrument, and the researcher revised the questions. The researcher describes the revision in section 3.9.2 below, which fully tables the findings from the pilot study.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Roberta and Alison (2017), for the researcher's interpretation of the data collected to be of value and efficient, the calculating instrument used to gather information must be valid and reliable. Hamed (2017) confirmed that the researcher must be concerned with its validity and reliability throughout the study phases.

The researcher reviewed some studies for this current study, and they stipulated how the matters of reliability and validity were included into their study. For example, Mohajen (2017) conducted the criteria for good research validity and reliability measurements. Further, the work of Smith (2018). The validity and reliability of the survey research are explained below.

3.9.1 Validity

The usefulness of any kind of research depends on the credibility of its research findings. Siruru and Maslacki (2021) mentioned that validity in quantitative data is about accuracy and whether the items correctly indicate what they are supposed to show.

The researcher has reviewed the literature to determine whether the researcher uses valid measures. For example, according to a study by Kieran (2018), Marco *et.al* (2018), and Andreas (2016), some of the ways of determining validity are:

- Content validity is a personalised method of considering how well a portion of items weighs the complexity of a variable. It also depends on agreement among researchers assessing the measures to establish if their content is valid.

- Construct validity is the outcome executed after data have been gathered and analysed. It is a conceptual method of weighing validity because it needs constructing countless methods of measuring an item.

In the current study, the researcher tested content validity to clarify if the survey covered all relevant parts of the subjects.

3.9.2 Reliability

According to Andreas (2016), reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, the extent to which results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Marco *et al.* (2018) reviewed ways to ensure that an instrument's reliability is increased.

The researcher ensured an increase in the merit of the research outcomes by resolving the matters of both reliability and validity in the following way:

1. The research instrument (online survey) was pilot tested to increase validity, and the instrument was also piloted using a target population like one of the significant studies. Finally, the researcher used comments and feedback from the pilot to produce the final instrument for the primary data collection.

2. The researcher developed the questions concisely to avoid ambiguity. Avoid double-barreled questions as they create ambiguity (Chew *et al.,* 2018), making it impossible for respondents to answer accurately. A double-barreled question touches on two or more distinct topics yet allows for only one response (Chew *et al.,* 2018). In addition, the researcher explained the research aims and objectives to the participants to give them background information about the study and its uses.

3.10 PILOT STUDY

The purpose of a pilot study is usually to examine, on a little portion, the pace outlined in a past developed research instrument. Then, based on the outcome of the pilot, the researcher would revise the tool (Marilyn, 2016).

However, Simkus (2022) emphasised that pilot studies help the researcher fix potential problems that may arise in the study in a less stressful manner. In addition, it allows

researchers to build confidence in their data collection methods and instruments. Therefore, to maximise and examine the reliability of primary data collection instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study on the 15th of June 2021.

3.10.1 Participants in the pilot study

For the pilot study, the researcher sent emails and used telephone calls to invite 5 participants who are not part of the main study population to participate in the survey. These participants were from the Durban University of Technology and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as illustrated in table 3.3 below.

The researcher's reason for piloting the study was to evaluate the content validity of the survey and assess the time each participant would take to complete the online survey.

Table 3.3 Description of participants in the Pilot study

Department	**Gender**	**Survey participant**
Finance – Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	Females	02
Lecture Assistant – DUT Tourism	Female	01
Lecture Assistant – DUT Tourism	Male	01
Administrator – DUT Engineering	Female	01
Total		05

3.10.2 Findings from the pilot study

The pilot study indicated that there needs to be a clear elaboration on questions regarding the systems in question**.** Pilot study participants could understand the questions explained by the researcher, but one found a few questions problematic. Through the pilot study, the researcher learnt the importance of capturing the instrument accurately in a manner that does not confuse another person. Therefore, the researcher adjusted the instrument study responses and lessons as soon as the researcher completed the pilot study. As indicated by Fraser *et al.* (2018: 56),

“directing a pilot study ahead of time permits a researcher to design and execute a large-scale project in as methodologically meticulous way as possible and can save time and costs by reducing the risk of errors or problems”. The researcher, therefore, disseminated the survey to all respondents to collect data for the main study.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION

This section contains the importance of data collection in research, the data collection plan used to collect data, and the data collection instrument used to assess the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. In affirmation, Pillay (2016) alluded that the data for his research was collected using the online survey tool Qualtrics. Therefore, this section will also table how the researcher designed the instrument for this study.

3.11.1 Importance of data collection

Mankwane and Shirindi (2019) stated that the data collection approach differs for other research, the data needed, and the reasons for the data. In data collection, it is significant to ensure that researchers collect data with the utmost integrity and attention to detail. It ensures that data-driven decisions are reached through reliably obtained and analysed data. Further mentioning that there are different data collection methods for obtaining either quantitative or qualitative data. It was critical to collect data at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to assess the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices.

3.11.2 Data collection approach

Quantitative data was collected from a census of administrative employees in the West region, North region and Head office, Queen Elizabeth Park at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (as per section 3.5 above) through an online survey https://forms.microsoft.com/r/qDSadRangq (Attached as appendix E) . The reason for using this data collection approach was that it was easier to produce objective data about adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife that can be communicated through statistics and numbers.

It is important to highlight that the time horizon for this study was adopted as cross-sectional because all data was collected at one point in time using an online survey. Cherry (2022) indicated that time horizons defines the time frame for the research. Cross-sectional or short term study that involves collection of data at a specific point of time and longitudinal referring to collection of data repeatedly over a long period of time in order to compare data. Table 3.4 below indicates the time frame for the current studies' data collection.

Table 3.4 - Description of data collection timeframe

Timeframe	**Work conducted**
15 June 2021	Online Survey pilot tested
30 June 2021	Data collection for the main study commenced
25 February 2022	Commencement of data Analysis and interpretation of results
07 July 2023	Completion of the study

The online survey was a suitable approach during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it is essential to reduce human contact to curb the spread of the virus. It is straightforward and convenient for respondents to complete surveys online (Sutherland 2019). Furthermore, respondents can fill out surveys when they choose to and start and stop a survey at their leisure. This gives the individual control over completing the study, which can increase engagement and response rates.

Joel (2016) defined online surveys as structured questions that the targeted audience completes over the internet, generally by filling out a form. Furthermore, in numerous studies, the online survey was proven to be a consistent technique for collecting data in quantitative research and was proven to be an effective tool for collecting data. For example, Mbhele (2019) collected data on determinants of employee job satisfaction at a national department in KwaZulu Natal using a survey. Also, Daryan (2017) collected data using an online survey when he conducted a study on the suitability of user authentication solutions on mobile devices.

For the current study, the researcher collected primary data. Kabir (2016: 109) defined preliminary data as data collected from firsthand experience. According to Ajayi

(2017), the online survey method is one of the primary data sources used to collect quantitative information about items in a population. Online surveys are used in different areas for collecting data, even in the public and private sectors (Ajay 2017). Kabir (2016: 109) emphasised that “primary data is most beneficial because the investigator collects information specific to the problem study”. In this case, preliminary data were collected to address the lack of focus on adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.11.3 Data collection instrument

Natarajan (2017) maintains that an online survey is almost always self-administered, allowing participants to fill them out themselves. All the researchers must do is arrange for their delivery and collection. In affirmation, Ganesha and Sreeramana (2022) indicated that an online survey is relatively easy to use, inexpensive, and often the most plausible option for measuring unobservable constructs such as attitudes, behaviour, preferences, intentions, and personalities.

It is crucial to mention the advantages of the approach and instrument used in the study. Sutherland (2019) said that the online survey provides participants anonymity. Once confidentiality is assured, participants feel more comfortable providing open and honest feedback. This positively impacts response and completion rates, which are crucial to survey success. After an extensive review of the literature, the design of the online survey was aligned according to the following objectives:

- To determine digital administrative systems and practices currently in use at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
- To examine factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices that are currently used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
- To assess the effectiveness of the adopted administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

3.11.4 Data collection instrument design

The researcher created a survey using a Microsoft Teams form for the current study. Microsoft Teams form was chosen because participants can be invited to respond to

it using any web browser or mobile device. Furthermore, the Microsoft Teams form was advantageous to the researcher and participants as the documents can be added to the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife website. Therefore, the researcher allowed participants to fill in forms quickly whilst working from home.

After completing the documents, the researcher collected the results and generated a report using real-time analytics. The researcher created this study's online survey https://forms.microsoft.com/r/qDSadRangq (Attached as appendix E) using close-ended questions. Paul (2018) defined closed-ended questions as questions that can only be answered by selecting from a limited number of options, usually multiple-choice, 'yes' or 'no', or a rating scale. In the current study, the researcher used options such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, not using, disagree and strongly disagree. The construction and structure of the instrument is discussed in the subsections below.

3.11.4.1 Section A of the instrument

This section consisted of biographical data where participants' gender, age, qualifications, occupation, and years of experience were used by the researcher to form a survey. Kazmierska (2014) confirmed that biographical information is about an employee's background. In addition, it includes data regarding an employee's personality, attitudes, experiences, and skills.

This data category is a strong indicator of future performance (Galasso *et al.,* 2020). Furthermore, biographical data was used to ensure that administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife from all age groups, different genders and varying years of experience were included in researching the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.11.4.2. Section B of the instrument

The section contains questions concerning the participants' perception regarding the adoption status of digital administrative systems, which the researcher tabled in section B1. The other part in section B2 contained information about the quality of adopting digital organisational practices by employees. In addition, the researcher wanted to determine the types of digital administrative systems and methods the participants have used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.11.4.3 Section C of the instrument

This section contained questions related to the factors effecting the use of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, elaborating more on the objective that examines factors affecting the acceptance of digital administrative systems and practices used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The researcher looked at both elements based on the factors influenced by organisation and those affected by individuals as informed by literature. The attitude towards using the systems was also used to construct the instrument under this section.

3.11.4.4 Section D of the instrument

This section ascertained the effectiveness of the adopted digital systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.11.5 Distribution of the survey

Due to the COVID-19 shutdown period, the researcher used Emails and WhatsApp massaging to approach and invites participants in different offices. Upon receiving gatekeepers letter and permission to conduct the study, participants' contact numbers for WhatsApp and email addresses were easily obtained from the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife intranet website. Participants were requested by email to click on a link to access the survey.

The researcher sent an email requesting 160 administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to participate in the study on the 30th of June 2021, with an anticipated response due date of the 29th of August 2021. Participants were requested to click on the link https://forms.microsoft.com/r/qDSadRangq (Attached as appendix E) to the Microsoft teams form and complete the online survey by inputting their answers and clicking on the submit button. The researcher could then view the data collected by clicking on the check result icon.

A positive reaction of 48 responses out of 160 distributions was identified just before the actual due date which was 29 August 2021, this shows interest on this topic on the side of employees. Once the researcher collected the data and correctly captured the

instrument. Data was analysed to understand the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS

The research can achieve meaningful insights from the data collected during the study (Allison and Joana, 2017). Data analysis is a practice in which raw data is ordered and organised so that valuable information can be extracted from it (Mhlongo 2021). According to Creswell (2013), data analysis is a method of processing a phenomenon into its essential measures to understand it better. It is a powerful and creative process that gives a deeper understanding of the study.

3.12.1 Quantitative data analysis

The researcher sourced quantitative from the online survey distributed to administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as illustrated in section 3.10.2. Sunday (2018) defined quantitative data analysis as a systematic approach to interrogations during which numerical data is collected.

The researcher created survey questions using an MS Teams form (as per section 3.10.3) above. The researcher used emails to disseminate the document to participants. On receipt of participant feedback, survey data was transformed into Microsoft Excel and exported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS).

Descriptive statistics were used in this study to summarise critical variables, and these will be presented using tables. The variables for this study were the digital administrative systems, digital administrative practices and factors influencing the adoption of digital systems and practices. Islamia (2016) explain that descriptive statistics assist the researcher to organise data into a reasonable and readable manner, making it easy to identify patterns in the data. Inferential Statistics is when a researcher gathers data from a sample and uses the statistics generated to reach conclusions about the population from which the sample was taken (Bhandari 2022). However, for the current study the inferential statistics were not used because a whole target population was used to collect data (census). As indicated by Alexander (2015)

that the statistical inference is commonly said to be inapplicable to complete population studies such as census, due to the absence of sampling variability.

The results of this survey were analysed using SPSS version 25.0, resulting in findings regarding adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Sharief (2020) described SPSS as a format that International Business Machines (IBM) offers for complete analysis. IBM SPSS Statistics is a family of advanced computer programs for statistical analysis (Sharief, 2020).

Craig (2017) alluded that exporting survey data from Microsoft Excel to SPSS's proprietary SAV format makes pulling, manipulating, and analysing data clean and easy. Using the SAV format, SPSS automatically sets up and imports the designated variable names, variable types, titles, and value labels, making the process easier for researchers. In addition, the researcher used built-in analytics on the SPSS to evaluate the responses.

3.13 LIMITATIONS

According to Akanle *et al.* (2020: 176), “limitations are choices made by the researcher which should be mentioned and further described that they are essential to understand for placing research findings in context”. Limitations represent the boundaries that the researcher has set for the study. In this study, the first limitation is that participants were limited to administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and the researcher excluded employees at the Senior and Management levels from the study.

The reason for excluding Senior and management levels is that the study's focus was on administrative operations who dealt precisely with digital administrative systems and practices in the organization during the COVID-19 shutdown. It may implicate the study's findings as most Senior Managers at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife also utilise digital administrative systems and practices. For instance, Senior Managers also use a Microsoft Teams system to conduct meetings during the COVID-19 period and beyond.

3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Like any other research method, survey research must follow specific ethical norms. This study entails individuals as participants (Deborah, 2016). A study involving individuals and animal subjects needs to consider ethical implications. The researcher must not carry out the research at the sacrifice of the topics regarding exploitation (Fleming, 2021). In this study, the ethical principle of self-determination, where respondents are treated as autonomous agents is maintained. This is communicated to the respondents before conducting the survey. This is elaborated further on section 3.14.3 below.

3.14.1 Gatekeepers letter

According to Sagher (2021), it is essential to maximise the possibility of being granted access to an organisation for research purposes. The researcher must persuade the gatekeeper and the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the social value of the study. It is a formal ethics review in addition. They have a right to know the proposed research processes and their potential consequent impact on the normal operational functioning of the organisation. The researcher obtained ethics approval from the Durban University of Technology for this study. In addition, the researcher received the Gatekeeper's letter (Attached as appendix D) from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife for permission to conduct the study on adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.14.2 Letter of informed consent

According to Galafshani (2018), The goal of the informed consent process is to provide sufficient information to a potential participant about the study conducted in a language which the participant quickly understands so that the participant can make the voluntary decision regarding "to" or "not to" participate in the research study. Therefore, the researcher prepared the letter of consent (Attached as appendix B) and sent it to the targeted group of 160 administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife seeking permission. Furthermore, the researcher stated that participants could withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher explained this in the consent letter before the study's commencement.

3.14.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher assured all participants in the study of anonymity. In addition, the researcher told participants not to provide their names during the completion of the online survey so that they could respond at their own free will to the questions without any fear of being recognised. Furthermore, for this study confidentiality was maintained by not revealing respondent's identities when publishing the study.

According to Rowland (2017: 160), anonymity is important because it protects the privacy of those who voluntarily agree to participate in research. In this study, there was non-identification of participants' details in the survey. The researcher further mentioned to participants through a letter of informed consent that the researcher would retain a copy for a year and that the research would only be for academic purposes. The researcher further stored the survey and data collected using an electronic file that was password protected in order to safeguard it.

3.15 CONCLUSION

This study adopted a positivist paradigm because all the research objectives would be covered under this philosophy. This chapter describes the research methodology and approach adopted in this study. The researcher employed a quantitative research method to collect data on adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife using an online survey method to a census of 160 administrative employees. The researcher also discussed the data analysis techniques used to analyse data. Reliability, validity, limitations and ethical considerations were also addressed in this chapter. In the next chapter, the empirical results of the study are presented and subsequently discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the study's methodology by explaining how data was collected using an online survey. The chapter focuses on the data presentation, analysis and interpretation to attain the study's objectives. The researcher used Software Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25.0 to perform the analysis.

This chapter will present the findings. These include the biographical information of respondents in section A., Followed by section B, which will explain and interpret the results of adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Section C will focus on factors that affect adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Finally, section D will present and interpret findings related to the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The researcher will first present the results using tables. The researcher also used tables to compare data. Although according to Tezner (2021), a researcher draft the thesis or dissertation with tables and figures in front of them. They will also use those visual tools much as they expect their readers to use them. It is an excellent means of testing tables and figures' clarity, accuracy and usefulness. Next, the study will discuss and interpret results using literature and policy documents. SPSS can take data from almost any file (Antonius 2014).

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

As discussed in the previous chapter, data was collected using an online survey. This section presents the response rate the researcher achieved for the study. Cleave (2020) revealed that the survey response rate is the people who answered the survey divided by the total surveys. In this study, a total of 73 participants out of 160 distributions completed the survey on the actual due date which was 29 August 2021.

Lindemann (2020) and Genroe (2020) mentioned that the acceptable average response rate for quantitative research is 33%. However, “a minimum response rate of between 30% to 40% is sufficient if the survey is conducted internally amongst employees” (Chung 2022: 44). The response rate of 46% achieved for this research is acceptable. The response rate was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{73}{160} \times 100 = 46\%$$

4.3 RELIABILITY TESTING

According to Taherdoost (2018), the accuracy and consistency of the survey questionnaire form a significant aspect of the research methodology, known as validity and reliability. Reliability is the ability to weigh instruments to achieve same results when applied at different times (McLeod, 2023). The researcher conducted the reliability testing for this study using Cronbach’s alpha test. Taber (2019) mentioned that Cronbach’s Alpha investigates the reliability of a questionnaire.

As mentioned in section 3.9.1 of chapter three, the survey instrument was pilot tested to test its validity and reliability. The researcher obtained feedback from the Institutions Ethics Committee and supervisors of the study to ensure the instrument's reliability. Table 4.1 below indicates that all cases were 100% valid, and reliability statistics were at 0.750 in table 4.2 below. It proves that the survey used was consistent and reliable. A statistician was sourced for this purpose to improve the quality of the study.

Table 4.1: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	73	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	73	100.0

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.750	73

4.4 BIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Section A

This section presents the respondents' demographics by using table 4.3 below. The requested information is gender, age, education, occupation, and the number of years of service at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This section will also focus on the preliminary analysis, which provides a descriptive analysis of the sample's composition.

4.4.1 Gender distribution of respondents

Table 4.3 below indicates that most respondents were females (68.5%). It can be because Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's recruitment policy was reviewed, updated, and approved by the Board in 2019. Recruitment and advancement processes to ensure equality between women and men, equal pay for equal work, recognition and rewards that are unbiased and based on contribution and performance, and non-discriminatory approaches (Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, 2019). Female employees are also given opportunities and considered promotions equal to male employees. However, according to the Department of Statistics South Africa (2021), women in South Africa are comparatively disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts regarding access to jobs. Once they are in careers, appointments to decision-making positions and employment in specific sectors remain elusive. Through its 2030 vision goals, the South African government hopes to bridge the gap between employed males and females by 2030. (Department of Statistics SA, 2012). Hence, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife has more female administrative employees than males. Out of a targeted population of 160, as per chapter three, figure: 3.1, the researcher targeted females at a total of 127, and only 50 responded, while males were 33 and only 23 responded.

4.4.2 Age distribution

Table 4.3 below shows that only (2.7%) of respondents in the age category of 20 and below participated in the survey. It could be because employees in this category are interns. On the other hand, most respondents who completed the online survey were employees between 31-40 years (35.6%). Olson (2018) indicated in his study that employees between the ages of 20 to 40 are more reasonable to accept innovation in comparison to older employees who require constant system support. Embracing technology in this section refers to the willingness to compete the online survey. Age

can also be a contributor to the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. Only (8.2%) of respondents in the age category of 51 and above completed the survey.

4.4.3 Academic qualification distribution

Respondents were requested to provide their highest qualifications to ascertain their academic qualifications. Table 4.3 below indicates that most respondents (60.3%) who completed the survey hold a diploma. It suggests that reasonably qualified employees operate the Administrative Unit at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. However, (20.5%) of respondents hold a matric certificate. According to Abedini and Kozanoglu (2021), organisations use technology as a competitive differentiator, enabling employees to work smarter and provide better customer service. Therefore, a business that becomes more profitable due to digitally skilled employees will likely innovate faster and continue to be the market leader (Abedini & Kozanoglu 2021).

4.4.4 Occupation distribution

As presented in table 4.3 below, the results have shown that (42.5%) of employees who completed the survey are Senior/ Administrative Clerks. Perhaps, because of the senior administrative clerks at the organisation's center. Burge (2020) mentioned that the success or failure related to the changes or transformation depends on how acceptance of the administrative clerks and support employees of the organisation.

4.4.5 Number of years of service at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife distribution

As shown in Table 4.3 below, the statistical results revealed that the majority (58.9%) of respondents who completed the survey had worked between 5 and 10 years at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. It could be because Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife has administrative employees who must acquire more skills and experience within the organisation's culture. Due to the number of experiences these employees have acquired, they are now using organisational values and beliefs associated with their rituals and practices (Vedant *et.al.* 2020). Therefore, it might negatively affect employees' adoption of transformation. However, results also revealed that (27.4%) of respondents who completed the survey had worked for less than five years. It can optimise the chances of better adoption of digital administrative systems, as indicated by (Vedant *et al.*

2020), as these employees are still new in the organisation and thus willing to try new ideas.

Table 4.3: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender		
	N	**%**
Female	50	68.5%
Male	23	31.5%
Age		
20 and below	2	2.7%
21 – 30	24	32.9%
31 – 40	26	35.6%
41 – 50	15	20.5%
51 and above	6	8.2%
Education Qualification		
Matric	15	20.5%
Certificates	1	1.4%
Postgrad	1	1.4%
B/Tech / Degree	10	13.7%
Diploma	44	60.3%
M/Tech / Masters	2	2.7%
Occupation		
Board Secretariat	2	2.7%
Clerk	1	1.4%
Data Capture	24	32.9%
HR Clerk	2	2.7%
intern	1	1.4%
Internship	1	1.4%
Personnel Assistant	11	15.1%
Senior / Administrative Clerk	31	42.5%
Indicate the number of years of service at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife		
Below five years	20	27.4%
5 - 10 years	43	58.9%
10 - 15 years	8	11.0%
Above 15 years	2	2.7%

4.5 STATUS OF ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AT EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

SECTION B1

This section analyses data based on the adoption status of digital administrative systems such as an SAP system, myESS system, Payspace system, Dynamic system, Microsoft Teams system, Zoom system, E-booking system, E-invoice system (SAP), E-signature system and E-coupons system.

Section B1 of the questionnaire probed the status adoption of digital administrative systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to answer the first research question. First, many statements coded B1.1 to B1.10, aligned to the status of digital administrative systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, were listed. Then, the researcher asked respondents at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to read them and rate them using a scale of 6= strongly agree, 5= agree, 4= neutral, 3= not using, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree. Table 4.4 below shows the results.

4.5.1 Adoption of Payspace system

Table 4.4 (B1.1) below indicates that the majority (above 95%) of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, administrative employees responded highly positively (‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) that they have adopted the Payspace system. Adopting the Payspace system has confirmed the priorities of employees as they may assume the approach that is related to them personally. This system is well adapted at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife because it involves personal information such as payslips and leaves balances. The findings reveal that administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife prioritise systems that benefit them personally more than the systems that can improve business processes. Perhaps, it is because of a lack of communication, as highlighted by McNair (2021), who avers that when employees are carried along through effective communication, they are likely to contribute more to the achievement of set organisational goals and objectives. They are also more likely to adopt innovation favorably. Several (4.1%) respondents indicated that they had not adopted the payspace system because the change management programme plays a crucial role in implementing a digital payroll system and ensuring that employees adapt without any mishaps in the organisations (Conte & Akesson 2021).

4.5.2 Adoption of Microsoft Teams

Kuwait and Rayen (2020) indicated that the Microsoft Teams system was the most helpful tool for organisations to move away from face-to-face communication. Most organisations and individuals did a lot to encourage virtual communication during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond to ensure healthy mental health. Results in table 4.4 (B1.2) below reveal most respondents (57.5%) who strongly agreed that they had adopted the Microsoft Teams system and a further (37.0%) who decided that they had adopted the approach. This finding collaborates with an assertion by Ekaman and Standberg (2021) that embracing the Microsoft Teams system can help organisations strengthen their virtual communications and increase employee productivity even if employees are working remotely. In addition, Torino (2021) also emphasised the importance of a Microsoft Teams system tool that can ease employees' work life in the context of always working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic or its impact. These results confirm that essential communications such as meetings, conferences and workshops continue at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife even if employees are working remotely. Table 4.4 (B1.2) further revealed (2.7%) of respondents who confirmed that they are not using the Microsoft Teams system.

4.5.3 Adoption of SAP system

Statistic results in table 4.4 (B1.3) below revealed that (52.1%) of respondents strongly agreed and addition of (32.9%) agreed that they have adopted the SAP system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Like the study by Akram *et al.* (2020), the successful adoption of an SAP system allows the business to standardise their operating processes that, further increase employee productivity. However, the minority of almost a quarter (11.0%) indicated that they are not using the SAP system.

4.5.4 Adoption of myESS System

The majority (47.9%), as indicated in table 4.4 (B1.4) below, agreed that they have adopted the myESS system. As Raka and Mansar (2021) suggest, the myESS system allows employees to take control of many paper-based human resources-related tasks that HR administrative employees would otherwise complete. An employee entering their details also increases data input accuracy, which ensures productivity.

4.5.5 Adoption of the e-booking system

Table 4.4 (B1.5) below indicates (41.1%) of respondents strongly agreed that they had adopted the e-booking system an additional (32.9%) agreed with the statement. Therefore, the acceptance of the e-booking system confirms that bookings are open 24 hours to clients at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. However, (17.8%) of respondents indicated that they are not using the e-booking system, and (8.2%) disagreed that they have adopted the approach.

4.5.6 Adoption of electronic invoice

The results presented in table 4.4 (B1.6) below indicated that (35.6%) of respondents strongly agreed that they had adopted the e-invoicing system an additional (30.1%) agreed with the statement. A positive response confirms an improved business relationship between Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and its clients, ensuring client satisfaction even if work occurs outside the office.

In addition, Avada's (2020) findings revealed that organisations now prefer to digitally connect with their customers and suppliers to exchange business documents such as order responses and invoices. In doing so, communication becomes faster and more transparent.

Almost a quarter (21.9%) indicated that they are not using the e-invoicing system. A study by Azmi and Yulan (2021) determined that perceived benefits and certainty in e-government positively influenced the acceptance of electronic invoices. At the same time, the researcher found that adopting an electronic invoice impacted the complete efficiency of the tax compliance process. These results may be because only administrative employees operate the electronic invoice system in the finance and procurement departments.

4.5.7 Adoption of a Dynamic System

The results illustrated in table 4.4 (B1.7) below revealed that (31.5%) of respondents strongly agreed that they had adopted the dynamic system. Hence, Burge (2020) found that the active system is straightforward for end-users. It provides quick access to standard features or commands, leading to better end-user adoption because the dynamic system features are simple and easily accessible to employees. However,

A total of (24.7%) of respondents indicated that they are not using the system, whilst (23.3%) of respondents strongly disagreed that they have adopted the approach. Nakeng (2020) showed that embracing a payroll management system encompasses significant changes at all levels of an organisation. Thus, to ensure the proper evaluation, smooth implementation, and maximum adoption of the system, its critical to engage Payroll consultants in the implementation phase (Cong *et al.,* 2020). It is essential to highlight that the dynamic system was implemented to be utilised by administrative employees at the payroll division only at EKZNW, and not all administrative employees have access to the system because of the low adoption rate of the system.

4.5.8 Adoption of a Zoom system

Findings in table 4.4 (B1.8) below revealed that (30.1%) of respondents strongly agreed that they had adopted a Zoom system and an additional (23.3%) agreed. Qureshi (2020) stated that Microsoft Teams and Zoom systems are two of the leading virtual communication platforms today and have experienced a significant surge in adoption due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Table 4.4 (B1.6) below indicates (19.2%) of respondents indicated that they are not using a Zoom system a further (26.0%) disagreed that they have adopted the Zoom system. Adopting and assimilating technology systems in organisational settings are complex and challenging processes whereby an organisation continuously allows multiple, overlapping technological systems to persist and continue over time (Zulher *et al.,* 2021). Chamberlain (2021 :78-79) confirmed that too many digital designs to choose from might lead to confusion. Often, organisations think “more is more” regarding software. Still, research has discovered that too many applications lead to destruction. Instead of improving productivity, this phenomenon has the opposite effect, leading employees to ignore applications instead of learning them.

4.5.9 Adoption of e-signature

To keep the administrative operations going at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, signing documents is essential, even if employees are working remotely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results also revealed that (27.4%) of respondents strongly agreed that they had adopted the e-signature system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. It

confirms that operations are continuing without involving paper in the office. The findings by Stanton (2021) stated that digitising the signing process allows organisations to collect signatures and approvals on multiple documents from clients or employees anywhere and on any device without printing a single piece of paper.

According to the South African Government (2020), authorities put measures such as minimising workers' in-office operations through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems, remote working arrangements, or similar measures to achieve social distancing.

Results in table 4.4 (B1.9) revealed that (21.9%) were not using the e-signature system, whilst (20.5%) disagreed that they were using e-signature. Reluctance by employees to adopt new digital strategies lies in a misunderstanding of what technology can include (Marnewick & Bvuma, 2020). Ghandhi *et al.* (2020) confirmed the need for effort in government/organisations to build electronic services infrastructure. These results demonstrate a need for the automation of processes within EKZNW.

4.5.10 Adoption of e-Coupons

The results presented in table 4.2 (B1.10) below revealed that about (19.2%) of respondents had confirmed the adoption of e-coupons because it guarantees an overall better customer experience. However, a study by Sigala (2018) revealed that although online coupons are increasing in popularity in the tourism industry, there is limited research investigating the design and implementation of online coupons that maximise an organisation's benefits.

Results further revealed (28.8%) of respondents who are not using the e-coupons system (24.7%) disagreed. 5.5% strongly disagreed with the statement because the Reservations department at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife uses e-coupons at the Reservations department at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife for promotions and refunding clients, hence the high number of respondents who are not using the e-coupons system.

Table 4.4: Status of adoption of administrative systems of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

	Code	Statement	SD	D	N	NU	A	SA	%	Mode
Status of Adoption of Digital Administrative Systems	**B1.1**	I am using a PaySpace system	0	0	0	3	24	46	63.0%	Strongly agree
	B1.2	I am using the Microsoft Teams system	1	1	0	2	27	42	57.5%	Strongly agree
	B1.3	I am using an SAP system	0	3	0	8	24	38	52.1%	Strongly agree
	B1.4	I am using the MyESS system	1	5	0	8	24	35	47.9%	Strongly agree
	B1.5	I am using the e-Booking system	0	6	0	13	24	30	41.1%	Strongly agree
	B1.6	I am using e-Invoicing	0	7	2	16	22	26	35.6%	Strongly agree
	B1.7	I am using a Dynamic system	1	14	0	18	17	23	31.5%	Strongly agree
	B1.8	I am using the Zoom system	0	19	1	14	17	22	30.1%	Strongly agree
	B1.9	I am using e-Signature	3	15	0	16	19	20	27.4%	Strongly agree
	B1.10	I am using e-Coupons	4	18	0	21	16	14	19.2%	Not using
		6= Strongly agree 5= Agree, 4=Neutral, 3=Not using, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree								

4.6 STATUS OF ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AT EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE.

SECTION B2

Section B2 of the questionnaire probed the status of digital administrative practice at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to answer the first research question. First, several statements coded B2.1 – B2.11, aligned to adopting digital organisational practices at Ezemvelo

KZN Wildlife, were listed. Then, the researcher asked respondents at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to read them and rate them using a similar scale as section B1. Table 4.5 below shows the results.

4.6.1 Practices associated with the Payspace system.

A high number (57.5%) of respondents strongly agreed to apply for leave and obtain their leave balance using the Payspace system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Findings confirm that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife has moved from the traditional way of applying for leave to a digital method. It saves time so employees may focus on other tasks, ensuring productivity. In addition, data collected mirrored findings by Nozuko (2020) that an online employee self-service system enables workers to apply for leave from anywhere without consuming time.

4.6.2 Practices associated with Microsoft Teams system.

Table 4.3 (B2.2) below revealed that the majority (53.4%) strongly agreed that they communicate and conduct meetings using a Microsoft Teams system. A further (35.6%) of respondents agreed with the statement. Therefore, the signed agreement is attributed to administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife continuing operations even if they work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife can plan and coordinate meetings while working remotely. The study by Regniers (2022) confirmed that the end-to-end capability of Microsoft Teams meetings helps remove frustration and inefficiency by bringing everything an employee needs at every meeting into one place. Furthermore, as the administrative employee plans meetings, they can use the chat facility to add the schedule, documents to pre-read and other discussion topics, this further means that there is productivity at the administrative level at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

4.6.3 Practices associated with an SAP system

As shown in table 4.5 (B2.3) below, most respondents (50.7%) and (31.5%) have strongly agreed and agreed that they have adopted obtaining quotations, placing orders, and purchasing goods and services using an SAP system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. However, the results also show that (9.6%) of respondents are not obtaining quotations, placing orders, or purchasing goods and services using an SAP system.

These findings may be because of a lack of information sharing about the implemented SAP system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. According to Janshen (2019), the lack of sharing of project information across departments might lead to the high resistance of users unwilling to contribute to the redesigned and standardised business processes required by the new system to run smoothly.

4.6.4 Practices associated with myESS system

Administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife indicated that they had verified their personal information from HR using the myESS system. Attesting the study by (Kappel 2018) who revealed that employees can upload and view important documents. When employees have access to shared documents, they will not have to ask HR administrators, but they will help themselves, guaranteeing success in remote work.

4.6.5 Practices associated with electronic booking for supervisors

As illustrated in table 4.5 (B2.5) below, a significantly high number of respondents (37.0%) agreed that they book business trips for their supervisors using electronic bookings. Results reveal that there is encouragement in embracing transformation by administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in terms of moving away from the traditional booking method to electronic bookings. Like the findings by (Alkema *et al.* 2019), employers must create an audacious vision, strategy, and process that can motivate their employees to pioneer and demonstrate new technologies and business models. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife management must encourage administrative employees to innovate through the organisation's vision and strategies so that administrative employees can adapt quickly to booking business trips for their supervisors through electronic booking.

4.6.6The practices associated with e-Invoice

The majority (34.2%) of respondents strongly agreed that they issue electronic invoices to suppliers at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The issuing of invoices is essential in the Finance division to maintain a good relationship between the organisation and its suppliers (Junior 2016). Findings indicate an increased proficiency in administrative employees at EKZNW and confirm that procurement records of the organisation are

secured. The findings further ensure that procurement records, such as supplier details, are secure through issuing electronic invoices to suppliers at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. It is like the study by Koczwarska and Sobieszek (2021), who confirmed that electronic invoicing helps standardise transactions and ensures uniformity in every operation. It also provides the secure storage of information.

4.6.7 Practices associated with electronic bookings for clients

As shown in table 4.5 (B2.7) below that (35.6%) of employees agreed that they process clients' bookings using the e-booking system. Results show that reservations administrative clerks at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife can process clients' bookings through electronic booking even if they work from home. Similarly, Harris (2022) confirmed that one of the key and compelling advantages of electronic booking is that customers can book around the clock without an administrative agent needing to be awake or managing their phones constantly. Guests can simply book via the organisation's website when and where it suits them, including at the last minute, helping the organisation increase its chances of making sales. According to Lacalle (2019), an employee could save time at work and personal life by adopting an e-booking system.

4.6.8 Practices associated with e-Signature

As illustrated in table 4.5 (B2.8) below that (32.9%) of respondents strongly agreed an additional (26.0%) agreed that they are signing documents using electronic signatures at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. These findings reveal that a traditional way of signing, and processing documents is still practised at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as almost 40% of respondents indicated that they are not signing documents using e-Signature. For instance, an administrator will await a printed document for signing instead of using a digital signature, which is time-consuming. This effect productivity on an administrative level, whereby administrative employees can lose almost a day while waiting to be in a specific place to sign and process documents like what was revealed by Balfoort (2021) that E-signature technology enables organisations to eliminate tasks better performed electronically. Kreidel (2020) also showed that electronic signatures could speed document turnaround and completion times, allowing the employees to sign in seconds and complete transactions in minutes.

4.6.9 Practices associated with a Zoom System.

The purpose of using a Zoom system is to conduct meetings and improve communication virtually (Baltezarevil *et al.*, 2021). In addition, Baltezarevil *et al*. (2021) mentioned that virtual methods and other techniques reduce travel and facility costs, reduce project schedules, and improve decision-making and communication.

4.6.10 Practices associated with a Dynamic system

The analysis of the statement above shows that (26.03%) of employees strongly agreed that they are compiling payslips using a dynamic system. A further (23.3%) agreed with the statement. Data collected mirrored a study by Suyanto (2019), who mentioned that there's some manipulation risk of information and documentation management when employees are still using a manual system in payroll accounting

4.6.11 Practices associated with the e-Coupon system

As presented in table 4.5 (B2.11), a high percentage of (28.8%) of respondents indicated that they are not using the e-coupons system. Using e-coupons can help the organisation maintain a good relationship with its clients by sending quick feedback (Sigala 2019). Jokonya and Wessels (2022) mentioned that receiving immediate feedback on queries will retain current customers and increase the organisation's ability to attract new customers. However, findings reveal that administrative employees have opted to use a manual way of sending vouchers to clients, e.g., quick customer surveys, instead of using the e-Coupons system.

Table 4.5: Adoption of digital administrative practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

		Statement	SD	D	N	NU	A	SA	%	Mode
	B2.1	I apply for leave and obtain my leave balance using a PaySpace system	2	0	0	4	25	42	57.5%	Strongly agree
	B2.2	I communicate and conduct meetings using a Microsoft Teams system	0	3	2	3	26	39	53.4%	Strongly agree

	B2.3	I obtain quotations, place orders and purchase goods and services using an SAP system	0	6	0	7	23	37	50.7%	Strongly agree
	B2.4	I request and verify my file or information from HR using the MyESS system	2	6	0	7	25	33	45.2%	Strongly agree
	B2.5	Practices associated with electronic booking for supervisors	0	7	1	12	27	26	35.6%	Agree
	B2.6	I issue electronic invoices to suppliers	1	10	0	15	22	25	34.2%	Strongly agree
	B2.7	Practices associated with electronic booking for clients	0	11	0	12	26	24	32.9%	Agree
	B2.8	I prepare and sign off documents using an electronic signature	0	16	0	14	19	24	32.9%	Strongly agree
	B2.9	I communicate and conduct meetings using a Zoom system	0	14	0	15	22	22	30.1%	Strongly agree
	B2.10	I compile payslips using a Dynamic system	3	18	0	16	17	19	26.0%	Strongly agree
	B2.11	I send vouchers to clients using e-Coupons	1	15	1	21	20	15	20.5%	Not using
6= Strongly agree, 5=Agree, 4=Neutral, 3=Not using, 2= Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree										

4.7 EXAMINATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AT EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE.

SECTION C

This section analyses data collected concerning the factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. The elements are the organisation and the individual.

Section C of the questionnaire probed to examine individual and organisational factors that affect adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Several statements coded C and C1 to C18, which aligned with the factors

that affect the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, were listed. The researcher asked respondents to read them and rate them using a scale of 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3=neutral, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree. The results are in Tables 4.6, 4.7 to 4.8 below.

4.7.1 Factors related to the organisation

4.7.1.1 Training.

When the researcher asked respondents whether they had attended any training in connection with digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, 86.3% responded 'no' and only (13.7%) answered 'yes' (Table 4.6). These findings confirm that this contributes to the non-adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Macharia (2019) highlighted that the demand for highly skilled administrators in the hospitality and leisure industry is rising as new digital systems are in place.

Employees must learn to operate systems for the industry's administrative operations to be productive. Sunday *et al*. (2020) mentioned that the analysis revealed that most micro-businesses train to learn how to improve in the implication of new technology and assess what is now. The training helps small business managers and workers understand applications that can contribute to organisational productivity.

Table 4.6: Training

Training on administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.		
No	63	86.3%
Yes	10	13.7%

4.7.1.2 Connectivity to enable remote work

As presented in table 4.8 (C1) below (38.4%) of respondents disagreed that they find connectivity good with the organisation a further (8.2%) strongly disagreed. The findings confirm that the organisation operates in a poor connectivity infrastructure that might cause a lack of productivity, especially in administrative operations. Aziz's

(2021) findings revealed that technological transformation and IT infrastructure significantly impact the organisation's productivity. Results also demonstrate that business continuity can be halted by the non-adoption of digital systems and practices due to a lack of connectivity.

Abedin and Kozanoglu (2021) alluded that good connectivity drives all aspects of intelligent and critical components of economies and societies. Digital connectivity is also crucial in the COVID-19 response and recovery, enabling remote working and critical communications (Sprenger & Schiavone 2017).

Table 4.8 (C1) below also indicates that (27.0%) of respondents agreed and (5.5%) strongly agreed with the statement. As described in section 3.5, the target population comprised administrative employees in different regions within Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The results confirm that administrative employees in other geographical areas have different views of connectivity provision within the organisation. Good connectivity is also beneficial to clients (Sintala, 2021). Sintala (2021) further indicated that the Tourism industry must invest in better and faster Wi-Fi infrastructure so that clients can do business and use their technology devices easily, ensuring good customer service.

4.7.1.3 IT Devices

table 4.8 (C2) below illustrates that (61.6%) of respondents agreed that they have full access to devices an additional (11%) strongly agreed. However, (13.7%) of respondents indicated that they do not have full access to devices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. These are pieces of physical hardware used to compute or support computer functions within a more extensive system (Beal, 2022). Devices are associated with organisational factors affecting technology communications in the tourism and leisure industry. Harrell and Bynum (2018) alluded that infrastructure can affect Wi-Fi connection and minimise internet access to technology devices in organisations, especially those that are in rural areas. It affects productivity as described in the study by (van-Deursen, 2018), who found that employees lose nearly 8 per cent of productive time due to insufficient IT resources or inadequate digital tools.

4.7.1.4 The use of laptops as devices

As presented in table 4.8 (C3) below, (46.6%) of respondents agreed, an additional (45.2%) strongly agreed that they prefer to work using a laptop, whilst (5.5%) were neutral. The results confirm business continuity at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife amid COVID-19. It can be attributed to findings (Lodivici, 2021) that as the business is done worldwide, portability is becoming a significant factor in the workstation, whether operations are local, national, or even international. Furthermore, Bradley (2019) alluded that laptops are suitable for work because they have software that employees will rely on to get things done when they are sitting at their workplace or out of their offices.

4.7.1.5 The use of smartphones as devices

As shown in table 4.8 (C4) below that (37.0%) of respondents agreed with the statement. However, (38.4%) disagreed, and a further (8.2%) were uncertain that they prefer to work using a smartphone. Therefore, it reveals that there may be a halt in productivity at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife if employees are encouraged to work remotely using their smartphones. Furthermore, a lack of financial resources might cause demotivation to use mobile smartphones for work purposes, like White (2019) found that employees worry about going over their data limits and incurring more charges because they can't connect to the Wi-Fi remotely via their smartphones. It ultimately impedes productivity.

Ghandhi *et al.* (2020) alluded that reimbursement modalities for supporting employees' finances are mandatory in teleworking to ensure that employees have the right equipment, internet, bandwidth, and communication tools within the organisation's framework. McIntosh (2020) revealed that smartphones in businesses also provide organisations with more collaborative communications enabling companies to make faster decisions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when employees are mandated to work separately.

4.7.1.6 Easily managing and browsing through systems

Statistic results have revealed in table 4.8 (C5) that (42.5%) of respondents agreed that the organisation makes it easy for employees to manage and browse through systems anytime. However, A relatively high percentage of (27.4%) disagreed with the

statement and (21.9%) were uncertain. Bates (2019) highlighted that browsing through systems means repossessing data from various sections of the web and exhibiting it on a desktop or smart phone. Results reveal that the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices may be affected by access to systems, which means that administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are struggling to retrieve information, especially if they are working remotely. Weiner (2019) found that effective web browsing through systems and processes significantly increases employee productivity. Melo (2021) confirmed that web browsing could help employees access information and increase employee engagement and satisfaction.

4.7.1.7 Systems are clear and understandable

When asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with this statement, the majority (42.5%), as indicated in table 4.8 (C6) below, agreed that the systems provided by the organisation are clear and understandable. This finding confirms that the systems are easy to use. However, (24.7%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. These results attribute to the simplicity of implementing digital strategies to increase productivity. Zaman (2020) attested that understanding systems determine an employee's behavioural intention to use the system. Lee (2019), in his findings, indicated that digital simplicity gives employees a sense of control and balance in their operations. Dankbarr and Kok (2018) confirmed that It's not enough to change one or two systems. Adapting to the digital world must be a wholesale transformation. It means embedding digital solutions not just in what organisations offer clients but also in their internal systems, from the software they use to HR processes (Dankbarr & Kok 2018) promoting advanced digital tools in one part of the business while maintaining antiquated systems.

4.7.1.8 Constant system support

As illustrated in table 4.8 (C7) below, the majority (41.1%) of employees have agreed that the organisation provides them with constant system support. Users tend to gain more confidence in using technology if they know that help will be available (Petronilla and Pemberton 2016). However, (26.0%) of respondents disagreed, and a further (21.9%) were neutral to the statement because of the organisation's clear vision and policies for implementing digital systems and practices, like Alkema *et al.* (2019). They

found that system support can be managed by offering achievable goals. He further stated that managers must give simple direction to employees to help simplify their assumptions when working with digital systems. It will help maximise their productivity, as they will have a clear focus and vision.

4.7.1.9 Organisational culture

The statistical results have shown in table 4.8 (C8) that the majority (52.1%) of respondents agreed that the organisational culture allows them to use systems. However, merely (17.8%) have disagreed. Holotiuk and Moornman (2018) mentioned that corporate culture is significant when introducing digital systems in an organisation as it affects the process of managing change, implementation, and adoption of the new system in organisations. The findings reveal that adopting digital administrative procedures and practices is slightly affected by the organisation's vision and communication, like Van-Bella *et al.* (2019). They confirmed in their findings that effective employers would formulate a clear vision of the digital transformation and effectively communicate it throughout the organisation on an ongoing basis to increase the chances of employee adoption.

4.7.1.10 Digital change agents.

Table 4.8 (C9) below revealed that (21.9%) of respondents agreed that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife does not need digital change agents to assist employees through digital transformation. However, (39.7%) disagreed, an additional (15.1%) strongly disagreed, whilst (and 16.4%) were neutral about the statement. Digital transformation agencies help to create appropriate product offerings and strategies in alignment with customer requirements and values (Finley 2021). In addition, agencies help train and educate employees to take a data-driven approach and get used to new business initiatives and technologies (Conte & Akesson 2021). These results reveal that adopting digital systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is affected by the lack of provision of digital change agencies in the organisation and how implemented systems are communicated to employees like findings by Thompson (2021) revealed that successful digital transformation is no longer the organisation's sole responsibility. Instead, it requires cultural change across all areas of the business. He further stated that digital transformation fails simply because the wider business is unaware of it.

4.7.2 Factors related to the individual

4.7.2.1 Open to change

Statistic results revealed that (47.2%) of respondents agreed with the statement, and an additional (41.7%) have strongly agreed that they are open to change, as indicated in table 4.8 (C10) below. Jonathan (2017) revealed that employee willingness to change is one of the key ingredients which makes an organisation successful over its competitors. Results confirm that employees at Ezemvelo KZN wildlife are open to transformation. Findings by (Tumer, 2020) revealed that studies have estimated that 70% of change initiatives in organisations succeed through employee self-motivation.

Results further revealed (5.6%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. It can be attributed to findings by (Capusneanu, *et al.,* 2021), who confirmed that change could be discouraging, mostly when employees have conducted things a particular way for a long time or if they are frightened that innovations may lead to a loss of income. Alyammahi (2019) alluded that users' unwillingness to accept innovations obstructs technology adoption.

The results in table 4.7 below indicate through a cross tabular that most employees who are open to change are between the ages of 21-40 because this age category has advanced technology technical and is willing to move from the old traditional ways of operating to digital processes (Tumer 2020).

Table 4.7: Age * open to change Cross tabulation

		I am open to change						
			Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Total
Age	20 and below	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
	21 - 30	0	8	3	1	12	0	24
	31 - 40	1	12	1	1	11	0	26
	41 - 50	0	9	0	0	6	0	15
	50 and above	0	4	0	1	0	1	6
Total		1	34	4	3	30	1	73

4.7.2.2 Employees support each other in learning systems

The results in table 4.8 (C11) below indicates that (68.5%) of employees agreed that they support each other as employees in learning digital system. The results confirm collaboration and sharing of knowledge at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. It is much more possible with virtual communications whilst employees work remotely (Regniers 2022). Like results tabled by Kunsman (2021), most organisations have switched to cloud-based programs, which offer more functionality and ease of use for team collaboration. He added that employees must be adapted and familiar with multiple devices beyond the computer. For example, how to use items like tablets and mobile smartphones for work purposes (Kunsman 2021).

4.7.2.3 Employee connectivity to the internet when working remotely

As depicted in table 4.8 (C12) below that (42.47%) of respondents agreed that they are well connected to the internet even when working remotely at EKZNW. However, (37.0%) disagreed, and a further (6.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Results confirm that the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices is affected by limited access to the internet when employees are working remotely.

Park (2020) revealed in his findings that the most significant challenges to adopting new digital systems were Internet access, hardware incompatibility and lack of electricity in remote areas. He further indicated that another challenge was employees' inability to understand the systems' advantages, especially when working remotely.

4.7.2.4 Attitude toward using Microsoft Teams

Table 4.8 (C13) below revealed that (57.7%) of respondents confirmed that they feel more confident using a Microsoft Team’s system to conduct meetings. The results showed improved communication and productivity, especially if employees are mandated to operate remotely. Regniers (2022) indicated that remote workforces could improve collaboration, strengthen company culture, and positively impact productivity by relying on the Microsoft Teams system during the COVID-19 period and beyond.

4.7.2.5 Attitude towards using the e-Bookings system

Results in table 4.8 (C14) below revealed most respondents (about 52.1%) agreed that they enjoy using the e-bookings system, and an additional (13.7%) strongly agreed with the statement. Results confirm a positive attitude towards using an SAP electronic booking system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The findings also revealed in table 4.8 (C14) a total of (23.3%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. Kuwait and Rayen (2020) mentioned that persuading employees to adopt a new system requires putting forth a compelling vision for what the system is and what it will do for an employee.

4.7.2.6 Attitude toward using the PaySpace system

Results in table 4.8 (C15) below illustrated that (60.8%) of respondents agreed, and an additional (23.3%) strongly agreed that they feel more comfortable using the PaySpace system to process leave forms. It contributes to Endehabtu *et al.* (2020), who revealed that users' attitudes toward an electronic system would positively influence their intention to use it. He further mentioned that studies suggest that users' attitudes are a crucial factor in the acceptance and efficiency of using innovations in practice (Endehabtu *et al.,* 2020). However, (6.8%) disagreed and (9.6%) were neutral about the statement. Endehabtu *et al.* (2020) also revealed that several studies consistently indicate that facilitating conditions, such as the technical infrastructure of organisations, influence users' attitudes and intentions to use technology.

4.7.2.7 Attitude toward using myESS system

Table 4.8 (C17) shows that the majority (61.6%) of respondents have agreed that they enjoy receiving their payslips and IRP5 from the myESS system. Results are due to behavioural intention towards the myESS system. Like findings by Hakami and Maslin (2019), organisations try to adopt IT innovations to stay in their competitive position and create a competitive advantage.

Chao (2019) also revealed that self-efficacy significantly positively affected the perceived enjoyment of using mobile learning. However, (15.07%) of employees were in disagreement with the statement.

The researcher attributes it to users' confidence and trust when using the myESS system. Like findings by Akinwale and Krayi (2020), they found that the faith and belief employees have in using financial technology platforms, bearing in mind that their confidential information is protected, also played a significant role in encouraging the users' attitude toward adopting the system.

4.7.2.8 Attitude toward using the SAP system

Statistic results have revealed that (54.8%) of respondents agreed. An additional (19.2%) of respondents strongly agreed that suppliers are paid on time using the SAP system, and invoices are treated on time because of a positive performance expectancy on the behavioural intention to use the SAP system, which increases employee productivity, as indicated by (Chao 2019).

Table 4.8: Factors that affect adopting digital administrative systems and practice at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

		Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	%	Mode
SECTION C - Examining factors that affect the adoption of digital systems and practices	C1	I find connectivity within the Organisation good	9	28	8	21	4	38.4%	Disagree
	C2	I have full access to IT devices	1	9	10	45	8	61.6%	Agree
	C3	I prefer to work using a laptop	1	1	4	34	33	46.6%	Agree
	C4	I prefer to work using a smartphone	4	28	6	27	8	38.4%	Disagree
	C5	The organisation makes it easy for employees to manage and browse through systems anytime.	1	20	16	31	5	42.5%	Agree
	C6	Systems provided by the Organisation are clear and understandable	0	18	19	31	5	42.5%	Agree
	C7	The organisation provides me with constant system support	1	19	16	30	7	41.1%	Agree
	C8	The Organisational culture allows me to use systems	0	13	16	38	6	52.1%	Agree
	C9	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife does not need digital change agents to assist employees through digital transformation.	11	29	12	16	5	39.7%	Disagree

	C10	I am open to change	1	4	3	34	30	47.2%	Agree
	C11	We support each other as employees in learning systems	1	4	5	50	13	68.5%	Agree
	C12	I am always well connected to EKZNW internet, even when I am working remotely	5	27	7	31	3	42.47%	Agree
	C13	I feel more confident using Microsoft Teams to schedule and hold meetings	1	11	5	42	14	57.7%	Agree
	C14	I enjoy using e-Bookings (SAP)	0	17	8	38	10	51.1%	Agree
	C15	I feel more comfortable using PaySpace to process my leave forms	0	5	7	44	17	60.8%	Agree
	C16	I enjoy receiving my payslip and IRP5 from the MyESS system	1	11	6	45	10	61.6%	Agree
	C17	Suppliers are paid on time using the SAP system, and invoices are GRA'd on time	0	9	10	40	14	54.8%	Agree

4.8 PERCEIVED BENEFIT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ADOPTED DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AT EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

SECTION D

This section analysis data concerning the perceived benefit and effectiveness of the adopted administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Section D of the questionnaire probed the effectiveness of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to answer the third research question related to the effectiveness of the adopted administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Several statements coded D1 – D5 aligned to the effectiveness of the digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife were listed. The researcher asked respondents to read and rate them using the strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree to, strongly agree scale. The results are in Tables 4.9 to 4.10.

In this section, the research focused on only five systems Microsoft Teams, Zoom system, SAP system, Payspace system and myESS systems. The researcher chose the platforms because they are critical systems to ensure business continuity during the COVID-19 shutdown. In addition, administrative employees used them while working remotely.

4.8.1 Effectiveness of PaySpace system in employee performance.

Based on the results presented in table 4.10 (D1) below. The majority (54.8%) of respondents agreed, and an additional (24.7%) strongly agreed with the statement. However, (12.3%) were uncertain, and (8.2%) disagreed. If employees trust the system to be effective, they will quickly develop a positive attitude toward using it, which can then positively affect an employee's performance (Rahmi *et al.,* 2021). Results prove the effectiveness of the PaySpace system at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Dahlberg *et al*. (2020) revealed that trust plays a crucial role in employees' acceptance of digital systems. He emphasised that a secondary factor in technology acceptance is trust, which includes security, attitudes, and concerns.

4.8.2 Microsoft Teams and Zoom are more effective than face-to-face communication

Statistic results in table 4.10 (D2) below illustrated that (50.7%) of respondents agreed, and a further (30.1%) strongly agreed that Microsoft Teams and Zoom systems are more effective than face-to-face communication. This can be attributed to the simplicity of Microsoft Teams and Zoom systems. Like the finding by Zaman (2020), where he revealed that the system's simplicity, when introduced to employees, can affect the acceptance and behavioural intention to use the system. However, (9.6%) of respondents disagreed with the statement.

Kirkland (2019) revealed that it is more effective for a young employee to browse the internet and understand systems even if they are working remotely, whilst an older employee might find difficulties that may lead to preferences for the manual process.

Table 4.9 below illustrates that 14 participants who wear in agreement with the statement were between the ages of 21-30. This confirms that the younger generation

works more effectively with the digital system than the older generation at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Table 4.9: Age * Microsoft Teams and Zoom are more effective than face-to-face communication Crosstabulation

		Ms Teams and Zoom are more effective than face-to-face communication					
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Total
Age	20 and below	0	0	0	2	0	2
	21 - 30	14	1	1	7	1	24
	31 - 40	13	2	1	9	1	26
	41 - 50	8	2	1	4	0	15
	50 and above	2	2	1	0	1	6
Total		37	7	4	22	3	73

4.8.3 The adoption of an SAP system encourages me to work even after hours

Results presented in table 4.10 (D3) below indicate that (54.4%) of respondents agreed that adopting an SAP system encourages them to work even after hours. I confirm the SAP system's effectiveness as administrative employees can do more work in less time anywhere. In addition, chapter two, section 2.8.2.4, states that having effective managerial procedures in place will allow employees to achieve more with less, get things done in less time, and scale their operations (Brian 2019).

These results indicate that with a Sap system, productivity is even if employees work from home, as indicated by Rahmi *et al.* (2021). However, (13.7%) disagreed with the statement. It is due to technology infrastructure, like the findings by Marcia (2019). They revealed that the lack of connectivity throughout Africa was a factor that would negatively impact the adoption of digital transformation.

4.8.4 e-Booking system is useful

Results illustrated in table 4.10 (D4) revealed that a high number of employees (49.3%) agreed that they found the e-booking system useful in their job during the COVID-19 shutdown. It confirms user satisfaction with the system, as indicated in the

findings by Chao (2019). However (17.8%) were uncertain, and (8.2%) disagreed with the statement.

Van-Dyk and van-Bella (2020) highlighted that before the organisation can address resistance to change, there must be communication and a clear definition of digital systems and processes implemented to all employees so that they can find the confidence to use a particular system effectively.

4.8.5 Effectiveness of myESS system in employee performance

Statistic results illustrated in table 4.10 (D5) below indicate (53.4%) of respondents agree, additional (21.9%) of respondents strongly agree that the adoption of the myESS system encourages them to work faster. Like Peter's findings, it could be because of the system's perceived information and the design's simplicity (2018). On the other hand, (12.3%) disagreed that adopting myESS encourages them to work faster. Eneizan *et al.* (2019) emphasised that technical support usually depends upon the individual utilising systems and procedures.

Table 4.10: Perceived usefulness and effectiveness of the adopted systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

		Statement	SD	D	N	NU	A	SA	%	Mode
SECTION D - Perceived usefulness and effectiveness	D1	The adoption of the PaySpace system is effective in my performance	0	6	9	0	40	18	54.8%	Agree
	D2	Microsoft Teams and Zoom are more effective than face-to-face communication	3	7	4	0	37	22	50.7%	Agree
	D3	The adoption of an SAP system encourages me to work even after hours	0	10	7	0	40	16	54.4%	Agree
	D4	I find e-Booking a helpful system in my job	0	6	13	0	36	18	49.3%	Agree
	D5	The adoption of the MyESS system encourages me to work faster	0	9	9	0	39	16	53.4%	Agree
	6= Strongly agree, 5= Agree, 4= Neutral, 3= Not using, 2= Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree									

4.9 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse data based on responses the researcher collected from administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife regarding the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. Objective one of the research projects was addressed, and the results showed that out of the ten digital administrative systems implemented, employees only adopted six. Furthermore, the researcher found one system to duplicate another. The most adopted system is the payspace system. However, this system is more related to employee benefit, this means that employees are prioritising the system that is beneficial to them more than the ones that can improve productivity and customer satisfaction.

The organisation has done well in implementing digital strategies, but factors were found to challenge employees' successful adoption of these systems. Objective two was also addressed by presenting and discussing factors affecting the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. The results indicate that factors mentioned in the literature review were tested and proven to have affected the level of adoption and utilisation of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Results revealed that these were primary factors of organisational influence.

Objective three focused on the effectiveness of the adopted digital systems and practices. The results indicated that the implemented digital administrative systems could be effective if appropriately communicated. Communication and collaboration encourage the respondent’s attitude toward the use of the system, and this maximises productivity. The following chapter will table in details the outcome of this study concerning the objectives and literature review and include recommendations, suggestions for future research and conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented an analysis of the quantitative data the researcher collected. In addition, the researcher conducted an online survey to achieve the study's objectives. The study's objectives were to determine digital administrative systems and practices in use at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The study also sought to examine factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Also, the researcher sought to assess the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

This chapter tables the overview of the study's achievements of objectives of the study. It further discusses the limitations and implications of the research study, recommendations and suggestions for future research related to the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. Finally, it concludes the analysis according to the outcomes of the study.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the embracement of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. All sectors in developed and developing countries have recently had to urgently transition to online platforms due to the rapid increase of the Coronavirus pandemic (Amador 2019). For instance, the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife mandated its employees to work remotely using online platforms to curb the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, employees are expected to adopt technology to attract, keep, and satisfy customers and survive competitors. Customer service can be affected when employees work virtually using technology.

Literature was reviewed on adopting digital administrative systems and practices. For example, section 2.2.2 of chapter two pointed out that in Sweden, a lack of digital activities results in growth challenges in most primary sectors, specifically the tourism and leisure industry (Jan 2019). Furthermore, digital speed is five times faster than traditional business (Berger 2017). However, according to Sibanda (2019), many of

South Africa’s large corporates, outside of banking, high tech, and telecommunications, which sit ahead of the pack, are in the early stages of their digitisation journey, from the mining and chemical industries to travel and leisure, many traditional businesses are only just beginning to implement digital strategies.

The importance of assessing organisations' readiness to adopt and use digital administrative systems and practices as a form of operation was also reviewed in the literature. For example, chapter two, section 2.3.3, explained that digital strategy uses technology, systems, and processes to improve business performance. Whether creating new products or reimagining the current methods, it specifies the direction an organisation will take to develop new competitive advantages with technology (Dube *et al.* 2019).

This highlights the need for proper planning and proper vision emerging adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. The findings presented in chapter four provides the state of adoption of digital systems and practices, the factors influencing adoption, as well as the perspectives of administrative employees towards enhancing customer service.

5.3 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This section provides the study's objectives based on findings and literature review.

Objective 1 incorporates the results obtained from the digital administrative systems adopted at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and the digital administrative practices implemented. This is because this objective focused on determining the use of digital administrative systems and digital administrative practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Hence, section B in chapter four was separated into two sections: section B1 and Section B2.

5.3.1 Objective 1: To determine digital administrative systems and practices used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

5.3.1.1 Systems adopted

Data analysis in Table 4.4 in chapter four shows that majority (>95%) of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife administrative employees responded highly positive (‘agree’ and ‘strongly

agree') that they are using the payspace system (B1.3) and Microsoft Teams (B1.5) digital administrative systems. The research revealed adopting digital administrative systems from administrative employees within Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Furthermore, these results confirmed digital strategies that could be implemented appropriately for specific use to achieve digital administrative transformation in the tourism and leisure industry.

The data analysis also revealed a high positive response (>80%) of the adoption of an SAP system (B1.1) and myESS system (B1.2). At the same time, (66–75%) of positive responses indicate that some make use of the e-Booking system (B1.7) and e-Invoicing (B1.8) digital administrative systems at Ezemvelo Wildlife. Adoption of these systems demonstrated less expensive client communication. In addition, it reduced data storage in the administrative operations of EKZNW as indicated in chapter two, section 2.5 of the literature review that certain benefits come with the use of digitalised systems that result in a paperless office, such as easy access to data, less expensive client communication and reduced daily data storage as opposed to the traditional office where more time is spent on administrative operations (Isabel 2021). However, the study found that some administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife still have not adopted these systems due to a lack of communication of newly implemented systems and a poor change management plan.

Table 4.4 in chapter four also revealed a high negative response (>50%) on the adoption of dynamic system adoption of a zoom system and the adoption of e-signature. This finding confirms that there are employees who have adopted digital administrative systems, and there are those who are still left behind and operating using a traditional paper-based method. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, routing and signing documents is using papers at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife because employees are encouraged to work remotely to curb the spread of the pandemic. This confirms delays in service delivery, lack of productivity and communication breakdown in the administrative operations at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Analysis results presented the non-adoption of the e-coupons system table 4.4 (B1.10) confirms that the Reservations department at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is issuing manual vouchers when refunding clients instead of an electronic voucher system. In addition, a report by Nene (2021) revealed that during lockdown level 4, more than 100 000

visitors, mainly from Gauteng province, were due to visit KZN Coastal. However, with the high rate of infections in the Country, travelling in and out of provinces for leisure purposes was prohibited for two weeks, resulting in accommodation facilities receiving calls for cancellations. This contributes to the importance of adopting e-coupons systems for refunds in case of cancellations to satisfy customers and speed up workflow processes at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

5.3.1.2 Practices implemented.

Data analysis in chapter four, table 4.5, revealed that more than (80%) of positive responses indicated that respondents obtain quotations, place orders, and purchase goods and services using an SAP system. Employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife use Payspace to apply for leave and get leave balance. In addition, they use Microsoft Teams to communicate and conduct meetings. The results reveal a significant shift from paper-based operations to digital processes. As Matthew (2021) emphasised, organisational culture change will ensure that business leaders, managers and employees are on board with the digital transformation initiative. An effective element for success needs a united company with a workplace culture geared towards digital transformation (Matthew 2021).

Approximately 80% of the positive response indicate that myESS is used to request and verify personal files or information from the HR at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The adoption of the practice confirms minimum human error on employee files. Pretorius (2021) indicated that processes that are used frequently or involve a lot of repetition should be targeted for digitalisation because they usually take up significant time. By digitalising these, the business can spend resources more effectively on fulfilling its corporate mandate.

Respondents indicated with a positive response between 60% and 73% that they have adopted issuing electronic invoices to suppliers. The analysis has illustrated that administrative employees adopt the SAP practice to book business trips for supervisors and process clients' bookings using e-Booking This confirms the leveraging of new methods of receiving payments and executing supply and value chain processes at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The positive response to adopting digital practices ensures that administrative employees can perform their operations remotely and that employee productivity is guaranteed.

Data obtained in table 4.5, chapter four, revealed a high rate of negative responses. Respondents confirmed that they are not compiling payslips using a dynamic system. As defined in chapter two, section 2.5.4 by Forrester (2015), the practices associated with the dynamic system were studied and proven to guarantee efficiency in payroll operations as they eliminate the use of paper. This further proves that employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife still prefer to use the paper-based method when carrying out their payroll operations.

5.3.2 Objective 2: To examine factors influencing adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The literature reviewed for this study outlined factors found in previous research to have affected the adoption of technology and digital innovation. These factors were grouped into two groups; factors associated with the organisation and those associated with the individual. Findings from this study outlined several factors affecting the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This section provides a summary of elements based on the study's results as per chapter four, categorised into two, factors of organisational influence and factors of individual power.

5.3.2.1 Factors of organisational influence

- **Training**

As mentioned in section 2.8.1.1 of the literature review, it is impossible that digital transformation progress may occur without new or upgraded employee technical skills (Abu-Shanab 2017). This is one critical factor to be prioritised to ensure the full adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. However, the results from the study have indicated that employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife have never been trained on how to operate digital administrative systems and practices.

Chapter two of the literature review stated that digital adoption is only successful in organisations when managers achieve an organisational state wherein all employees can use digital tools to their fullest extent. The organisation can only say it has

successfully embraced digital adoption (Boothby *et al.,* 2022). Several systems have been implemented, but end-users have not been equipped with refresher training to use digital systems. This factor will continue affecting the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices if not prioritised. As Benson (2021) indicates, employee training increases productivity and improves output. This, in turn, can significantly reduce the number of issues stemming from inefficiency and errors (Benson 2021).

- **Connectivity to enable remote work**

This study found that even though most employees have agreed (37.0%) that the organisation has a good connectivity infrastructure as per chapter four, table 4.8 (C1). Some employees were uncertain, and others disagreed. Section 2.8.1 of the literature review highlighted that local and cloud-based digital tools, software, and hardware, represent the primary resources to be made available to employees for use and must be tabled on the organisations' vision (Matthew & Ward 2018). Organisations must provide their employees with connectivity to get out all the potential benefits of a 'digital arsenal' and organisational processes and practices using digital tools (Eneizan *et al.,* 2018). This study has confirmed, as per results in chapter four, section C1, that some Regions at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are experiencing poor connectivity, which might lead to the non-adoption of digital administrative systems and practices. Investment in connectivity at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife can help improve the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices, enhancing employee productivity and customer satisfaction even if employees are working remotely.

- **Constant system support**

Section 2.8.1.2 of chapter two highlighted that system support in the hospitality and leisure industry in South Arica is in high demand as the industry is moving towards the new digital era where almost all operations are done online (Ghaderi *et al.,* 2021). System support has impacted the adoption of digital administrative systems at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This is confirmed by table 4.8 section C7 of chapter four, where most employees responded that they support each other in learning systems.
This factor affects adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Therefore, the organisation should implement proper support systems

for employees struggling to adopt digital administrative systems and practices independently. For an instant, among other system support, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should prioritise the implementation of a user self-service support system as it can be effective during COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Organisational culture**

The corporate culture was tested and proven to hurt by adopting digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Several employees (26.7%) have disagreed that the organisational culture allows them to use administrative systems, chapter four table 4.8 (C8). Therefore, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should implement digital administrative systems and practices policy that will table clear standard procedures for the operation of digital administrative systems by all administrative employees.

- **Embracing transformation**

As section 2.8.1.5 of chapter two mentions, employers must create an audacious vision, strategy, process, and culture to encourage their employees to innovate and experiment with new technologies and business models (Calvacanti *et al.,* 2020). This study found that digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are implemented, but this factor's adoption of these systems is impacted negatively. Digital transformation and improved business processes and activities will lead to better adoption (Zhang & Hon 2020).

5.3.2.2. Factors of individual influence

- **Open to change**

The study revealed that employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are open to changing chapter four, table 4.8 (C10), which confirms that this factor might not have much adverse effect on adopting digital systems and practices. However, some employees indicated that they are resistant to change. Therefore, the organisation should look at the common causes that might promote employee resistance to change.

As shown by Sharma (2019), organisations should start by making a change communication plan before initiating change. Organisations should have several

communication actions planned, such as the announcement of the change, small group discussions and methods for gathering feedback (Madden 2017).

In chapter two, section 2.2.2, Sepelova *et al.* (2018) highlighted that because of the digital revolution, the international development trends in the service sector in South Africa, particularly the hospitality industry, have opened the way for novel solutions like cloud-based booking sites via digital administrative platforms, information and experience sharing via digital corporate communication.

This means that Managers at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should be vigilant in ensuring that employees do not resist change. Drastic measures must be in place to keep employees in the loop as digital transformation keeps evolving (Avenyo *et al.,* 2022).

- **Work experience**

As defined in Chapter two, section 2.8.2.2, employees' experience of applying their minds to new technology can positively and negatively affect the future adoption of technology and digital transformation (Murrithi *et al.,* 2016: 84-100). Furthermore, the study has found in chapter four, table 4.8, that older employees might find it more challenging to adapt to digital systems than the younger generation.

Therefore, a transparent support system for employees who have traditionally acquired experience at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife needs to be implemented to transform into a digital era quickly.

- **Level of education**

This study obtained that the level of education is another factor that is likely to affect the adoption of digital systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Administrative employees who were part of this study hold mostly Diplomas, followed by Matric certificates and Degrees, a minor qualification that administrative employees have at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Therefore, the organisation must implement continuous training and skills development programmes to assist employees with little to no knowledge of operating digital administrative systems and practices.

- **Age**

Age contributed to adopting digital systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, as most respondents who completed the online survey were employees between 31-40 years (35.6%). This means younger employees are more willing to adopt technology and digital transformation than older employees attesting to (Olson 2018), who indicated that employees between the ages of 20 to 40 are more anticipated to accept technology in comparison to senior employees who require constant system support.

- **Behavioral intention to use**

This study found that employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are adopting mostly the digital systems and practices that relate to processing personal information than those that can help maintain productivity and quality customer service. This attributes to section 4.5.1 of chapter four, where it was found that above 95% of employees adopted a PaySpace system used to collect payslips and leave balances. Furthermore, section 4.5.2 of chapter four also revealed that at least 57.5% of employees show a behavioural intention to use a Microsoft teams for communication and conducting meetings. This proves that administrative employees are adopting digital strategies that are beneficial to them.

5.3.3 Objective 3: To assess the effectiveness of the adopted digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The results revealed in chapter four, table 4.10 (D1-D5), a positive response of more than 70%, indicating that adopting an SAP system at Ezemvelo KZN wildlife encourages administrative employees to work after hours. This confirms the effectiveness of the Sap system, as employees can achieve more with less (Brian 2019), which results in positive employee productivity if adopted successfully. The findings confirm the effectiveness of the SAP system as administrative employees can do more work in less time anywhere. Section 2.9.2.4 of chapter two stated that having effective administrative procedures in place will allow an employee to achieve more with less, get things done in less time, and scale their operation (Brian 2019)

The findings also revealed that employees find the e-Booking system effective in their operations. However, (17.8%) of employees were uncertain. As studied by Zaman

(2020), chapter two, section 2.9.2.1, the system's simplicity, when introduced to employees, can affect the effectiveness and the attitude towards the willingness of an employee to adopt it. This means that the clarity of the implemented system can play a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness of the adopted strategy.

Interpretation of results in chapter four, table 4.10 (D4), indicated a positive response on the Payspace system adoption being effective in employee performance and the myESS system allowing employees to work faster. This concludes that techniques such as innovation, collaboration and communication are essential when implementing digital strategies in the organisation.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations have been identified in this study.

5.4.1 Census of Administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Respondents in this study were limited to administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Employees at Senior and Management levels were excluded from the study. This is because the administrative level is the ones who deal with daily operations using digital administrative systems and practices. On the literature there was a crucial discussion of digital change agent as leaders. However, data collection did not include leaders due to the main focus being on the administrative staff who are at middle and lower levels.

Findings in this study indicate that digital administrative systems are implemented at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Still, factors such as training, connectivity, organisational culture, collaboration, work experience, openness to change, and level of education affect how administrative employees adopt and utilise these systems.

5.5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Literature reveals few studies on digital administrative systems and practices in South Africa’s Hospitality and Tourism industry. Examples include Madonda (2016), who studied the influence of social media as a communication tool in promoting the tourism

industry in Durban, and Booyens (2016) conducted a study on innovation and networking for the competitiveness of the Western Cape Regional tourism economy and Dube, Ndayizigamiye and Khoase (2019) their study focused more on a systematic review of digital marketing in South Africa. None of the studies has focused on adopting digital administrative systems and practices by employees on an administrative level in the Hospitality and Tourism industry. This study contributes knowledge about adopting digital administrative systems and practices, factors influencing adoption and which systems are deemed effective in this context. This will help prepare administrative employees in public and private organisations, particularly the tourism and leisure industry for the digital era, whereby most functions of businesses in all industries will be automated (Mhlongo 2021).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

- The Payspace system was revealed in this study as the most adopted system by employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. However, its practice is associated with employees' personal information, such as leave and payslips. This means that employees are prioritising systems that are beneficial to them. It is recommended that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife enhance communication to employees regarding the purpose and benefits of the digital systems and practices to be used and adopted in order to increase productivity.

- As we know, the world came to an abrupt halt in early 2020, and governments, informed by science, had to implement drastic measures to save lives (Anon 2020). Therefore, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should consider standardising and putting procedures through an organisation policy for digital administrative systems and practices and include systems such as e-signature, e-booking and Microsoft Teams system. For instance, a standard procedure relating to Digital Corporate Communication systems will help prepare employees and make them understand the importance of digital administrative systems and practices so that administrative operations continue in unforeseen events.

- As mentioned in chapter two, policy-making bodies and policy administrators at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife must consider modern information technology a core driver for improving the efficiency of its administrative operations and encouraging transparency within the organisation.

- The management should consider decentralising training for administrative employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife on how to use digital systems and practices that are implemented by the organisation at a regional level, to improve productivity even if employees are working remotely. In addition, it is suggested that the organisation should pay more attention to improving its digital technology expertise. As indicated by Thomas and Seely (2021: 21), "today's business environment is so dynamic that employees must develop skills to help them adapt to ever-changing work-related situations".

  It is further suggested that the management should invest in training for older employees to integrate them into the digital age while leveraging the professional experience they bring to the organisation.

- As mentioned in chapter two of the literature review, organisations that do not invest in digital transformations risk losing brand credibility due to poor administrative operations and may be unable to target the right audience (Chan *et al.* 2019). Therefore, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should invest in adopting digital administrative systems and practices, ensuring that digital transformation agencies are consulted to assist employees through a digital transformation during and post COVID-19 pandemic.

- The management at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should introduce strategies that can help reduce employee resistance to change. Beloglazov and Bedganyan (2018) indicate that employees in organisations are objected to being educated about the nature and need for change before implementation. A few main reasons employees resist change is a lack of communication (Pretorius 2019). As mentioned in chapter two, poor communication is a cause of employee resistance to change (Pauline 2021). Organisations should commence by

putting in place a change communication plan before they propose change. There should be multiple communication actions planned, such as the announcement of the change (Sharma 2018).

- Management should prioritise investing in connectivity (digital infrastructure) at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The findings in this study indicate a lack of connectivity which negatively affects the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Investing in data provision for employees so that they will be able to use their smartphones remotely is one of the strategies to be prioritised, as indicated in chapter two of the literature review that connectivity / Internet might not be much of an problem, but instead that the issue lies in how government sector, employees and businesses use their devices to access information, and who pays for the data they use (Lester 2022).

- It is suggested that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should prioritise its digital infrastructure, such as financial investments towards Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife website design. The study found that most administrative employees have not adopted the e-booking system, per chapter four, section 4.5.5. This may be attributed to website maintenance and updating. Therefore, it is recommended that the management ensure that all information related to digital administrative systems and practices is easily accessible on the EKZNW website. This will help boost employee productivity and achieve quality customer satisfaction.

- It is recommended that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife introduces a digital strategy that will focus on administrative digital systems whereby employees can interact with customers online for ease of communication while employees are working from home. As mentioned in section 2.3.3 of chapter two, having a cohesive strategy allows the organisation to reach its target audience more effectively, using the platforms their potential clients prefer to spend their time on, such as Google and social media (Dube *et al.,* 2019). Furthermore, this will ensure that

good customer service is always provided to clients, even if employees are working remotely.

- Management at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife should strengthen the efforts to achieve quality customer service by introducing a strategy such as conducting a digital customer survey to acquire feedback and gather customer suggestions. This will help maintain an excellent business-to-customer relationship during and post COVID-19 pandemic.

5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This section provides suggestions for future research to be conducted on the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices.

- Research on adopting digital systems and practices will be conducted on Executive Management and Senior Management employees of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife or other organisations, such as government departments, since this study was only limited to administrative employees.

- Thorough research sheds light on the factors more instrumental to the option of digital administrative systems and practices, specifically, to narrow how organisations can overcome employee resistance to change.

- Research on digital administrative systems and practices is to be conducted in other provinces, particularly in the tourism and leisure industry, to ascertain their level of adoption.

- This study's focus was on digital administrative systems and practices. Future research could be conducted in the tourism and leisure industry to ascertain the adoption of smartphone usage as a tool for teleworking to maintain productivity in cases of unforeseen events or natural disaster crises.

- Research to assess if a field of academic qualification leads to better digital platform adoption.

- The Impact of the adoption of digital systems and practices on customer satisfaction.

- Research on adoption of digital administrative systems and practices using the mixed methodology or qualitative methodology.

5.8 CONCLUSION

According to Ali (2020) and Bullock (2020), modern organisations desirous of growth and significant market share must adapt new technology and fully leverage the features of ICT. This study focused on adopting digital administrative systems and practices, and it was conducted in the tourism and leisure industry, specifically Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

It has highlighted that most digital systems and practices are implemented but not successfully adopted and utilised by employees at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Findings have also revealed that the most adopted and used digital systems are those that are associated with employee benefits, such as Payspace system. Therefore, there is a need for communication and collaboration to ensure the success of the adoption of digital systems. Most factors that have been indicated to affect the adoption of digital systems and practices in this study pave the way to propose strategies that can overcome what inhibits adoption and usage.

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Appendix A

DUT
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

FACULTY OF ACCOUNTING & INFORMATICS

Faculty Research Office
Durban University of Technology
Date 9 April, 2021

Student Philiswe Ndlovu
Student Number: 20516745
Degree: Masters of Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management
Email: 20516745@dut4life.ac.za
Supervisor: Dr CK Dongwe
Supervisor email: cynthiaz@dut.ac.za

Dear Mr Kendra

ETHICAL APPROVAL: LEVEL 2

I am pleased to inform you that the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) following feedback from two reviewers has granted preliminary permission for you to conduct your research, 'The adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife'.

When ethics approval is granted:
You are required to present the letter at your research site(s) for permission to gather data. Please also note that your research instruments must be accompanied by the letter of information and the letter of consent for each participant, as per your research proposal.

This ethics clearance is valid from the date of provisional approval on this letter for one year. A student must apply for recertification 3 months before the date of this expiry.

Recertification is required every year until after corrections are made, after examination, and the thesis is submitted to the Faculty Registrar.

A summary of your key research findings must be submitted to the FRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely

Dr Mogiveny Rajkoomar
FREC Chair
Faculty of Accounting and Informatics
Durban University of Technology
Ritson Campus
Durban, South Africa

CONSENT

Full Title of the Study:

Names of Researcher/s:

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Phillsiwe Ndlovu**, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____	
Full Name of Participant	**Date**	**Time**	**Signature / Right Thumbprint**	

I, **Phillsiwe Ndlovu** herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Phillsiwe Ndlovu	18/02/21	_____
Full Name of Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	**Date**	**Signature**

6 August 2020

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research: THE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AT EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE.

Researcher: Ms Phillsiwe Ndlovu
Qualification: BT-Office Management and Technology

Supervisor: Dr CK Dongwe
Qualification: PhD

Supervisor: Dr S Parbanath
Qualification: PhD

Brief Introduction and purpose of the study
Technology is key to the success of any business. If the adoption of technology is not given sufficient attention, it could lead to disengaged and unsatisfied employees, loss of customers and challenges associated with misinformation. Customer service and information provided is crucial to the survival of any organisation. Failure to adapt to change and to adopt technology could create challenges regarding the information communicated. This study aims at examining the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Greetings.

I am a Post Graduate student at Durban University of Technology and I would like to invite you to participate in the research about the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to proliferation of digital administrative digital systems, processes and practices as a forced move from the paper-based administrative operations to online operations. However, if these digital platforms are not adopted by employees, this could lead to loss of customers, poor customer service, misinformation and failure to adapt to change.

Objectives of the study are outlined below:

- To determine digital administrative systems and practices that are currently in use at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
- To examine factors influencing the adoption of digital administrative systems and practices that are currently used at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
- To recommend strategies for better adoption of digital administrative systems and practices at KZN Wildlife.

Your responsibility as a participant will be to respond to an online survey that will be created using Microsoft Teams form and uploaded online. Survey questions are close-ended meaning they can only

be answered by selecting from a limited number of options. The online survey will require less than an hour to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The participant is entitled to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so. The researcher may under any circumstances decide to withdraw the participant from the study.

There will be a non-identification of participant's personal details in the survey and only the researcher will be able to see the survey you participated in. A copy of the survey will be retained confidentially for a year, the research will only be for academic purposes and the final report will be kept in Business Re-engineering Office and library at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Ms Philisiwe Ndlovu at 082 53 48 799 or email: ndlovu4@gmail.com , my Supervisors Dr CK Dongua Tel: 033 846 8599 / Dr S Parbanath Tel: 033 846 8943 or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375.

By signing this letter you are consenting to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Participant's signature **Date**

Appendix D

11 February 2021

The Chief Executive Officer
Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
Queen Elizabeth Park
1 Peter brown drive
Cascades
3202

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Mr Dlulane

My name is Philisiwe Ndlovu, a Masters of Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters dissertation involves The Adoption of Digital Administrative Systems and Practices at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct the study within Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife organization.

I have provided you with a signed copy of my proposal which includes information on data collection tools and consent and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as proof of registration.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Tel: 033 845 1929 and email: Philisiwe.Ndlovu@kznwildlife.com or my Supervisors, Dr CK Dongwe on Tel: 033 845 8899 / Dr S Parbanath on Tel: 033 845 8843.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Philisiwe Ndlovu
Durban University of Technology

Approved / Not Approved

Mr Nesikelelo Dlulane
Chief Executive Officer
Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

11/02/2021
Date

APPENDIX E

Online survey

https://forms.microsoft.com/r/qDSadRangq

Triedstone Consulting RC: 2020/429060/07

* Copyediting * Data Analysis * Market/Social Research * Digital Marketing

209 Chester House,
Chester Road,
Rondebosch, 7700
Cape Town, South Africa.

06 October 2022.

Editing Certificate

We certify that the thesis titled: ***The Adoption of Digital Administrative Systems and Practices at Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Wildlife*** was proofread and edited for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and overall academic writing integrity. The editors ensured no alterations to the author's original intended meanings during the review. Furthermore, the editors tracked all recommendations and amendments with the Microsoft Word "Track Changes" feature. Therefore, the author had the option to accept or reject each change.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Sincerely.

Joseph Olusegun Adebayo, PhD.
Executive Director