



Closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to promote institutional sustainability

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, Inock Siziba, student number 21649375, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled:

Closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to promote institutional sustainability

is my own work and that it has not been submitted in part or in full to any other degree or any other institution. All the consulted sources have been properly acknowledged.

Signature:

Date: 03/12/2021

Abstract

The closures of many theological institutions is of growing concern among theological educators and the Church at large, in Zimbabwe. Despite government efforts, such as establishing the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE) to regulate higher education providers by registering and accrediting them, closures of theological institutions continue to be on the increase. This study focuses on the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe, in order to recommend interventions so as to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions. The dissertation achieved its aim by conducting an extensive study of relevant literature. A case-study was carried out at two theological institutions in Zimbabwe, with a sample size of six respondents. In addition, a focus group discussion was held with six members at the third site and investigated the participants' views in relation to the research focus. Participants consisted of core employees at various managerial levels and some students, at three theological institutions in Zimbabwe. As a result, 12 respondents represented both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion. The study produced the following four key findings: non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the main cause of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe; closures of theological institutions in were not only a national (Zimbabwean) problem but also an International problem, as the closures were spread throughout the globe; closures of theological institutions had both positive and negative impacts; organisational memory (OM) had the potential to contribute to the achievement of institutional sustainability, by influencing institutional decision-making processes, as well as by helping organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes. The main conclusions drawn from this study were that: current approaches to curb the problem of the closures of theological institutions will be deficient as long as theological institutions fail to take into account the significance of OM in their decision-making processes. The recurring closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe was partly due to the fact that, institutions were not learning from their past, or the past of their sister institutions, hence continually repeating past mistakes. Therefore, this study recommends that: theological institutions need to comply with policy guidelines; policy enforcers should intensify their efforts and raise public awareness about the need for institutions to comply with national policy guidelines as well as the consequences of non-compliance. Based on the usefulness of OM in supporting institutional decision-making processes as well as in helping organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes; the final recommendation of the study pointed towards the need for theological institutions to consider OM as an important knowledge-based strategy, for their continuity.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the memory of my brother, Josaya Masiyiwa, who passed on unexpectedly while I was preparing this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study emerged due to the researcher's exposure to issues of institutional sustainability affecting theological institutions in Zimbabwe. The researcher observed that, most seminaries, bible colleges and theological colleges that are currently in operation had closed down, at least once in their institutional history; while other institutions never re-opened following their closure. The researcher also observed that, these institutions in Zimbabwe were not only shutting down, but have at some point discontinued some of their academic programmes, especially the undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in theology which is cause for concern.

The recent discontinuation of the Bachelor of Theology programme at the theological institution in Bulawayo where the researcher serves as the College Librarian further aroused interest in this study. On the 25th of August 2016, the researcher's institution was served with an Order of Closure and Discontinuation of its Bachelor of Theology by the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education (ZimCHE). The reasons cited for the closure ranged from non-regularisation of the programme with ZimCHE to the lack of accreditation of the programme, as well as non-registration of the institution under the ZimCHE Act Chapter 25:27 Paragraph 10.1 of 2006.

Garwe (2015), lists five (5) institutions that were closed down and four (4) institutions whose educational programmes were nullified in Zimbabwe. Suffice to say that Garwe is one of the senior officers at the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE).

In addition, because of the brain drain currently affecting Zimbabwe, the ability to perform effectively has become an issue for most educational institutions, including theological institutions that are becoming unsustainable. According to the United Nations Development Programme Report (2008) cited in Mafuso (2018:41), "the decline in the Zimbabwean education system has resulted in the inability to regenerate skills for capacity building". Similarly, Anyadike (2013:17) indicates that, "Zimbabwe has experienced a debilitating flight of professionals and skilled people escaping the country's economic crisis". The report asserts that, "the degree and trend of the brain drain has reached unsustainable heights and that this has serious implications for the country's capacity to deliver on the sustainable development front".

As can be observed from the discussion above, there are several reasons that have been attributed to the closures of theological institutions, including non observance of rules and regulations, economic challenges, brain drain et cetera, but no research studies have examined what OM could contribute to promote sustainability of theological institutions? Therefore, as a knowledge worker, I am interested in providing a knowledge based solution to the

challenges regarding the closures of theological institutions. According to Farooq (2016), OM is positively related to knowledge management (KM). Hence, Farooq's argument that, OM results in innovativeness and competitiveness of organisations.

Mwila (2012) argues that, “knowledge management and innovation have a co-dependent relationship which can lead to the enhancement of organisational sustainability, effectiveness and competitive advantage. Organisational memory is viewed as the critical premise on which both knowledge management and innovation rely”. Considering Mwila’s foregone argument, the focus of this study is to find out what OM could contribute to promote institutional sustainability for the remaining institutions, bearing in mind that OM has the potential to promote sustainability. Therefore, knowledge has become a spring of competitive advantage; Knowledge Management (KM) activities such as OM become critical for organisational success.

The link between OM and sustainability is discussed in the literature reviewed. OM is often considered a key factor in sustaining organisations’ competitive advantage. For example, Jain (2020) asserts that, “organizational memory is important for the sustainability of organizational performance”. Pinto (2012) argues that organisational memory is the core of sustainable knowledge management for organisational continuity. For Pinto, OM and Knowledge Management (KM) are used interchangeably. In addition, Lazarenko, Garafonova, Marhasova and Grigashkina (2021) argue that OM systems results in the sustainability of organisations’ competitive advantage. Similarly, Peterson (2012) posits that OM practices enable organisations to acquire and sustain competitive edge. The positive link between sustainability and OM which has been raised in the literature reveals that OM could have something to contribute in promoting sustainability of theological institutions.

The concept of Competitive Advantage seems to be a common concept in the literature. The Cambridge Dictionary (2021:115) defines it as “the conditions that makes a business to be more successful than rival businesses”. Alternatively, competitive advantages are the conditions that make businesses successful. It is worth noting that theological institutions are not spared, they too have to look at conditions that could make them successful and avoid shutting down. In this study, the term sustainability refers to corporate, entrepreneurial or business sustainability.

Consequently, the literature reveals that the two concepts, *OM and Sustainability* are linked to each other. For example, the literature reveals that OM is important for the sustainability of organisational performance. Therefore it can be argued that OM (as one of the key aspects in the Knowledge Management (KM) field) could possibly have the potential to promote the sustainability of organisations, including theological institutions. There is recognition of the fact that OM or knowledge represents one of the most important assets of an organisation, capable to influence an organisation’s competitiveness and sustainability.

Furthermore, literature exists that discusses the closure of theological institutions because of their unsustainability (Ball 2015, van der Hart 2015, Weinbauer 2011, Ekene and Oluoch-Suleh 2015). Reasons include but are not limited to: absorption of theological schools by universities, Bible colleges being forced to diversify their programmes to extend beyond theology, financial pressure (funding), student attrition and poor student enrolment, ivory tower faculty, irrelevant curricula, improper registration and affiliation.

Banks (2015: 4) asserts that “rivalry among theological colleges caused some of them to succeed and some of them to close down. Banks further described the change that resulted in the growth of interdenominational and charismatic colleges, at the disadvantage of mainline and confessional institutions. He further argues that, competition also extends to theological education institutions that are most similar to each other and within a given denomination.

On the contrary, Worsley (2016) suggests that Christian organisations are uncomfortable with competition than other organisations. He argues that, the goal of a Christian should be more about people working together and forming partnership rather than about competing and rivalry with each other. As a result, many Christian organisations end-up collapsing.

Woodhouse (2015) highlights that, the rate at which small colleges are closing in the USA, it means that the trend will continue to grow in the future. The report predicts that, due to the decline in student enrolment as many as fifteen (15) small institutions will shut their doors by year 2017. This report's prediction speaks only to the situation in the United States of America (USA). A similar study needs to be undertaken in locally. In a study carried out in Canada by Weinbauer (2011) it was observed that, student enrolments are decreasing.

Woodhouse (2015) alleges that historically colleges are unwilling to close, and he thinks that institutions would rather prefer to merge with other institutions before they consider closing their doors. Similarly, Thomas and Chabotar (2015:60) posit that, “mergers can facilitate the reduction of cost, making it more cost-effective for the resulting education institution to offer the range of distinctive programmes and services, than for two separate institutions to do so”. Institutional mergers also provide chances for attaining economies of scale and reducing fixed costs by strengthening their academic and administrative departments, thereby ensuring sustainability of education institutions.

While mergers of small institutions with established universities have been received positively by some scholars, conservative scholars have expressed disapproval. Baloyi (2015:27) observed that, church leaders in Zambia were lukewarm about establishing a department at the University of Zambia, partly because it was felt that “the church's priority should be pastoral formation rather than classical academic theology”. Thus, sustainable seminaries or bible colleges are viewed as those run by the church, through the church, and for the church. Suffice it to say that, by

church is meant the universal church or the whole body of Christians despite denominational affiliations. As a result it is believed that mergers with established universities could lead theological institutions to die off, at least in the form they were in, before a merger.

From the literature cited above, it seems that knowledge management appears to have been overlooked as a likely strategy to achieve institutional sustainability of theological colleges and seminaries. Several authors are in agreement that effective knowledge management practices such as organisational memory increase the chances of organisational success (Nafei 2016). Therefore, it can be assumed that knowledge management principles can also be applied to religious organisations for sustainability. Iro-Idoro (2017) posits that knowledge management is essential as it enhances organisational survival. Similarly, Mwila (2013) alludes to the fact that knowledge management leads to the strengthening of institutional sustainability, effectiveness and competitiveness. The same author also views organisational memory as the critical basis upon which both knowledge management and depends.

1.2 Research Problem and Aim

Theological institutions in Zimbabwe have a critical role to contribute in the development of leaders for the church and society at large. Yet, so many of these institutions had either been closed down or had their educational programmes nullified, or even been absorbed by national universities. The study strongly envisioned that organisational memory could contribute towards the sustainability of theological institution, as it is considered as one of the knowledge-based strategies. Knowledge-based strategies are based on the assumption that knowledge is the most strategic resource of a company and that knowledge has the potential to make organisations succeed (Nicolescu 2011). Consequently, this study sought to investigate the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and to find out what organisational memory (OM) could contribute in order to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions.

The relationship between Organisational memory and institutional performance is well documented in the literature (Jain 2017, Monica 2018, Oruma & Onuoha 2020). The literature provide arguments that organisational memory is a key concept for institutions and that OM results in changes in organisations, including the sustainability of organisations. However, there has not been any studies that sought to investigate what OM could contribute to promote sustainability of theological institutions.

Based on the problem statements above, the aim of the study was stated as follows:

To inquire into the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to establish what organisational memory could contribute to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In the light of the general aim stated above, the main objectives of the study were four-fold:

1. To find out the magnitude of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
2. To assess the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
3. To ascertain strategies for sustainability being implemented by theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
4. To establish what OM could contribute to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question was stated as follows:

Why are theological institutions in Zimbabwe closing down, and what can OM contribute to promote sustainability for the remaining institutions?

In attempting to answer the above stated question, the following sub-questions were developed:

1. What is the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
2. What is the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
3. What are some sustainability strategies being implemented by theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
4. What can organisational memory contribute to promote sustainability for the remaining theological institutions?

1.6 Research Methodology

Research Methodology covers several aspects, including: the research design, the target population, sampling, data collection, et cetera (Harvey, Barr & Paulos 2011:581). Consequently, the research methodology chapter for this study will present all these aspects.

1.6.1 Research Design

An exploratory research design was employed in this study to examine the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. According to Rahi (2017), an exploratory study starts with an issue of interest and it is directed at studying the nature of the phenomenon, the way in which it is displayed, and the other factors with which it is related. Exploratory research is conducted when a new area or topic is studied, in order to explore the complete nature of a little known phenomenon.

As reflected in the literature review, the contribution of organisational memory in the achievement of institutional sustainability among theological institutions in Zimbabwe had not been investigated before. Therefore, an

exploratory research design was well suited for this study as it was most likely able to answer the research questions appropriately. A major advantage of an exploratory research was its flexibility and its ability to address research questions of all types such as, what, why, and how? Most of the research questions this study attempted to answer were the 'what' questions.

This research study used a qualitative approach. According to Harvey, Barr and Paulos (2011:26), “qualitative research refers to any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other methods of quantification”. Thus, the researcher relied on the gathering of non-numerical data, such as words.

The researcher gained insight into the causes of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and to explore what OM could contribute to the achievement of sustainability among these institutions. Therefore, the qualitative approach was well suited for this study.

1.6.2 Population

The population for this study was all Christian educators and administrators serving in all the twenty (20) theological institutions which were affiliated or associated to the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ). According to Harvey, Barr and Paulos (2011:366), “population is sometimes referred to as the target population and this is the entire set of individuals, objects, and organisations meeting the sampling criteria”.

1.6.3 Sampling

Sampling is a procedure that involves making decisions about what to sample and how to do it (Goodday, Marchant and Talbot 2019:468). This entails selecting participants with whom to conduct a study. I used a non-probability sampling procedure that involved the use of the purposive sampling method was applied in order to get a sample of informants. “In this method not every element of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample” (Rahi 2017).

In relation to the aim of the study, Omona (2013:118) states that “the aim of qualitative research is to wittingly select the information source that is considered able to answer the research question. The qualitative researcher is usually interested in finding information-rich sources in order to improve the understanding of certain aspects of the case under study (Harvey, Barr and Paulos 2011:376). For this particular study, purposive sampling was used as people who were considered to possess valuable information participated in the study. The sample included selecting participants who were experienced in theological education and also currently working in a seminary, Bible College or in a theological college.

The sample size could not be predetermined, as the researcher had to conduct semi-structured interviews and a focus-group interview with respondents until data saturation was achieved. This was in compliance with methods normally applied for qualitative research involving a small sample sizes, and the principle of conducting sampling and data collection until data saturation has occurred (Speziale, Streubert and Carpenter 2011:22-23). Speziale & Carpenter (2011) cited in LoBondo and Haber (2014) also concur that, in qualitative designs sample sizes cannot be predetermined. The authors posit that, sample sizes in qualitative research tend to be small because of the large volume of verbal data that must be analysed.

1.6.4 Data Collection Methods

semi-structured and focus-group interviews were the two data collection methods used in this study. The benefits of combining semi-structured and focus-group interviews are many. According to Hesse-Biber (2016) focus-groups can be used as a follow-up to semi-structured interviews. Also, individual interviews can be used as a follow-up to group interviews.

In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus-group interviews were preferred for this study because the research question required breadth and depth. According to Hesse-Biber (2016) semi-structured interviews provide greater depth from individual participants, whereas focus-groups can give researchers a greater range of responses in a short time period. Hence, was advantageous to follow-up semi-structured interviews with focus-group interviews to verify individual interview data, as well as to examine how individual responses differed in a group setting.

1.6.5 Measuring Instrument

The study used an interview guide to collect data during semi-structured interviews as well as during focus-group interviews. According to Gillespie and Chaboyer (2013:86) “an interview guide is an oral administration of a questionnaire and it gives a general plan to follow for data collection”.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

The thematic method was used to analyse data for this study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) suggest that the reason for using thematic analysis is to enable the identification of themes or patterns in the data. As a result, themes will then be used to analyse data for this study. Therefore, the data analysis process for this study was guided by Braun and Clarke’s (2013) six-phase process for doing thematic data analysis. The six-phase process includes the following aspects: that the researcher familiarises himself with the data, as well as code and generate themes. In addition , I had to reviewing and naming themes, and write-up. Consequently, responses from the semi-structured interviews as well as from the focus-group interview were arranged in accordance with the research questions. Data were analysed and

summarised. Findings of the study were reported as a explanation of the total population of the study. Data were given in the pattern of histograms, pie charts, and in percentages via the use of MS Excel Spreadsheets.

1.6.7 Pretesting

Pretesting is a method that include checking that questions work as desired and that they are understood by those individuals who will be asked to respond to them (Hilton 2015:1). Furthermore, pretesting has can lessen sampling error as well as increase the response rates (Hilton 2015:1). In this study, the questions in the interview guide were pretested to clarify any anomalies that could have caused misrepresentation among the respondents. Pretesting was done with members of staff from non-participating colleges. This was helpful in identifying questions that might have been misunderstood by participants.

1.6.8 Delimitations/Scope

The study focussed on seminaries, bible colleges and theological institutions which were affiliated to or associated with the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ). Hence, the study delved into the causes and the impact of the closures of these institutions, as well as intervention strategies that could be employed in order to save the remaining institutions from closure.

1.6.9 Validity and Reliability

Drost (2011:598) asserts that, “validity refers to the extent to which the research truly measures that which it is intended to measure or how truthful the research results are”. On the other Drost defines reliability as, “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study”. Thus, validity and reliability are important concepts in research as they enhance the credibility and trustworthiness research. Important as the concepts are, issues of validity and reliability pause challenges in qualitative studies. The issues of reliability in qualitative research were discussed at length in chapter 3 below.

However, in an attempt to increase validity and reliability in this study, the researcher used two data collection methods, that included semi-structured interviews and a focus-group interview. Also, the data collection instruments were reviewed by a panel of experts at DUT, when the researcher submitted them together with the research proposal for approval.

1.6.10 Ethical Considerations

In an effort to make sure that ethical issues are attended to as expected, the researcher adhered to the University's ethical guidelines. For example, the requirement that the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee needed to approve the conduct of the study was met.

In addition, the researcher treated issues of the participants' anonymity and confidentiality with the seriousness they deserve. Respondents were promised that the information they provided was to be treated in confidence and that their anonymity was going to be guaranteed. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also applied during the processes of data collection, analysis, and presentation. In addition, participants were given pseudonyms in order to keep their anonymity.

1.7 Structure of Report

The dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter one forms the introduction to the study and presents an orientation by stating the background, purpose, aims, and objectives of the study, as well as the research design of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter two reviews related literature pertaining to the objectives of the study from academia and scholars.

Chapter Three: Research methodology and research design

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology. Particular attention was given to the research design, population, and sample, method of data collection and reliability and validity of the research study.

Chapter Four: Research findings and analysis

Chapter Four forms the findings and analysis of the study. The presentation of results gathered from the semi-structured interviews as well as from the focus-group interview was done in this chapter. This was followed by the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter five: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Chapter Five presents a summary of the findings of the study, and draw conclusions. Finally, the chapter will offer specific recommendations in order to promote sustainability of theological institutions in Zimbabwe.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter formed the introduction to the study and presented an orientation by stating the background, purpose, aims, and objectives of the study, as well as the research design of the study. The next chapter presents a literature survey that pertains to relevant areas of the study, namely: to closures of theological institutions; to sustainability issues of theological institutions and seminaries; as well as to organisational memory.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

For the purpose of providing a setting for the study, this chapter presents a literature survey that pertains to relevant areas of the study, namely: to closures of theological institutions; to sustainability issues of theological institutions; as well as to organisational memory.

A literature review's function is described by Rowe (2014:30) as to synthesize "past knowledge on a subject, pointing out important biases and taking note of the gaps in the literature and suggesting future direction for research." Thus, reviewing relevant literature helps the researcher to set his or her work in the context of other scholars. The aim of the study can be re-stated as follows:

To investigate the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to determine what OM could contribute to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions

In the light of the general aim stated above, the main objectives of the study were four-fold:

1. To find out the magnitude of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
2. To assess the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
3. To ascertain sustainability strategies being implemented by theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
4. To explore the significance of organisational memory in theological institutions in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Closures of Theological Institutions

In the widely published Online *Symposium on the Future of Seminary Education*, Schmidt (2011:1) laments, "Our seminaries are dying ... is it time to write the eulogy?" Schmidt cites a number of seminaries in the United States of America (USA) that have sold their buildings and property, while some are said to have cut the number of faculty and to have eliminated some of their academic programmes. The author reports that the remaining few seminaries are competing for a shrinking pool of prospective students, and lowering academic standards to attract the few students that they do have.

Some of the reasons provided by Schmidt (2011) for the crisis in theological education in the USA include: changing trends in theological education, seminaries are financially stressed, theological graduates are ill-prepared to take up the positions for which their theological education should have prepared them, seminary faculty often lack real affinity for the church, failure of the church to articulate what it wants from its seminaries and graduates, as well as the fact that seminaries are often not selective in their student recruitment process as anyone with any form of educational qualification can gain admission into a seminary.

In response to Schmidt's observations above, Wheeler (2011) argued that some of Schmidt's criticisms of theological education are right on target and supported by evidence. However, Wheeler disagrees with some of the author's observations. For instance, Wheeler refutes the allegation that, lack of any real affinity for the church by faculty is to blame for producing students who are "poorly grounded" in the faith and in the skills of congregational leadership. Wheeler posits that, seminary faculty are almost all religiously observant as they attend or lead worship regularly and they also spend significant additional time in church and are involved in denominational activities beyond their home congregations.

For Wheeler (2011) therefore, it is incorrect for Schmidt to make the case that the failures and closures of contemporary theological institutions in the USA are chiefly the fault of faculty who are detached from the church and favour research on religion over their involvement in the local church ministry programmes. According to Wheeler, the most significant reform needed in theological education is for seminaries to harness support from private foundations, accrediting agencies, research institutes, and consulting businesses that could provide support for and oversight of theological education. Given an opportunity such organisations could spearhead positive change in theological education, but only if they are asked to get involved.

Similarly, Buschart (2011) alludes to the fact that, seminaries are subject to all of the social, economic, technological, and other culture-shifts to which all other institutions are subject. For instance, innovations, especially those offering virtual and distance education, are turning-around the educational environment, and they are having an impact on a number of things such as organisational budgets and the learning and teaching practices. Also, demands on those who teach are changing, even student needs are also changing. For Buschart therefore, theological institutions must grapple with the challenges confronting them, just like other institutions are grappling with similar issues. Instead of writing a eulogy, theological institutions must say a prayer and confront their problems head-on.

Commenting on seminaries in South Africa, Naidoo (2013) alludes to the significant shrinkage, if not the disappearance of faculties of religious studies in State Universities across the country because of the restructuring of higher education over the past years. According to Richardson (2007) cited in Naidoo (2013), the following factors have contributed to what he terms 'the crisis' of the shrinking and disappearing theological Faculties in State universities in South Africa: funding bases have changed; there has been changes of the national curriculum as well as changes in the education policy. For example, changes that occurred in the country's secondary school system have also contributed to 'the crisis'. The demise of unity among churches and a return to denominationalism; and the subsequent threat of closure to a number of theological Faculties.

Legislative changes in higher education contributed to the closure of some theological institutions in various ways, in South Africa. According to Van der Walt (2019), the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* relates to all higher education

programmes and qualifications provided in South Africa. Van der Walt points out that several universities and higher education institutions were placed under administration, before and after the attainment of democracy in South Africa. According to Dunsmuir and McCoy (2015) the Policy framework and its enforcement presented a dilemma to the churches and to the entities serving them. The critical question was: should the church surrender to secular third-party entities the final responsibility for determining and judging what is offered as 'acceptable' theological education for church training purposes within South Africa's higher education sphere?

Dunsmuir and McCoy (2015) further argue that, until the implementation of the *Higher Education Act of 1997*, theological institutions (including seminaries, independent and ecumenical institutions, and university Faculties) were largely left to their own devices in delivering theological education programmes. Given the significance of theological education to the churches, these programmes were usually offered in partnership with denominations for the development of church leaders. Consequently, with the introduction of the legislative changes from 1997 onwards, theological institutions were left in a quandary about whether to be true to church needs and mandates for training future ministers of the gospel, or to comply with the law of the country? (Dunsmuir and McCoy 2015).

Bird and Smith (2011) report that religious studies at universities in South Africa went through a difficult time in the past years. In some cases Religious Studies Departments closed down, in other cases they merged with other disciplines or were severely affected by rationalisation. The University of the Witwatersrand and Rhodes University were cited as some of the institutions whose theological Faculties closed down.

Pillay (2017) posits that, “University faculties of theology are in the process of changing and restructuring”. Pillay further points out that, theology faculties have been under scrutiny as a result several theological faculties have closed or merged with other faculties the humanities or arts. In short, theology is under duress, as it is disappearing from South African universities. Therefore theological studies in South African universities have suffered pressure leading to some Departments closing. The explanation given for this situation is largely financial constraints.

In contrast however, Bird and Simth (2011) reported a totally opposite situation in relation to theological education in Botswana and Lesotho, where religious education was said to be flourishing. For instance, the Department of Theology and Religious Studies remains as one of the key Departments at the University of Botswana. The Department made history as a torch bearer especially in the fight against HIV/AIDS by embarking on a seminar series, research and publications around the HIV/AIDS scourge. To date, the Department remains in full swing offering a full time Bachelor of Arts programme in Ecclesiastical Studies, as well as post-graduate courses like Biblical Studies, Theology, Religious Studies and Philosophy (*Academic Calendar: University of Botswana* 2017).

Similarly, the Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Care and Counselling remains on offer at the National University of Lesotho (*Academic Calendar: National University of Lesotho* 2017). The World Council of Churches (2011) reports

that the National University of Lesotho first offered a diploma in Pastoral Care and Counselling in 2005. Then it developed another course at degree level, shortly thereafter. These programmes grew and many students were enrolled in comparison to many other programmes in the humanities. Many students were being sponsored by government and non-governmental institutions.

Several submissions allude to the dearth of unity among different churches and a return to denominational interest as contributing to the closures of theological institutions. Citing the closure of the Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM) in South Africa, Duncan 2016 explains the circumstance as symptomatic of the crisis in ecumenical theological formation. FEDSEM was founded in 1961 and it brought together the theological training institutions of several major denominations such as Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist. For Duncan (2016), a lack of ecumenically committed leadership, as well as a failure to provide a viable ecumenical theological formation among other factors, culminated in the closure of FEDSEM in 1995 (Duncan 2016).

In addition, Duncan (2016:15) observes that, “the collapse of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa was because of the failure by its founders to advocate a clear vision to guide its progress”. It is believed that the churches were driven together by adverse circumstances such as resistance to Apartheid, rather than choosing to be together freely and with conviction.

On the contrary, Lovett (2017) argues that the main cause for the many closures of theological institutions was lack of economic commitment by the mainline churches and shrinking enrollment. Lovett (2017) argues that theological education in South Africa is in a quandary because of the cost implications. She cites Banwell as saying that the “Cost of residential training is in danger of 'pricing itself out of the market’”. Duncan (2016) agrees that the constraints related to finances contributed to the closure of some of the institutions.

There appears not to be much literature written on the prevailing condition of theological institutions or pastoral training centres in Zimbabwe. However, indications point to a crisis and distress in theological institutions in Zimbabwe. For instance, Garwe (2015, cites an excerpt that appeared in the *Herald* of 30 March 2014 in which ZIMCHE is quoted as reporting that “five theological institutions were closed, and another four theological institutions’ academic programmes were nullified”.

For Garwe (2015), the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe as well as the nullification of some of their academic programmes was because the affected institution had failed to meet the minimum criteria as set by ZIMCHE, in relation to terms of leadership, financial viability to maintain the institutions sustainably, staff qualification and infrastructure, as outlined in the ZIMCHE standards.

With reference to the lack of sustainability and longevity of Old Testament (OT) scholarship in Zimbabwe, Rugwiji (2014) alludes to the proliferation of bogus theological colleges and universities that have negatively impacted on OT scholarship. According to Rugwiji, these colleges or universities masquerade as institutions of higher learning operating under the auspices of tertiary education in Zimbabwe. Most of these Bible colleges or universities are church-oriented, making them centres of learning for prospective students whose main aim is to preach.

For Rugwiji (2014) therefore, it is the proliferation of bogus theological colleges in Zimbabwe that has necessitated the closure of many such institutions. It would seem that Rugwiji advocates the closure of bogus theological institutions in Zimbabwe as such institutions do not require formal entry qualification into their programmes, thereby lowering a degree to just a piece of paper. Also, some of the students who would have graduated from such colleges or universities would have been recycled into the system as part of the teaching staff. In addition, there is no emphasis on requirements for faculty selection and appointment. For example, requirements such as evidence of teaching or research experience in other institutions of higher education are not considered. Rugwiji argues that such malpractices are more prevalent in the field of Biblical Studies, and they negatively impact on the sustainability of OT scholarship in Zimbabwe.

Tarusarira (2020:292) highlights “the failure of ecumenism in the emergence of church-related universities in Zimbabwe”. The author notes that, “ecumenical ventures were considered in the early stages of the evolution of church-related universities in Zimbabwe, but the idea did not take root for a variety of reasons”. Tarusarira cites “ethnicity, regionalism and historical back-ground among the major reasons for the failure of ecumenism in higher education in Zimbabwe”.

For Tarusarira (2020), lack of unity among churches led to the collapse of many protestant colleges in Zimbabwe. The introduction of church-related universities has seen an increase in competition and rivalry. Rather than for the churches to work in unity they are caught up in battles for supremacy. In spite of the lack of adequate resources, sought to take advantage of the opening up of the higher education sector by the state, denominations like the United Methodist Church decided to go it alone and founded Africa University. Also, the United Church of Christ in Chipinge, Zimbabwe and the Methodist church have plans underway to start their respective denominational universities.

Financial sustainability of theological institutions in Africa has been of interest to many authors. According to Bellon (2017:55), the Overseas Council International (OCI) conducted a global survey on the state of financial sustainability among 136 theological institutions across the world, in 2011. The OCI findings indicated that, the inception and development of theological education in Africa survived on donations from churches, individuals, foundations, trusts, and businesses.

Similarly, the Global Survey on Theological Education (2013:12) indicates that, “theological educators perceive that their institutions are not stable financially”. It is argued that theological schools in Africa are unstable including those in Latin America. In addition, the Global Survey on Theological Education (2013:104) suggests that, “the financial instability and crisis common in theological institutions is in striking contrast.”

Ramantswana (2015:8) reflects on what he calls the effect of *sustentasië* (an Afrikaans word, referring to the act of white wealthier churches subsidising black poor churches financially to sustain their ministry) on Black theology amongst Reformed ministers and theological institutions. He writes:

The church and her institutions belong to those with money, while the indigenous Christians are just obliging and following the regulations of the 'hands that feed'. Local church members even know that their local ministers have no say, but that the missionary who gives them second-hand clothing and pays their school fees is the one with the final say (author's own translation).

For Ramantswana (2015:8), donors influence the direction of church institutions, especially when the institutions have severe financial constraints. Consequently, the financial over-dependency on donors could be an obstacle to achieving self-sustainability among theological institutions. An over-dependency on donors may then lead to the closure of theological institutions in the event the donor decides to withdraw his or her support. Donor withdrawal of support can be regarded as one of the major causes that could cripple theological institutions' abilities to manage their institutions' operational costs, which may then lead to their collapse.

On the other hand, Franklin and Niemandt (2015) advocates that people should give their money and possessions to those in need, including to theological institutions as they too are in need. In addition, Tongai (2015:72) also cited in Franklin and Niemandt (2015) notes that being generous is not just about giving money, but includes giving oneself in time, prayer, hospitality, and material resources. For Carter (2011) and Tongai (2015) therefore, those with resources can use their wealth as an opportunity for generosity to bless those in need, including theological institutions. In this regard, churches and theological institutions can freely receive donations without feeling guilty of being financially or materially depended on their donors.

Rodin (2015) cited in Franklin and Niemandt (2015) proposes that since God owns everything, it means that living charitably simply reflects an attribute of a generous God. Consequently, the acceptance of this generosity by the church or theological institution means entering into God's life of generosity. In simple terms, whenever the giving and receiving of donations takes place, God is being glorified in the process.

However, Ferenczi (2016) presents a list of challenges facing theological institutions in most parts of the World that includes: declining ‘traditional’ enrolments, declining involvement of missionary faculty, growing competition and increasing costs of programme delivery. The author advocates decreasing support and increasing restrictions on

giving. For Ferenczi (2016), all of these areas present varied and often contradictory challenges to theological institutions which can collectively or individually cause some to close.

2.3.1 Sustainability

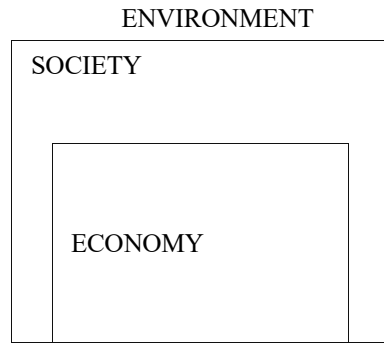
Henkel (2015:222) posits that, “the term *sustainability* is derived from the Latin *sustinere* which means to maintain, to support or to endure”. According to Bellon (2017) sustainability as a term evolved from the concept of sustainable development and the two are now considered interchangeable. Henkel goes further to suggest that, the word sustainability has been used more in the sense of human sustainability on planet Earth and this has resulted in the most widely quoted definition of sustainability as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (*Brundtland Commission of the United Nations* on March 20, 1987).

However, certain factions within the scientific community have challenged the Brundtland Commission's definition above as being too basic. For instance, Ferenczi (2016) describes ‘sustainability’ as a term that is at best a fuzzword that is filled with many opposing meanings. Similarly, Toman (2013) describes the term as having many interpretations by different people. The author goes further to suggest that, for ecologists ‘sustainability’ has connotations for the preservation of the status and function of ecological systems; for economists, it means the maintenance and improvement of human living standards; while environmentalists view it “as a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while not exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs”.

Writing in the context of green computing, Roxana (2012:278) defines the concept ‘sustainability’ as referring to the capacity to endure through renewal, maintenance, and sustenance, or nourishment. Roxana goes further by contrasting sustainability with durability, the latter being defined as the capacity to endure through unchanging resistance to change.

According to the World Summit on Social Development (2012:46), sustainability is defined as “an integration of social, economic and environmental factors”. This view has been graphically represented using three over-lapping ellipses, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 2.3.1 Three pillars of sustainability (Source: Hattingh 2014:161)



However, other sustainability experts and practitioners such as Hattingh (2014) added one more pillar to make a total of four pillars of sustainability.

Morrell (2011:75) views sustainability “as connecting human needs and the ecosystem”. For instance, the authors define ecological sustainability as a conservation concept that involves meeting human needs without compromising the health of ecosystems. In ecology therefore, sustainability describes the well-being of humans and other organisms over time.

The operationalised definition of sustainability for this research study considers sustainability as referring to the continued capacity of theological institutions to avoid closures of their institutions and their academic programmes for the benefit of the church today as well as for the benefit of the church in the future.. Therefore, sustainability suggests the continued well-being and survival of theological institutions and their academic programmes in order to provide theological education needs effectively for today's church as well as for the church in the future.

2.3.2 Sustainability and Theological Institutions

Bellon (2017:257) observed that, “at the centre of theological colleges and seminaries' struggles is the issue of sustainability”. The Bellon further asserts that to be complete, seminaries need to have facilities such as: classrooms, libraries, dormitories or student housing, kitchen or catering facilities, et cetera. For most institutions, these facilities are usually possible at the start due to donor funding, but often collapse because funding has been withdrawn or the missionary personnel have gone back to their countries of origin.

In addition, Bellon (2017) echoes the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability, “as the ability of theological institutions to satisfy the needs of the present generation without having to compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainability in this regard is understood as, the theological institution's ability to train Christian leaders for the present generation without compromising the training of Christian leaders for

future generations. Furthermore, Bellon (2017) emphasises the importance for theological institutions to achieve a level of financial sustainability that allows them to meet operating costs. The author reasoned that, financial sustainability is inevitable if theological institutions in Africa are to make a social impact that secures the future of theological education.

Likewise, Morrell (2011) asserted that for theological institutions, sustainability is achieved when social benefits exceed total costs and where viable functional networks exist with other local institutions. The author argued that, sustainability goes beyond an institution's financial viability, but also includes its capacity to engage the external environment, as well as its ability to generate social benefits to improve the welfare of society. In considering theological institutions the author views financial sustainability, as the ability to meet operating costs fully while effectively fulfilling its organisational mission with an emergency financial reserve that ensures operations for at least one year, while maintaining an institutional capacity that attracts funding for capital projects.

In an effort to explain sustainability challenges among theological institutions, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in North America coined the term 'economic equilibrium'. According to the ATS cited in Ferenczi (2016), economic equilibrium is reached when a school has sufficient resources to conduct its mission with quality, preserve the purchasing power of its financial assets, maintain its physical assets, and provide fair compensation to employees. Townsley (2015) defines economic equilibrium as, a state of long-term financial sustainability for an institution of higher education. Graham (2015) goes further to suggest that, equilibrium is achieved through an institution's ability to adapt year-to-year, to changing circumstances.

Regarding sustainability challenges for the church in Africa and institutions such as theological institutions, Bible colleges and seminaries, Bellon (2017) argues that dependency on foreign donations can be counter-productive to the achievement of sustainability. The author advocates for the adoption of what has become known as the three-self principle that states that, a church or her institutions can be (and should be) self-supporting, self-governing, and self-sustaining. The understanding being that, a self-sustaining church or institution has the ability to maintain its core functions through its own local resources without resorting to funding from foreign donors.

However, Seibel (2011) expanded the three-self principle to include six characteristics of a sustainable church or institution. According to Seibel, the six distinctive features of a self-sustaining church or institution include: self-image, self-functioning, self-determining, self-supporting, self-propagation, and self-giving.

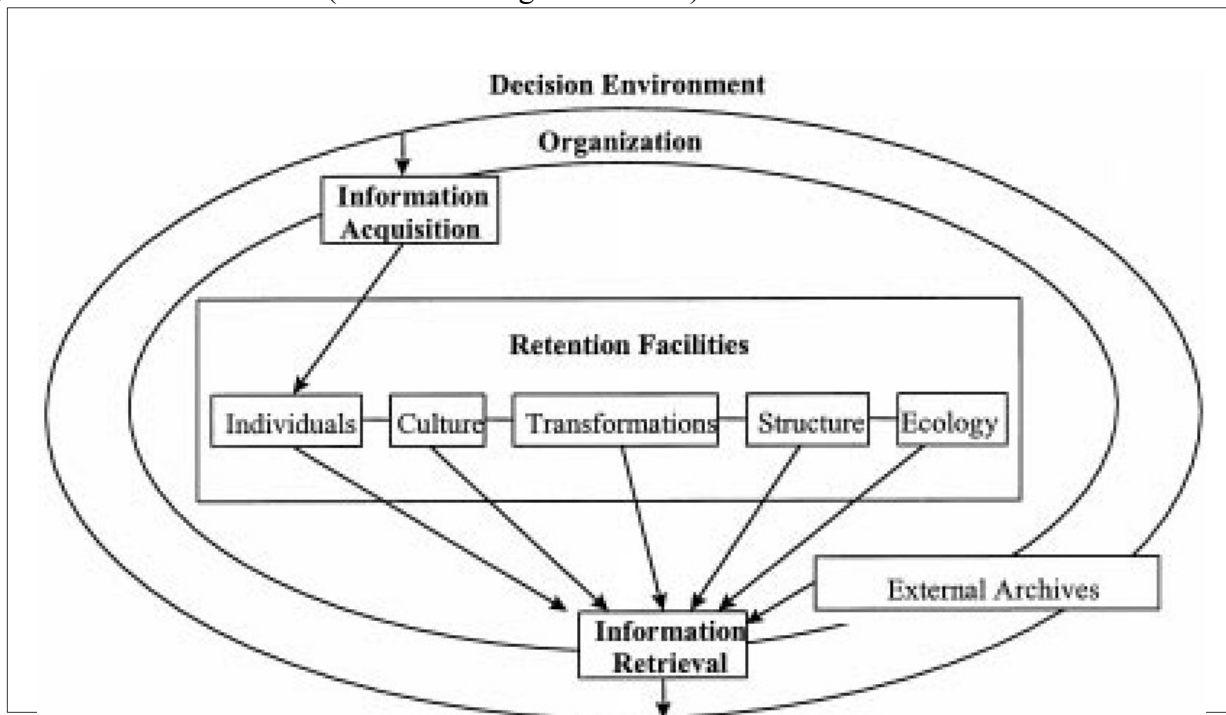
2.3.4 Organisational Memory (OM)

Highlighting the role of OM in decision-making, Walsh and Ungson (1991:61) defined organisational memory (OM) as, "stored information from an organisation's past history that can be brought to bear on present decisions". This corresponds closely with the definition given by Stein (2013), who regarded OM as the way in which organisational

knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities. The above authors' argument is that, decisions are likely to be more effective when considered in terms of the organisation's history than when made in an historical vacuum.

Walsh and Ungson (1991) further contended that OM consisted of five different retention bins, namely: individuals, cultures, transformations, structures and ecology. The authors created a model for OM that provides a possible explanation for how an organisation acquires, retains and retrieves the generated information, as shown below:

Figure 2.2: OM Structure (Walsh and Ungson 1991:64)



Walsh and Ungson (1991) also acknowledged concerns among scholars as to whether OM exists at all, as well as whether the idea of OM was merely anthropomorphising of individual memory? Although the debate comparing and contrasting individual and OM remains unresolved, the authors concluded that, “Organisational memory is both an individual and organisational level construct” (Walsh and Ungson 1991: 61).

Some scholars have criticised Walsh and Ungson's (1991) model of OM. For instance, Carlile and Reberich (2015) found the idea of memory stored in a bin as too static a concept to capture the dynamic nature of human interaction. Another criticism was that Walsh and Ungson's storage method separated what was stored from the knowledge itself, and then hoped to reunite the knowledge and the organisation accurately and appropriately as needed (Spender 2012). In addition, while Walsh and Ungson (1991) acknowledged the distributive nature of organisational memory and recognized that stored knowledge could be placed in more than one storage bin, they failed to provide a mechanism for choosing what to store and the processes for storage and retrieval.

However, Anand, Mantz and Glick (2014:796) discussed OM as distinct from group or individual memory, and suggested that being able to access tacit knowledge, belief structures, et cetera is essential for organisations to function effectively. Thus, Anand et al. defined OM as, “the information and knowledge known by the organisation and the processes by which such information is acquired, stored, and retrieved by organisation members”. For Anand et al. OM is an organisational level construct which organisational members can acquire, store and retrieve.

Writing in the context of organisational learning, Olivera (2016) discussed OM as an interrelated, dynamic, constantly adapting system. The author's focus was on how organisations store memory and how stored memories were made available to individuals in the organisation. Olivera posited that by understanding an organisation's methods for storing and retrieving its memory, one is able to understand if the organisation learns and how that learning occurs. Hence, the author was more concerned about what to do with OM once it was created than with the creation of memory itself.

The interlocking nature of people and technology in the formation and use of OM is a recurring theme in the literature. For example, Ackerman and Halverson (2011:60) referred to an OM that included a reliance on both people and technology. Their research focused on the social construction of OM as an organisational member retrieved knowledge and used it to answer questions. In their argument in support of using technology to maintain OM, the authors cited the ability of computer storage to make “social organisations more durable”.

2.4.1 The Significance of Organisational Memory

Dunham and Burt (2011) affirmed the importance of organisational memory in their assertion that, through OM, organisations are able to learn from past experiences. For the authors, organisations are able to avoid repetition of past mistakes by adopting proven successful practices through OM. Other benefits of organisational memory include improved learning capabilities (Wexler 2018); accumulation and storage of the ‘best practices’, which can be integrated, analysed and adapted to other situations (Nilakanta, Miller and Zhu 2006).

Similarly, Chen and Wang (2016) claimed that, organisational memory can effectively transit organisational resources into knowledge so that the efficiency and performance of the organisation could be improved. The authors further suggested that, organisational memory can combine knowledge in whatever form such as documentations, etiquette, files, culture, belief, routine and so on; and can store knowledge within effectively transition links so that organisation members can extract, exchange and share it. Thus, Chen and Wang (2010) believe that an OM’s major function is to enhance the organisation’s competitiveness by improving the way it manages its knowledge. For the authors, organisational memory extends and amplifies knowledge assets by capturing, organising, disseminating, and re-using the knowledge created by employees. Although organisational memory is largely referred to as a key

resource, others note that solely allowing organisational memory to guide future practice may be counter-productive when change is called for (Kransdorff and Williams 2014).

2.4.2 Anthropomorphism and Organisational Memory

In the literature, anthropomorphising is a controversial theorising tool because it is favoured by some scholars and yet reviled by others. According to Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2017) “anthropomorphising refers to imbuing non-human agents (e.g. computers, robots, and organisations) or non-human processes with human characteristics, motivations, intentions, and/or emotions”. Similarly, Gray, Gray and Wegner (2017) defined anthropomorphism as, a process of inductive inference whereby people attribute to non-humans distinctively human characteristics, particularly the capacity for rational thought and conscious feeling. In simple terms, anthropomorphism could be understood as ascribing human form or attributes to things that are not humans. For example, the proposition that organisations have memories raises questions about anthropomorphism given that only biological organisms or human beings have memories.

There are many instances in the literature that suggest that organisational theory is replete with anthropomorphism. For example, Organisational Life Cycle (OLC) models outline the creation, development and decline of organisations based on the biological pattern of birth, growth and death. According to von Wobeser (2016), common terms used to describe OLC stages include: organisational birth, organisational survival, and organisational mortality. Similarly, von Wobeser (2016:36) argued that:

There is no debate as to the validity of applying the biological concept of life cycle to organisations. It is clear that organisations are at some point “born”, they grow to one size or another, and eventually they all “die”.

Therefore, OLC models treat organisations as if they were some kind of living organisms such as plants, animals or a human being.

Organisational learning is another construct through which anthropomorphism is evident in the organisational literature. According to Tam and Gray (2016), organisational learning is a process of acquiring information, interpreting information, and using information to guide decision-making in organisations. In addition, Tam and Gray defined organisational learning as, a process of information acquisition, information interpretation and resulting behavioural and cognitive changes, which should in turn have an impact on organisational performance. Thus, the definitions above suggest that the learning processes in organisations resemble human traits such as the ability to learn, capacity to acquire and interpret information.

In attempting to avoid the anthropomorphic controversy found in the organisational learning construct, Schoeneborn and Blaschke (2013:262) pointed out that:

In talking about organisations as learning systems we do not mean to suggest that they have human properties. Organisations do not think, do not learn in a literal sense. Only people do. It is true however that, members of an organisation can not only learn as individuals but can transmit their learning to others, can codify it and embody it in the standard operating procedures of the organisation. In this limited sense, the organisation can be said to learn.

However, the term 'organisational learning' remains anthropomorphic in its use in organisational theories. The term attributes human traits such as learning, as well as the capacity to acquire and interpret information to organisations.

In general terms, Shepherd and Sutcliffe (2015) offered additional examples of anthropomorphising when he made reference to 'healthy organisations'. Also, descriptions of organisations in such terms as 'organisational maturity', 'organisational personality', 'organisational cognition', 'organisational actions' and 'organisational behaviour' are further demonstrations of anthropomorphising, by researchers of organisational studies (Shepherd and Sutcliffe 2015).

Although anthropomorphising as a means for enhancing theorising has been prominent in organisational theory, it is often criticised. For example, Shepherd and Sutcliffe (2015:99) argued that, "primary dependence on unshackled anthropomorphising for our knowledge about other species is not a promising direction for science to go . . . [because it can] lead toward automatically adjusting and confirming just-so stories". Furthermore, Shepherd and Sutcliffe (2015:99) declared that, "anthropomorphising runs deep and seems to require repeated weeding out". Some scholars even include the term 'error' in their definitions of anthropomorphising. For instance, Andersen (2012) asserted that, the 'error' of attributing uniquely human characteristics to other types of units is called anthropomorphism and is widespread in organisational literature, hence, the expression 'anthropomorphism error' in the organisational literature.

It is therefore significant to note that, the literature surveyed on the one hand presented anthropomorphising as a useful tool for generating organisational theories, yet, on the other hand, some scholars still view it with caution, suspicion, and even disdain. However, in this study the author takes the perspective that anthropomorphism is a useful tool for generating, developing, and communicating new knowledge in organisational studies. Particularly, what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to the achievement of sustainability for theological institutions in Zimbabwe.

2.5 Summary

This chapter provided the literature survey pertaining to the objectives of the study from academia and scholars. The review of literature revealed that at the centre of theological colleges and seminaries' struggles is the issue of sustainability. As a result many theological institutions close down or have had their educational programmes

nullified, or they have even been absorbed by national universities. The literature further revealed that, financial pressure (funding), student attrition and poor student enrolment, ivory tower faculty, irrelevant curricula, improper registration and affiliation, are some of the causes for the lack of sustainability among theological institutions. However, organisational memory as a branch of knowledge management appears to have been overlooked as a likely cause for the failure of institutions to achieve sustainability. The oversight is especially glaring given that the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century demands that institutions embrace knowledge and information as key assets in order to remain competitive and sustainable. Therefore, in the light of the literature survey revelations, it is critical to investigate what OM could contribute to the achievement of institutional sustainability among theological colleges in Zimbabwe? In the chapter below, I present the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature survey that pertained to the following areas of the study: closure of theological institutions; sustainability issues of theological institutions and seminaries; as well as organisational memory. This chapter deals with the selection of philosophies, approaches, strategies, and designs for research, as they relate to the investigation of the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. This chapter will discuss the research stages, in line with Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Research Methodology Life Cycle*.

3.2 The Research Methodology Life Cycle

Dawood and Underwood (2010) presented a life cycle model of the research methodology which includes several structures. The first section of the cycle examine the branches of Philosophy. For example, it examines epistemology and ontology. Afterwhich a presentation of the types of Research Approaches is availed. Strategies are also part of the life cycle, and concepts such as research choices and time horizons are introduced. The cycle links axiology with data research procedures and data collection techniques. Dawood and Underwood (2010) present a picture of a research process that begins with philosophy and that ends with axiology.

Each of the cycle's aspects is presented below, in diagrammatic form in order to show the relationship between these aspects.



Figure 3.1 Research Methodology Life Cycle (Based on Dawood & Underwood Research Methodology Life Cycle, 2010:184).

The Research Methodology model shown in figure 3.1 above has slight modifications from Dawood and Underwood's original *Research Methodology Life Cycle*. For example, the original diagram gives 'atheistic' as one of the branches of philosophy instead of aesthetics, as shown in figure 1 above. Also, the original diagram lists Phonology as a branch of epistemology instead of phenomenology, as shown in figure 1 above. Phonology is the study of speech sounds, whilst Phenomenology (also called Interpretivism" is usually used to explain human experience and is also an example of qualitative research. Another modification to Dawood and Underwood's original diagram is the change of the heading 'Research Reasonings' to 'Research Reasoning', as shown in figure 1 above. The reason for this change is that, 'Reasonings' is not a recognised word in standard English. However, the word 'abductive' which is also not a recognised word in Standard English has not been changed, as it is a subject-specific word in research. According to McGregor (2014), abductive reasoning is a process of reasoning whereby the researcher selects the best explanation from competing explanations about a phenomenon – that is, a best option based on what is known or observed about a phenomenon. Under Research Strategies, the word listed as 'Experiment' in Dawood and Underwood's original diagram has been modified to 'Experimental', as shown in figure 1 above.

3.2.1 Philosophy

Ukwamedua (2017:91) states that, "philosophy is derived from the following Greek words: *philein*, 'to love', and *sophia*, 'wisdom'. Simply stated, philosophy is love of wisdom or love of knowledge. Its various sub-branches, are: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics and aesthetics.

Research philosophy "refers to the source, nature and development of knowledge and about the ways in which data about a phenomenon should be collected, analysed and used" (Dudovisky 2016:42). The researcher's assumptions are usually reflected in his or her philosophy. The researcher's assumptions serve as the basis or foundation for formulating a research strategy.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012), point out that a research philosophy is important for various reasons. In the first place the authors argue that, philosophies are important in clarifying research designs; Secondly, research philosophies make it possible for the researcher to determine his or her research design. Finally, the research philosophy is important in helping researchers identify and create designs which are often outside of their experiences.

Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Research Methodology Model* presented above presents the study of knowledge (epistemology) the study of being (ontology) and the study of value (axiology), as the three assumptions that are included within the research philosophy. The assumptions of which can be seen in the table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Assumptions about Research Philosophy (Sexton 2013)

Epistemology “asks the How question?)	These assumptions are concerned about how researchers gather and accept knowledge about the world.
Ontology “asks the what? question)	These assumptions relate to what researchers make about the nature of reality
Axiology (asks the why? question)	These assumptions relate to the nature of values and the bases of judgments of value

3.2.2 Epistemology

Under the epistemological assumption, Dawood and Underwood (2010) present three traditions of philosophies, namely: Positivism, Realism and Interpretivism/Phenomenology. According to literature however, there are five major research philosophies, namely: Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism, Post-modernism and Pragmatism. However, Post-modernist and Pragmatist philosophies are excluded in Dawood and Underwood’s (2010) *Research Methodology Life Cycle*. In the following section, the researcher will only discuss three research philosophies in detail, namely: Positivism, Realism, and Interpretivism.

Positivism

According to Babbie (2011:35), “Augustine Comte is considered as one who started positivism and advanced that human beings could be studied, scientifically. From the literature, it appears that positivist philosophical assumptions are connected with experiments and with quantitative research, and they are considered to be a continuation from empiricist philosophy (Ryan 2018). Empiricist philosophy is one form of foundational philosophy which believes knowledge comes from experience only. Hence, empiricists believe in objective knowledge that is free from any bias (Phillips and Burbules 2000 cited in Ryan 2018).

Positivists are of the view that reality is objective and that it can be studied by researchers, independently. Furthermore, they also believe that quantitative research quantifies data as a result statistics and mathematical techniques are central to the research process

Addae and Quan-Baffour (2015:155) argue that positivism is characterised by the following four doctrines:(1) only experience is real and could be studied, thereby rejecting other abstractions like matter and spirit; (2) words, generalisations, abstractions are not real and can not be systematically studied; (3) the detachment of facts from values; and (4) the contention that reality is objective and that the researcher is able to study it independently. Therefore, positivists are of the view that different researchers studying the same factual will arrive at the same result (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Such beliefs have guided quantitative researchers for many years and have motivated the use of the scientific method in the study of social phenomena.

Whilst positivist philosophical assumptions may be useful in the analysis of numbers and statistical data, such as the number of theological institutions closed down or the frequency of their closures, the positivist approach will not be in a position to interpretate and understand unpredictable social factors such as feelings, beliefs and motivations. Therefore, a positivist philosophical assumption cannot be used in this study to explain the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. Certainly, closure of these institutions is an interpretive issue and cannot effectively studied if non-interpretive positivist approaches were used.

Realism is a research philosophy which presumes that there is a knowable and objective reality. According to Žukauskas et al. (2018) realism is related to positivism and interpretivist research philosophies. The essence of realism is that what the mind tells is the truth: and that reality can exist independent of the human mind. More specifically, realism accepts truth can exist independently, outside of men's beliefs and behaviour. In addition, realism accepts that the ability to understand human beings and their behaviour requires recognition of the subjectivity that is intrinsic in humans. Realists' also believe that, truth is independent and beyond human control.

According to Livesey (2011), people who subscribe to realism affirm the principles of the natural and the social sciences. For example they believe that scientific evidence is proof enough that the results or findings of the phenomena that has been scientifically studied, are valid, and yet not sufficient. For realists, the social world must be investigated or researched as a whole and not in parts and pieces. Realists are of the view that all parts of the social world are somehow related or connected to other parts of the social world. As a result, realists usually conduct dip interrogations as they go beyond mere descriptions in their investigations. Livesey (2011) argues for the use of focus groups and semi-structured interviews to collect data.

The following are the two different types of realism: direct and critical. Direct realism depicts the world as based on personal senses of people. On the other hand, critical realism is depicted via people's experiences and representations of the real world. According to Livesey (2011) critical realists', sensations and images of the real world can mislead and usually do not depict the real world.

Realism as a research philosophy was not considered best suited for use in this study because, it is mainly based on the belief that social reality exists independently of our knowledge of and ability to observe it. Hence, this realist assumption is opposed to the researcher's belief that, what is known of social reality is concept-dependent and socially constructed.

Interpretivism / Phenomenology

According to Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Life Cycle*, the third research philosophy is interpretivism also called phenomenology. This research philosophy considers reality as biased, prone to change, and socially constructed (Saunders and Lewis 2017).

For interpretivists, their assumption is that meaning and knowledge generation present opportunities for various explanations and interpretations. Hence, they hold that there is no impartial knowledge which is autonomous of thinking and reasoning of people. Myers (2013) argues that, interpretive researchers base their position on the fact that access to reality (whether given or socially constructed) is only through social constructs such as language, and shared meanings. It is generally believed that interpretivists' research is supported by observing and making interpretations. For interpretivists, collecting information about events is key, while making meaning constitutes interpretation of information as researchers draw inferences or by make judgements. Interpretivist research studies cases by looking at the meanings that people give. Interpretivists' assumption is that meanings are emergent and determined by the context.

This study deals with social phenomenon in the form of the closure of theological institutions. Therefore, the research study utilised an interpretivist research philosophy. In this research study, the researcher investigated the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe using an interpretivist research philosophy. The table below displays characteristics of interpretivist assumptions as used in this study:

Table 3.2: Characteristics of Interpretivist Assumptions

Feature	Description
Purpose of Research	To investigate the causes of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to recommend interventions so as to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions.
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happenings are recognised through the mental processes of e that explanation as a result of the interaction with the context.• Knowledge is socially constructed by participants in the research process via their experiences or their natural settings.• Both the researcher and the respondents are involved in an the research process by talking,listening, reading and writing.• Data collection processes are done personally by the reseacher as he or she interacts with research respondents.
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are many truths or realities.• Reality can be arrived at and socially constructed as the researcher and the phenomena interact.• Usually uncovered when people make sense of their social world in their natural contexts.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often data is collected by conducting interviews.• The researcher determines the valuable and appropriate method.

3.2.3 Ontology

According to Malette (2013:65) ontology refers “to a branch of philosophy associated with conveying the nature and structure of the world”. Malette further argues that ontology describes the form and nature of reality and what can be revealed or known about it – it is the science or the study of being. Dawood and Underwood’s (2010) *Research Methodology Life Cycle*, considers ontology after epistemology, and this order contradicts the sequence generally advocated by several authors like: Bryman 2012, Saunders and Lewis. 2017, et cetera. These authors would consider ontology first before epistemology. However, given that a commitment to follow Dawood and Underwood’s (2010) framework was already made at the beginning of the chapter, this study maintains the order presented in the framework under consideration which has two ontological branches, namely: subjectivism and objectivism. On one hand objectivist ontology holds that, in existence are social phenomena together with their meanings, independent of collective actors. On the other hand, subjectivism, holds that social phenomena and their meanings are always being generated by social actors. Subjectivism is also understood as constructionism or interpretivism (Bryman 2012 and Bell 2015).

In this study, the researcher’s ontological perspective will be underpinned by a subjectivist ontology which suggests that individuals take an active role in the construction of social reality. The rationale being that, a subjectivist perspective allows the researcher to understand and interpret what the subjects (people involved in theological education) understand or how they interpret their context, specifically closures of theological institutions. Thus, effort to recognise and appreciate the subjects’ point of view, instead of understanding only my point of view. Therefore, only towards the end of the study will the I interpret and make meaning of the data contributed by the subjects, but this will still be influenced by the kind of interactions that would have take place with participants.

Also, a subjectivist ontology is the preferred perspective for this study because, the researcher believes that the issue being studied; that is, the closures of theological institutions, reflects multiple realities as already highlighted in the Literature Review section. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the assumption of a Subjective Paradigm/Interpretivist Paradigm/Constructivist Paradigm pertains to the the researcher beliefs and that the case studied has several realities, and that those truths can be explored and meaning deduced from them or developed through the interactions that would have taken place between the researcher and the respondents of the research, and among the research participants.

3.2.4 Research Reasoning / Approach

Dawood and Underwood’s (2010) *Research Methodology Life Cycle* provides Deductive, Abductive and Inductive approaches as the three branches of research reasoning or research approaches, available to researchers. These concepts are explained below.

According to Dudovisky (2016), reasoning of an inductive nature starts with comprehensive observations of the world, which are directed towards abstract general ideas. In an inductive approach, a researcher is guided by the scientific reasoning and the identification of relationships as the research process develops. During the initial stages in the research process, the researcher will not be aware of the findings until the whole process is complete. Inductive reasoning is described as a ‘bottom-up’ approach to knowing, This means that the researcher employs observations in order to describe a sketch of the case that is being studied. Generally, the inductive approach is associated with qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis.

Dudovisky (2016:45) views a deductive reasoning as, “concerned with constructing a hypothesis that is based on an existent theory, followed by putting a research strategy in place to test the hypothesis”. Deductive reasoning is generally known as reasoning from particular to general. Should there be a causal relationship inferred by a given theory or case, then it is most likely to be the same in other cases. Deductive reasoning can be understood best by use of hypotheses derived from statements or assertions of the theory. In other words, deductive approaches to reasoning are about deducing conclusions from theoretical assumptions or propositions. Generally, the deductive approach is used a lot in quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis.

Dudovisky (2016) presents abductive reasoning as, an approach aimed at solving flaws associated with deductive and inductive approaches. Specifically, deductive reasoning is criticised for the absence of transparency when it comes to how to theory is selected to be tested through constructing a hypotheses. On the otherhand, inductive reasoning is often criticised because “no amount of scientific data will enable theory-building” (Bryman 2012 and Bell 2015:24). Hence, abductive reasoning, as a third alternative, meant to overcome shortfalls found in inductive and deductive approaches. ‘Surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’ characterise the abductive approach, as the research process starts with surprising facts or puzzles. Dobson, et al (2012:6) state that, ‘surprise’ triggers the abductive process, and that the ‘surprise’ should disappear when abductive reasoning is completed. For example, the puzzle should disappear when a hypotheses has been found that explains the event or observation initially considered a ‘surprising fact’. On the basis of the author’s observation stated above, it can be argued that a weakness of the abductive approach is that it cannot be used effectively, if there are no ‘surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’. Another weakness associated with abductive reasoning is that, its conclusions generally tend to be uncertain and doubtful as the conclusions are often expressed in words such as ‘best available’ or ‘most likely’ explanation. Thus, false conclusions could likely be arrived at, if other rules explaining the observation are not taken into account. The ‘best’ explanation among many alternatives is not always the correct one, in explaining ‘surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’ identified at the start of the research process. Also, it is hard to know the best explanation, since none would have been tested. Due to the weaknesses associated with abductive reasoning highlighted above, Dudovisky (2016: para. 6) advises that candidates should “stick with traditional deductive or inductive approaches when writing your dissertation ...”

Therefore, the research approach for this study will be inductive reasoning given that there are no pre-defined theories relating to the closures of theological institutions. Yet there are several conceptions and misconceptions about why theological institutions close-down, as has already been alluded to in the literature review section. Also, inductive reasoning has been chosen given that the researcher is in the dark about the nature of the research findings until such a time that the study is completed.

3.2.5 Research Strategy

According to Saunders and Lewis (2017), “a research strategy is a general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research question”. The authors further argue that a suitable research strategy must be chosen depending on research questions and objectives, the comprehensiveness of existing knowledge of the subject area has to be studied, the period of time and assets available, and the philosophical base of the researcher’s thinking. There are many research strategies with their unique characteristics that are available from which a researcher may choose from. However, Dawood and Underwood (2010) in their *Research Methodology Life Cycle* provide five (5) research directions or research strategies that are available and that a researcher can choose from, namely: experimental research, grounded theory, case study, action research and ethnographic research.

In normal circumstances experiments are used in natural sciences and they are aimed at creating casual relationship between variables (Bryman 2012). However, given that this study is a social study rather than a natural sciences’ study, and that the focus area is not casual links between variables, experimental research was not considered for this study.

An ethnographic approach requires the researcher to be immersed in a setting, and to become part of the group under study in order to understand the phenomenon being studied (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012). As the researcher was outside to the context in this research, ethnographic enquiry did not seem to be an appropriate strategy for this research.

In grounded theory; “theory is derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process in an iterative process” (Bryman 2012). Grounded theory could be regarded as the next best alternative for this research, due to the nature of research questions being asked. However, this research study seeks to investigate the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to recommend interventions so as to ensure sustainability of the remaining institutions. Hence, the research is not attempting to generate theory from data. Consequently, grounded theory was also not deemed to be suitable for this study.

According to Saunders and Lewis. (2017), “action research starts with a research question, and with a specific context and then works through several stages”. Each stage involves a process of diagnosing problems, taking action

and evaluating. Hence, the research may change as the research develops. The authors go further to identify some of the practical issues of this strategy as, identifying an accepting context, emergent nature, researcher's role as a facilitator and the stages of iteration. Issues involved in this strategy are too demanding in terms of time, resources and expertise. As such, action research strategy was not regarded as being suitable for this research.

A case study research strategy was deemed to be the most appropriate by the researcher, for this study. According to Saunders and Lewis. (2017), a case study "is a research strategy associated with an empirical investigation of a phenomenon in its real life context using multiple sources of evidence to answer why, what and how questions that are commonly used in explanatory and exploratory research". Within a case study, the margins between the phenomenon being studied and the context within which it is being studied are not always apparent (Yin 2012). A case study also provides an semi-structured exploration and understanding from different perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, institution, programme or a system in a real-life context. This approach is suitable when the focus of a study is on comprehensively exploring and understanding rather than on confirming and quantifying (Kumar 2011).

Yin (2012) differentiates four case study strategy designs as "single case, multiple cases, holistic cases and embedded cases". The author goes further to describe a multiple case study strategy as used to establish whether or not the findings of the first case occur in other cases. Holistic case studies focus on a single phenomenon as a whole while embedded case studies focusses on units within a single phenomenon.

3.2.6 Research Choice

The next step in Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Life Cycle*, "involves the identification of a research choice, also called a methodology". The authors point out that, research choices outline the considerations given on selecting a mono method, mixed method or multi methods approach. Mono methods are selected where the study uses one data gathering technique that corresponds with the analysis. Multi methods are selected where the researcher combines two or more techniques of data collection and analysis. For example, multi methods is selected where the researcher combines either qualitative techniques such as focus group and interviews, or quantitative techniques such as questionnaires and experiments. However, mixed methods involve the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques such as interviews and questionnaires, which are done either sequentially or in parallel (Saunders and Lewis. 2017).

The first mentioned method is the mono method, which relates to the utilisation of a single data collection technique followed by a corresponding qualitative or quantitative analysis procedure. The second is the multi-methods, which involves the use of multiple methods to arrive at the data analysis. The mixed method research choice involves the utilisation of different data collection methods such as questionnaires that are mainly used in a quantitative approach,

and semi-structured interviews which are mainly used in a qualitative approach. Mixed method studies can be traced back to paradigm wars between quantitative and qualitative research approaches, resulting in mixed methods evolving as a popularly used mode of inquiry (Creswell 2018). The figure below illustrates the different research choices available.

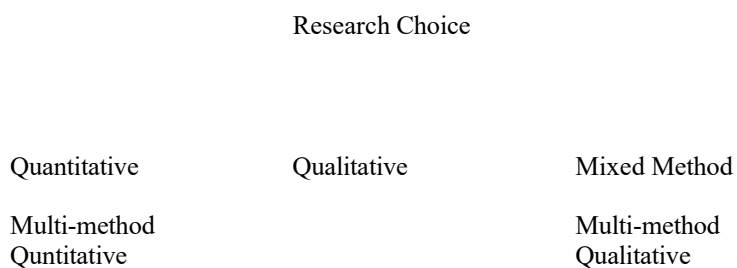


Figure 3.2: Research Choices (Adopted from Saunders and Lewis, 2017:152)

The research choice to be adopted for this study would be the qualitative mono method. The utilisation of a mono method, particularly a single qualitative data collection technique in the form of semi-structured, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews with qualitative data analysis procedures was implemented. The qualitative mono method was deemed to be the most appropriate research choice for this study because the research questions raise issues that require deeper analysis of the many closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. This requires detached explanations which can only be obtained through semi-structured, one-to-one semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative research is defined by Creswell (2018) as, “a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”; this process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis done inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. Some of the characteristics of a qualitative research include:

- A belief in multiple realities;
- Qualitative research is mostly appropriate for small samples;
- A commitment to the participants’ point of viewpoint;
- Conduct of inquiry in a way that does not disturb the natural context of the phenomena of interest;
- Data sources include observation, interviews, questionnaires, et cetera;
- Emphasises the use of words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data; and,
- Qualitative research explores, describes and explains social phenomena (Creswell 2018:180).

Therefore, in order to satisfy the objectives of this study, a qualitative research was adopted.

3.2.7 Time Horizons

Time horizons is the next step in Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Life Cycle*. This step provides the time horizon within which the project can be completed. Time horizon can be categorised as either cross-sectional or as longitudinal. In cross-sectional research studies collect data from a representative subset of the population at a specific point in time (Saunders and Lewis 2017). In longitudinal research studies, data for the same topic is collected repeatedly over a period of time, and can be extended over years or even decades.

This research is based on Cross-Sectional data wherein participants' responses on the causes of the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe are collected at only one point in time. Further, interventions so as to ensure sustainability of the remaining institutions are analysed only once. Also, given that the research study's time frame was limited, a cross-sectional time frame was used.

3.2.8 Axiology / Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Dawood and Underwood (2010) states that, 'axiology', is a word that is derived from the Greek axia (ἀξία, value, and worth) and that it is the study of value or quality. It is often thought to include ethics and aesthetics; philosophical fields that depend crucially on notions of value. In order to assess the value and quality of a research study, qualitative, quantitative or mixed data collection techniques are used by researchers and certain data collection techniques are peculiar to some strategies.

3.2.8.1 Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Qualitative researchers typically rely on the following four (4) commonly used methods of data collection, namely: participant observation, interviews, focus groups, document analysis/material culture. According to Saunders and Lewis (2017), when one conducts research through participant observation one attempts to participate fully in the lives and daily activities of informants and thus become a member of their organisation, group or community. This makes it possible for the researcher to share their experience not only by merely observing what is happening but also by feeling it. The authors also state that one of the purposes of participant observation is, to discover the delicate nuances of meaning behind the respondent's comments which are not likely to be found using questionnaires for example. By immersing himself or herself in the research setting the researcher is able to achieve this goal.

A research interview is a conversation between two or more people, requiring the interviewer to establish a rapport between themselves and the individual or group under study, to facilitate the asking of concise and unambiguous questions, to which the interviewee is willing to respond, and to listen to attentively (Saunders and Lewis 2017). Types of research interviews include: structured, semi-structured, semi-structured and group interview. The authors describe structured interviews as those techniques that use questionnaires based on predetermined and standardised

sets of questions and these are referred to as interviewer-administered questionnaires. They are used for the collection of quantifiable data. Semi-structured interviews are described as non-standardised and are often referred to as qualitative research interviews. In the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher would have a list of themes and sometimes some key questions, but he/she does not use them in a structured way. The researcher may use some questions in some interviews and other questions in others. However, unstructured interviews are informal and especially used to explore in depth a particular area in which the researcher is interested. Focus groups are group interviews where the topic is defined clearly and precisely. The moderator or facilitator running the focus group needs to ensure that the group keeps within the boundaries of the topic being discussed, to generate interest in the topic and to encourage discussion. semi-structured interviews are also a qualitative research method of data collection. They are used to explore in-depth a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives.

Document analysis is another type of qualitative research method of collecting data. It refers to the processes of collecting and analysing facts or trends in already existing documents (Saunders and Lewis 2017). Document analysis can be used either as a stand-alone data collection procedure or as a precursor to collecting new data using other methods. However, material culture refers to the process of collecting and analysing data from cultural artifacts of a particular community or society. Examples of cultural artefacts include: art pieces, design artefacts, music collections, et cetera.

3.2.8.2 Quantitative Data Collection Methods

According to Saunders and Lewis (2017), “quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting quantitative data that are analysed using mathematically-based methods”. Qualitative research looks for quantities in something and then attempts to establish details numerically. The authors further argue that, quantitative researchers view the world as reality that can be determined objectively. For Saunders and Lewis (2017), the ultimate goal of quantitative research is to generalise the results of research, as opposed to the ultimate goal of qualitative research which is to understand a phenomenon. The authors also provide the most common methods used in quantitative research such as: surveys, experiments, systematic observations, online polls, face-to-face interviews and phone interviews. The survey technique is the most common method of collecting quantitative data from selected respondents.

3.2.8.3 Data Collection for this Study

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used because the research questions of the study could not be answered by applying quantitative methods. This was due to the fact that, the research questions were exploratory in nature. In addition, the purpose of the study was to gain insight into a topic on which little literature existed. Also, the nature of the study required access to information on the topic of the many closures of theological institutions which could not have been acquired through a standardised questionnaire with predetermined answer categories, as used in

quantitative research. Furthermore, the aim of the study was not to measure or to quantify anything, but to improve understanding of the phenomenon by obtaining information via semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Semi-structured interviews which were face-to-face were employed for this study. It is generally accepted that, the semi-structured interview is the most widely used interviewing method for qualitative research. Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study because they offered flexibility in approaching different respondents differently, while covering the same core issues. For example, a semi-structured interview method allowed the interviewer (researcher) to deviate from a particular order of asking questions, and it also allowed the interviewer to move back and forth based on the responses given by the interviewee/s. Accordingly, an interview guide comprising four parts which was aligned to the objectives of the study, was formulated (as attached). These parts included: the extent of the closures, the causes of the closures, the impact of the closures, and intervention measures to prevent the closures.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, the focus group interview was another valuable tool that was employed for collecting qualitative data in this study. According to Millward (2012), the focus group interview is an interactive, discussion-based interview with a small group of participants on a specific topic. Therefore, most of what had been discussed in the semi-structured interviews applied to the focus group interview, except that it was conducted within the context of a small group.

Informed consent is an important ethical requirement to be adhered to in conducting individual interviews as well as focus group interviews. According to Nijhawan et al. (2013), informed consent involves the process of informing the respondents about the purpose of the study and obtaining their voluntary participation. For this study therefore, the respondents were approached and informed about the background and aim of the study prior to the actual interviews. The researcher also ensured that all interviewees gave prior informed consent and also signed the consent form, agreeing to participate in this study.

3.2.9 Conceptual Framework

Dawood and Underwood's (2010) *Research Methodology Life Cycle* offers structuration theory as the researcher's choice of theory. A conceptual framework "lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them" (Niu, Miles, Bach and Chinen 2012:440). In other words, a conceptual framework is a network of interlinked concepts that together provide understanding of the phenomenon or phenomena being studied. A conceptual framework can also be described as a loose selection of concepts by the researcher in his or her study to help clarify the concepts used in the research study.

In this study, the researcher used structuration theory to explain the links between institutional sustainability, theological institutions/colleges and organisational memory. Developed by Anthony Giddens, the main argument of structuration theory is that structure and agents are not two separate concepts or constructs, but these together produce social action or social change. According to Baker (2013), the central argument of structuration theory is that structure and agent/action form a duality by which structure is generative of actions and action is equally as generative of structure over space and time. Structure and action are not solitary entities; actions are equally as propagative of structures, as much as structure is generated by actions.

By structure, the structuration theory means specific practices surrounding how social actors deal with rules and resources. Examples of structures include: class structures, educational institutions, et cetera. Consequently, theological institutions/colleges can be considered as structures in the sense of Giddens' theory because they are educational institutions. As social institutions, theological colleges have rules about how things are to be done, said or written, as well as resources in the form of power over people and materials.

On the other hand, by 'agent' the structuration theory means actions of individuals which might transform or reproduce the world around them. According to Heather and Carlos (2017), the concepts of 'agent' and 'agency' involve people having the ability to transform the world around them through their actions, as well as being able to reproduce it.

It is the researcher's observation that the many closures of theological institutions/colleges in Zimbabwe, characterise the social world of these institutions. Consequently, investigating what organisational memory could contribute to the achievement of sustainability among the remaining institutions was considered as the 'action' or intervention suggested by the researcher that was hoped to bring about transformation in the form of sustainability among the remaining seminaries, Bible colleges and theological schools in Zimbabwe. Therefore, a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework is presented in the figure 3.3 below.

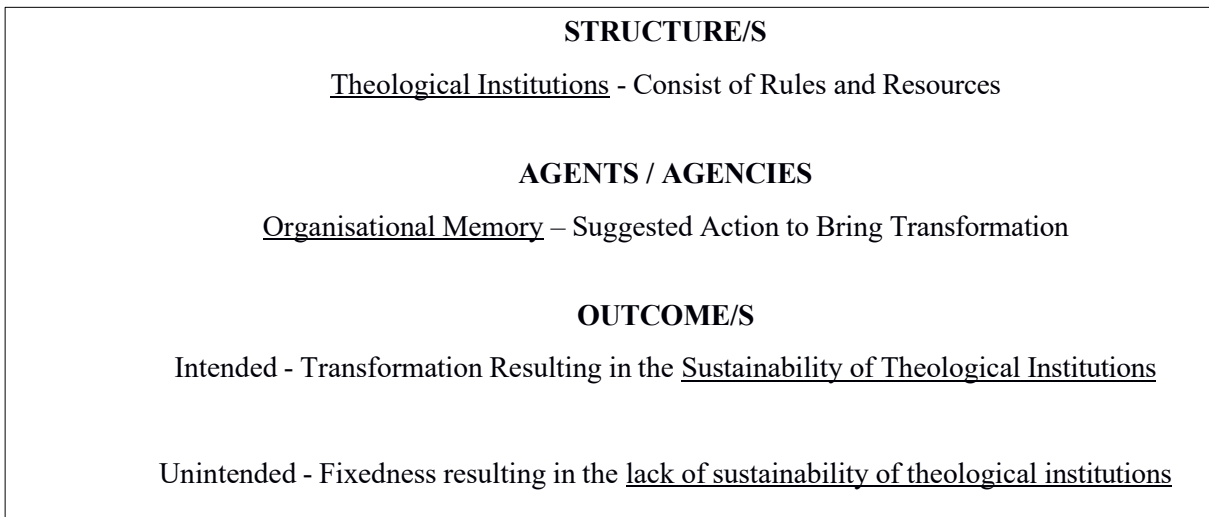


Figure 3.3 Diagrammatic Representation of Conceptual Framework (Created by the researcher 2019)

3.3 Population

The population for this study was Christian educators and administrators who were serving in all the twenty (20) theological institutions which are affiliated to or associated with the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ). According to Harvey, Barr & Paulos (2011:366), “population is sometimes referred to as the target population and this is the entire set of individuals, objects, and organisations meeting the sampling criteria”.

3.4 Sampling

“Sampling is a process during which decisions are made on what and how to sample” (Goodday, Marchant and Talbot 2019:468). Sampling involves selecting people with whom to conduct a study. A non-probability sampling approach, using the purposive sampling method, was employed to obtain a sample of informants. “In this method not every element of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample” (Rahi 2017).

Omona (2013) argues that “the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select the informants that will best answer the research question”. The qualitative researcher may decide to find participants with particular characteristics to increase understanding of some cases being studied (Harvey, Barr and Paulos 2011:376).

In this study, purposive sampling was used because information-rich informants were required. This entailed selecting informants who were experienced in theological education and also working or studying in a seminary, Bible College or in a Theological College. A total of twelve 12 participants, representing three of the institutions, took part in the study. Out of the twelve (12) participants, six (6) of them represented two of the institutions and they

participated in the semi-structured interviews, while the other six (6) were from one institution and participated in the focus group discussion.

The sample size could not be predetermined, as the researcher had to conduct interviews and focus-group interviews with respondents until data saturation occurred. This was in accordance with methods applied for qualitative research involving a small sample, and the principle of conducting sampling and data collection until data saturation occurred (Speziale Streubert & Carpenter 2011:22-23). Speziale & Carpenter (2011) cited in LoBondo and Haber (2014) also concur that, “in qualitative designs sample sizes cannot be predetermined”. The authors maintain that, “sample sizes in qualitative research tend to be small because of the large volume of verbal data that must be analysed”.

3.5 Data Analysis

Aspers and Corte (2019) define qualitative data analysis as, “working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them and searching for patterns”. Thus, the aim of data analysis is to discover patterns, concepts, themes and meanings.

The thematic method was used to analyse data for this study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) suggest that “the goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes or patterns in the data, and to use these themes to address the research study”. Therefore, the data analysis process for this study was guided by Braun and Clarke’s (2013:13) “six-phase process for doing thematic data analysis”. The six-phase process includes: familiarisation with the data, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and write-up. Consequently, responses from the semi-structured interviews as well as from the focus-group interview were organised in line with the research questions. Data were analysed and summarised. Findings were reported as a description of the total population of the study. Data were presented in the form of histograms, pie charts, and in percentages via the use of MS Excel Spreadsheets. Data were also presented in the form of histograms, pie charts, and in percentages via the use of MS Excel Spreadsheets.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Drost (2011:598) notes that, “validity refers to the extent to which the research truly measures that which it is intended to measure or how truthful the research results are”. On the other hand the author defines reliability as, the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. Validity and reliability are important concepts in research as they enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

In qualitative research, “validity and reliability are established through trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of research findings” (Creswell 2018). On one hand, Creswell describes the term ‘*trustworthiness*’ in qualitative research as, “a measure of the quality of research”. It is the extent to which data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy. On the other hand, ‘*credibility*’ is described as being similar to internal validity and referring to how research findings match reality. However, Creswell (2018) is also quick to point out that, “reality is relative to the meaning that people construct within social constructs”. In order to increase credibility, the researcher made available the research findings and the author’s interpretations of the data to the participants (member checking) to enable them to evaluate it for credibility.

According to Creswell (2018), “transferability is similar to external validity and refers to the extent to which findings can be generalised to other environments, different from the one directly studied”. Transferability is considered a major challenge in qualitative research due to its subjectivity and the small size of the samples. However, in order to achieve transferability, the researcher left it to the reader of this research study to determine, how close the researcher’s and the readers’ contexts are. If the contexts are close to each other, only then can the research findings be generalised. However, if the contexts are not closely related, the research findings should not be generalised.

In addition, Creswell (2018) asserts that, “dependability is similar to reliability and it refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context”. In order to achieve dependability, this study used multiple methods of data collection and analysis (triangulation). For example, the interview guide was used to collect data from individual respondents in order to obtain deeper information about the closure of institutions and ascertain strategies which were being implemented for the sustainability of institutions. A focus group discussion was conducted at the third institution because this location and its members of staff were much more familiar to the researcher compared to the other two. Also, it was envisioned that through a focus group discussion important information that would have been missed during semi-structured interviews would be obtained. As a result, it was hoped that reliable and complete information about the closures of theological institutions would be obtained. Furthermore, the collected data and the tentative data interpretations were available to the respondents from whom they were derived and then asked if the results were plausible or not.

Finally, Creswell (2018) described *confirmability* “as being similar to objectivity and it referring to the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others”. In order to achieve ‘confirmability’, the researcher ensured that all collected data were archived in a well-organised, and retrievable form so that they could be made available to others should the findings be challenged in the future.

3.7 Pretesting

As was already mentioned in chapter 1 above, pretesting is a method of checking that questions work as intended and are understood by those individuals who are likely to respond to them (Hilton 2015). It is also the case that pretesting has the capacity to reduce sampling error and to increase response rates (Hilton 2015).

In this study, the questions in the interview guide were pretested to clarify any anomalies that may have caused misrepresentation among the respondents. Pretesting was done with members of staff from non-participating colleges. This helped to identify questions that might have been misunderstood.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical aspects of research give important directions that point to the honesty considerations of the research while at the same time being sensitive to the community where the research was undertaken. In this research therefore, ethical issues were given due consideration. As indicated earlier, the researcher adhered to the Durban University of Technology's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines to ensure that all ethical issues were identified and addressed in the most appropriate manner, before the finalisation and submission of the research proposal.

Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Durban University of Technology's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines Committee. Permission was also obtained from the people in-charge of the theological institutions/colleges which were used as cases, for this study. In addition, the respondents' consent was obtained before they participated in the study. Respondents were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent to or to decline to participate, and to withdraw participation at any time without penalty. Furthermore, anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, by not revealing the respondents' names when reporting on or in publishing the study.

3.9 Summary

This chapter highlighted the methodology and design that was used to conduct this study. The research design was presented as exploratory in nature, and a case study was preferred as the research strategy. A qualitative research approach was adopted, as it seemed to work well in understanding people's feelings, experiences and perceptions about the many closures of theological institutions. Purposive sampling was adopted to facilitate the selection of information-rich informants. The next chapter will present the findings of the study and their analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate causes of the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to recommend interventions so as to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions. The previous chapter discussed the research methodology and the procedures to be followed for data collection. This chapter presents and analyses the results from the qualitative interviews and focus group discussion. Hence, the chapter is divided into two parts, that is; in the first part the data collected from the interviews conducted at two institutions, as well as the focus group discussion are presented. In the second part, the researcher analyses the data collected from the interviews as well as from the focus group discussion.

Findings presented and analysed in this chapter came from individual interviews and a focus group discussion held with twelve (12) representatives from three different theological institutions. As already indicated in chapter 3 above, saturation determined the sample size of this study. According to Nelson (2017) data saturation is “the point at which new data appears to no longer contribute to the findings, due to repetitive comments by participants”. For this study, data saturation was detected after six (6) individual interviews with participants from two (2) separate institutions, as well as after a single focus group discussion with six (6) participants from a third institution. Also, while the sample size of twelve (12) participants appeared to be small, it was sufficient for analysis considering the calibre of research participants as well as the type of institutions that took part in the study. The researcher deliberately chose the participants and the institutions that offered the best opportunity to get to data saturation. “A large sample size does not guarantee one will reach data saturation, nor does a small sample size—rather, it is what constitutes the sample size” (Burmeister and Aitken 2012). In addition, Fugard and Potts (2015) have recommended that qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least twelve (12) to reach data saturation.

Out of the three (3) institutions that participated in this study, two (2) of them had experienced the closure of some of their academic programmes or experienced the closure of the institution itself. After having attended to the issues raised against them by regulatory authorities, the two (2) institutions re-opened once again. However, one (1) of the institutions that participated in this study had neither experienced a closure of any of its academic programmes, nor been closed-down, at all. The number of institutions that participated in this study was also determined by limited funds at the researcher’s disposal, during the time of the study. The participants and institutions that took part in this study were chosen because they were considered to be information rich, in terms of the following research objectives:

1. To identify the reasons of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
2. To determine the extent of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;

3. To assess the impact of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe; and,
4. To examine what organisational memory could contribute to promote institutional sustainability among the remaining seminaries, bible colleges and theological schools in Zimbabwe.

It was the researcher's considered view that, the two institutions that had once closed and re-opened were information rich because of their experience. The mere fact that they were once closed and then re-opened, meant that the participants from these institutions were qualified to articulate the reasons for the closures. It also meant that, they were qualified to talk from experience how they were impacted by the closures, as well as what OM could contribute to promote institutional sustainability.

It was also the researcher's considered view that, the participants from one of the institution that had never been closed-down were qualified enough, as they had shown interest in engaging deeply in this study, at least from an observer's point of view. Also, the majority of faculty and staff members of this institution belonged to and were actively involved in the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ). Suffice it to say that, ACTEZ was quite vocal in matters to do with the maintenance of standards and accreditation in theological institutions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three (3) representatives from Institution 1, while the other three (3) semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from Institution two (2). Focus group discussions were conducted with six (6) representatives from Institution 3. In order to protect the participants' confidentiality and/or anonymity, all names were presented using pseudonyms. The table 4.1 below, shows participants' profile based on their institution, position and gender.

Table 4.1 Participants' Profiles

Institution	Position	Gender	Name
One	Registrar	Female	Susan
One	Lecturer/ Dean of Students	Male	Sam
One	Lecturer	Male	Saul
Two	Academic Dean/Lecturer	Male	Mark
Two	Librarian	Female	Mary
Two	Registrar	Male	Moses
Three	Academic Dean/Lecturer	Male	Joshua
Three	Librarian	Male	Jerry
Three	Student/ SRC President	Female	Julie
Three	Lecturer	Male	Jaison
Three	Alumni	Male	James
Three	Student	Male	Jacob

The participants of the case study were all deemed to be individuals who were rich in information concerning the closures of theological colleges. In fact, some of the participants had personally been affected when their institutions closed-down or had their academic programmes stopped. Hence, these individuals were considered qualified to give some insights into the closures which those who had not experienced closures could not.

The data collected from the structured interviews and the focus group discussion were grouped together in themes, as reflected in the interview guide. The following were the overarching themes, as derived from the objectives of the study:

Theme 1: Causes of the closures

Theme 2: Extent of the closures

Theme 3: Impact of the closures

Theme 4: Intervention measures

4.2 Presentation of Interview Results

1. The findings were presented based on the objectives and the interview themes that were highlighted in the interview guide.

Objective 1: To identify the reasons for the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe.

The theme associated with objective 1 above stated, was the causes of the closures. In order to understand the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, three questions were asked under this theme.

Question 1: In your opinion, what are the reasons for the closures of theological institutions?

Responses from Institution One:

In answering this question, Susan alluded to institutions' lack of accreditation as the main reason why theological institutions closed-down. Sam also concurred with Susan's point of view, but went further by adding that the lack of funding and non-compliance with government policies were additional causes. Saul thought that financial constraints were the major reasons why theological colleges closed-down. He also indicated that new legislative requirements in higher education contributed to the closures of some of the institutions; for example, the establishment of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE), whose mandate was:

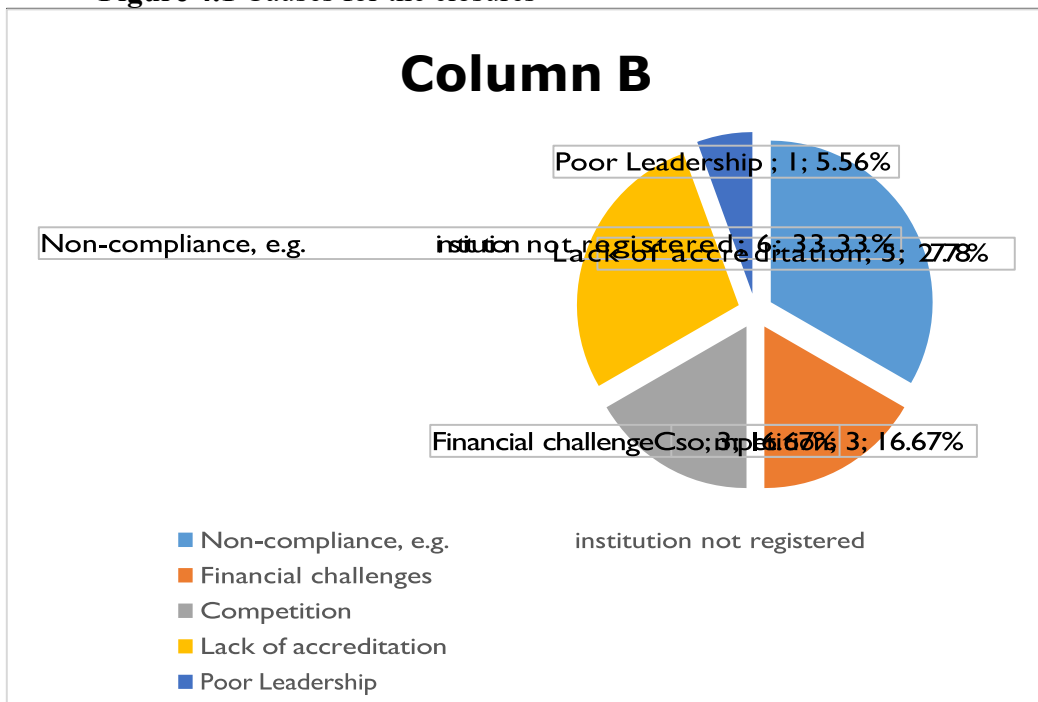
“to promote and coordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and to act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher education.” (ZimCHE Act, 2006:4).

Responses from Institution Two:

In responding to the question, Mark alluded to unprofessionalism by heads of institutions as one of the reasons why theological institutions closed-down. He also cited the fact that institutions closed-down because they were not registered by the relevant regulatory government authorities. Mark further mentioned the fact that some of the institutions that closed-down were bogus. However, Mary gave financial constraints as the reason for the closures of theological institutions. Similarly, Moses cited the socio-economic challenges that were prevailing in Zimbabwe as the reason theological institutions closed-down. He also alluded to issues of non-compliance with requirements of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education.

Figure 4.1 below, presents a summary of the causes for the closures of institutions obtained from institutions 1 and 2 findings:

Figure 4.1 Causes for the closures



Question 2: To what extent could competition among educational institutions contribute to the closures of theological institutions?

Responses from Institution One:

Susan did not comment on this question as she was somewhat uncomfortable with it. However, both Sam and Saul indicated that competition among educational institutions did not have a wide-ranging effect on the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. When probed further, Sam responded by saying, “theological institutions are often mismanaged, as a result they eventually close-down”. However, Saul cited the lack of funding as most churches were struggling to adequately support their seminaries.

Responses from Institution Two:

In responding to the question above, Mark and Moses acknowledged the existence of competition among educational institutions, but were quick to point out that competition was not the reason theological institutions closed-down. Mary responded by saying that to some extent rivalry and competition between University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies, Denominational and Inter-denominational Theological Institutions had contributed to some of the closures. Mary gave an example of an inter-denominational institution whose undergraduate programme was closed-down by regulatory authorities, and as a result lost its entire student population to one University's Department of Theology and Religious Studies. She also alluded to the fact that denominational and inter-denominational institutions also compete for students between themselves.

Question 3: How about issues of accreditation, affiliations, registration, standards, etc.; to what extent do these contribute to the closures of institutions or discontinuation of teaching programmes?

Responses from Institution One:

All the respondents interviewed from institution one, were in agreement that the lack of accreditation, affiliation, registration and standards, contributed to the closures of institutions and/or discontinuation of teaching programmes. Some of the examples cited included, the loss of accreditation and registration by the relevant regulatory government authorities such as the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO), and the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE). Also, the lack of affiliation or an associate status with a local University were mentioned as having contributed to the close-down of some of the institutions and/or the discontinuation of some academic programmes.

Responses from Institution Two:

In responding to the question above, Mark, Mary and Moses unanimously agreed that the lack of accreditation, affiliation, registration and standards, contribute to the closures of institutions and/or discontinuation of teaching programmes. However, loss/lack of accreditation and registration were cited by the three respondents as having contributed the most to the closures of theological institutions. It was significant to note that the respondents' claim was substantiated by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Washington Mbizvo who was quoted as saying, "... institutions and programmes that do not meet the set standards and are unregistered are to be closed down or suspended" (Bulawayo24.com 2011).

Objective 2: To determine the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

The theme associated with objective 2 above, was the extent of the closures. In order to determine the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, two questions were asked under this theme.

Question 1: Were the closures wide-spread or just targeted at a select few institutions?

Responses from Institution One

Once again, Susan did not comment on this question as she professed ignorance of the extent of the closures. However, Sam felt that the closures were spread throughout the country, but targeted small colleges that were non-compliant with accreditation and registration requirements as stipulated by the relevant regulatory government authorities. Similarly, Saul was of the view that, the closures were wide-spread, but only affected colleges that were experiencing financial constraints.

Responses from Institution Two:

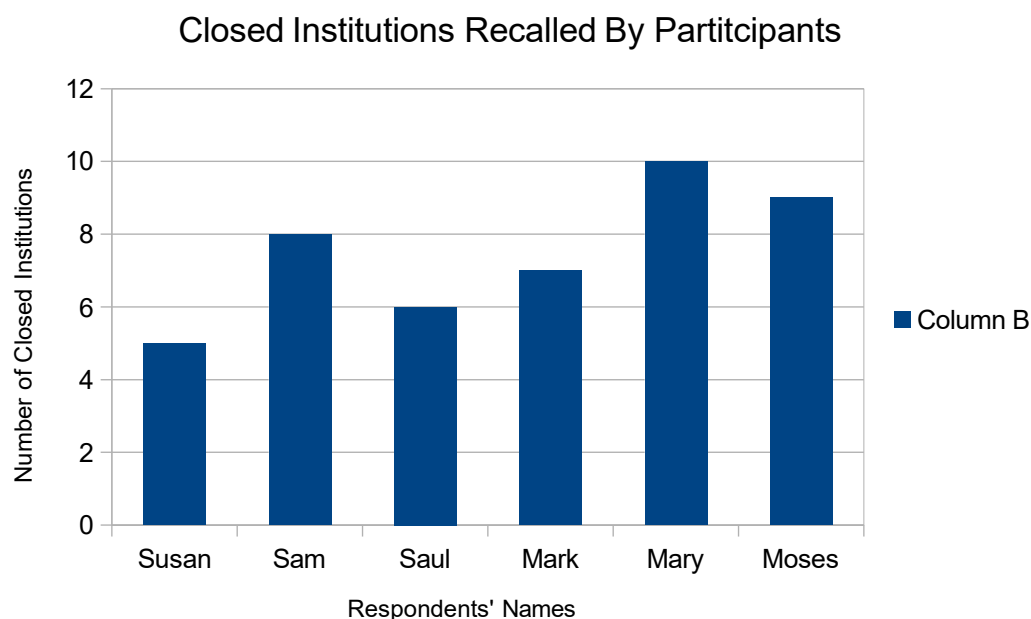
In responding to the question above, Mark felt that the closures targeted a few colleges that were not registered by the relevant regulatory government authorities. Likewise, Mary felt that the closures targeted institutions that were not authorised to operate by the relevant regulatory government authorities. She went further to say that, not only theological/bible colleges were targeted, but the closures targeted all educational institutions in Zimbabwe that were offering all kinds of certificates, diplomas and degrees, yet they were unregistered. Moses also concurred with Mark and Mary's viewpoint.

Question 2: How many theological institutions are you aware of that have closed-down or have been forced to discontinue the teaching of academic programmes?

Responses from Institutions One and Two:

Figure 4.2 below, shows the number of theological institutions that have closed-down or been forced to discontinue their teaching programmes in the past five (5) years. The range of closures that respondents from both institutions were aware of, was between 5 and 10.

Figure 4.2



According to Susan five (5) institutions, that she knew of closed-down or were forced to discontinue teaching programmes in the past five (5) years. Sam estimated it to be around eight (8); while Saul said six (6) and Mark indicated seven (7). However, Mary estimated them to be ten (10) and Moses was aware of nine (9) institutions that had closed-down. Suffice to say that all the closures of the above stated institutions had taken place in the last two years. The numbers of closures provided by the respondents were rough estimates, in as far as they could recall. The official number of closures were provided and discussed under the Analysis and Interpretation Section below.

Objective 3: To assess the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

The theme associated with objective 3 above, was the impact of the closures. In order to assess the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, four questions were asked under this theme.

Question 1: What were the effects of the closure of theological institutions on faculty, staff, students and the church?

Responses from Institution One

Susan said that some of the effects of the closures of theological institutions were unemployment for faculty and staff members. She also said that closures saw students moving to other institutions and this was frustrating for affected students. Susan further alleged that closures disturbed churches' staffing plans, as staffing plans prepare churches for growth by recruiting graduates from theological institutions, at the planned times.

Similarly, Sam said closures of theological institutions resulted in loss of income for staff members of the affected institutions. The respondent further indicated that closures impacted the affected institutions' reputation in adverse ways. He gave an example of the list of once closed down institutions published in local newspapers by ZimCHE, and then claimed that,

“... the listed institutions were going to receive fewer applications and less competitive applicants simply because their reputation had been tarnished as they had once been black-listed and closed down by ZimCHE”.

Saul was concerned that,

“... the continued closing down of theological institutions could lead to false teaching and the dearth of sound doctrine in the churches”.

Responses from Institution Two

In responding to the question above, Mark said that:

“the costs that follow from closing -down of colleges can never be recouped ... ”. He went on to say, “the affected colleges, faculty, students and churches will not get the lost days back, and they will not get the lost time back”.

For Mark therefore, the effects of the closures of theological colleges resulted in the time lost on the part of faculty, students and sending churches.

Focusing on the institutions which re-opened after having once been shut-down, Mary cited the dwindling of student enrolments as one of the major effects of the closures of theological colleges. She gave an example of an institution whose enrolment plummeted from about one hundred and fifty (150) students to ten (10) students only, at its re-opening.

However, Moses indicated that the loss of the institutions' credibility with the sending churches and the community at large, had a major effect of the closing down of theological colleges. He went on to point out that “... it takes very little to generate credibility problems after being shut-down and the institution's name has been published in newspapers, as being unregistered”.

Question 2: To what extent are the closures of theological institutions more difficult to accept for some people than others?

Responses from Institution One

For Susan, it was difficult for students to accept the closing down of their colleges. The reason being that, college education is generally considered the best form of investment a student can make in his or her future. Therefore, college closures shatter the affected students' dreams and expectations for the future.

Citing the high levels of unemployment in Zimbabwe, Sam said "... closures of theological institutions were hard to accept for the employees of the affected colleges who had to face the trauma of adding to the figures of the unemployed". For Sam, unemployment has social as well as economic consequences for the affected seminary workers, who had to be laid-off. Most of them had to find alternative means to generate income, including joining in the survival-type informal sector.

Saul felt that, the closure of theological institutions was difficult to accept for the churches that owned the affected colleges. For Saul, theological colleges are considered as critical training arms of the church, as well as being the spiritual formation centres committed to developing leaders for service in the church. Hence, closing down of these institutions has a direct effect on the church, and therefore it is difficult for them to accept.

Responses from Institution Two

Mark felt that, the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe was meant to restore sanity to the education sector. He therefore was of the view that, these closures were acceptable and a welcome move bent on safe-guarding quality and standards in the education sector. According to him,

"... many unregistered institutions had mushroomed and were churning out unaccredited diplomas and degrees."

Mary indicated that, the closures of some of the theological institutions in Zimbabwe could be regarded as good riddance. For her, some of these colleges exploited people's desires to access good and quality theological education from registered institutions. Instead most of the affected institutions known to her were offering unrecognised qualifications, and because of their desire to acquire theological education most people fell prey to the scams of bogus colleges. For Mary therefore, the closures were a welcome and acceptable development.

Similarly, Moses was of the view that closure of theological institutions was a welcome move to people concerned with the upholding of Christian values. For Moses, theological colleges that were shut down due to non-compliance with the government policy guidelines were not upholding the Christian principles. According to Moses therefore,

“Running a theological institution based on Christian principles is non-negotiable. So, if it meant the institution/s were to be shut-down, then such a position ought to be accepted”.

Question 3: How would you handle the closure of your institution if it were to happen today?

Responses from Institution One

In responding to the question above, Susan indicated that she would be saddened if her institution were to be closed down. But she would try to encourage students to transfer to other theological institutions. Similarly, Sam said,

“... it’s hard to imagine the sudden closure of my institution. If it happens, I would job hunt by contacting faculty friends at other theological institutions, and quickly send out my curriculum vitae, should they have vacancies”.

As a senior citizen himself, Saul said it would be time to retire should his institution suddenly close-down.

Responses from Institution Two

Mark said he would be upset should his institution suddenly close down. But, he went on to say,

“I will consider all possibilities that are available to have the institution reopen, in the shortest possible time”.

Mary indicated that she might have to work hard to ensure that students complete their academic studies through a related institution, should her institution suddenly close-down. Moses was of the view that,

“... faced with a sudden closure of the institution, it would be critical to determine what needs to be done to meet the requirements of reopening the institution”.

Question 4: What are some of the lessons that might be learned from the closure of theological institutions?

Responses from Institution One

One of the lessons Susan drew from the closures was that,

“... small and private colleges in Zimbabwe, will continue to be in danger of facing closure, in comparison to state-funded colleges and universities”.

On being probed to justify her claim, she went on to say

“State-funded colleges and universities receive government grants, while private colleges do not receive any grants from the government”.

Susan further claimed that, most theological institutions in Zimbabwe do not charge students the full cost of education. Instead, students receive tuition subsidies from these small and private colleges. For Susan, by providing tuition subsidies small and private institutions are only prolonging the inevitable future day of their closure, under the guise of solving their problems.

Sam indicated that issues of compliance with the country's registration and operation procedures needed to be adhered to, in order to avoid close-down. For Sam therefore, institutions needed to avoid operating illegally as it brings unwanted risks of closure to institutions.

The important lesson for Saul was that, declining enrolments eventually lead to institutions being closed. He indicated that, theological institutions were facing intense competition for students from University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies. For him then, without students there is no basis for an educational institution to continue existing.

Responses from Institution Two

Mark said,

“the many closures of theological institutions send a message to other institutions that their future is not secure, as they too could be affected. Therefore, responsible authorities of these institutions, needed not be complacent. Rather they needed to adopt a learning attitude from the affected institutions, in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes”.

Spurred on by the many closures, Mary had this to say,

“From now on, I will challenge prospective students looking at choosing a theological institution to ask themselves whether the institution they end up enrolling in, will even be in existence by the time they hope to graduate”.

In order to answer this question, Mary indicated that prospective students needed to know the following information about the institution before committing themselves to registration:

- Is the institution registered with the relevant authorities?
- Who certifies the diploma or degree?
- How financially sound is this institution? How much is tuition?
- What is the reputation of the institution?
- What are the college facilities like? For examples, library, classrooms, student residences, et cetera.

However, Moses' lesson was that,

“... keeping an institution open at any cost was not the best thing for a theological institution, it’s students, or its staff members”.

For Moses, theological institutions should not be forced to close down by some government authorities like ZimCHE. Instead, out of their own volition theological institutions ought to make a decision to close down, once there are enough indications that it is no longer sustainable to run the institution. According to Moses, some of the indications that operating an institution is no longer sustainable include: perpetual financial distress, reluctance by donors to give money like they used to, declining student enrolments, inability to meet operational costs, et cetera. Once these issues become continual problems, then the affected institution ought to make a decision to shut down, at least before the institution loses its accreditation, thereby preserving the good reputation the institution might once have had.

Objective 4: To examine what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to the promotion of Institutional sustainability among the remaining seminaries, bible colleges and theological schools in Zimbabwe.

Intervention measures to prevent the closures of theological institutions was the theme associated with objective 4 above. In order to examine what OM could contribute to promote institutional sustainability, three questions were asked under this theme. Also, in order to remove potential ambiguities to or misunderstanding of the concept organisational memory, participants were advised to relate organisational memory to human memory.

Question 1: To what extent can memory stored in an organisation promote institutional sustainability?

Responses from Institution One

Susan indicated that,

“... just as human memory is critical for survival in a complex environment, so is memory stored in organisations. Organisational memory is to a great extent helpful in improving organisational decisions in order to avoid problems”.

Sam pointed out that,

“memory stored in organisations is very important because it allows organisations to remember past experiences in order to be better prepared to make good decisions in the present as well as in the future”.

For Sam therefore, OM is critical in the promotion of institutional sustainability.

Saul said that,

“Without a memory of the past, organisations cannot function effectively in the present and plan effectively for the future. Therefore, memory stored in an organisation has an important role in the enhancement of institutional sustainability”.

Responses from Institution Two

In responding to the question above, Mark indicated that,

“Memories are recollections of past experiences that are unique to each organisation, just as they are unique to individuals. Therefore, OM is important as operating without it could be risky to the future survival endeavours of organisations”

Similarly, Mary indicated that, OM was helpful in ensuring that institutions do not continually make the same or similar mistakes, thereby compromising institutional sustainability. Moses declared that, OM was critical because it enables institutions to learn from their past, in order to influence the present and future organisational aspirations.

Question 2: What are some of the intervention measures that can be applied in order to promote institutional sustainability?

Responses from Institution One and Two

Responses to the above question collected from interviewees from the two institutions are summarised in the table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 Intervention Measures from the Findings

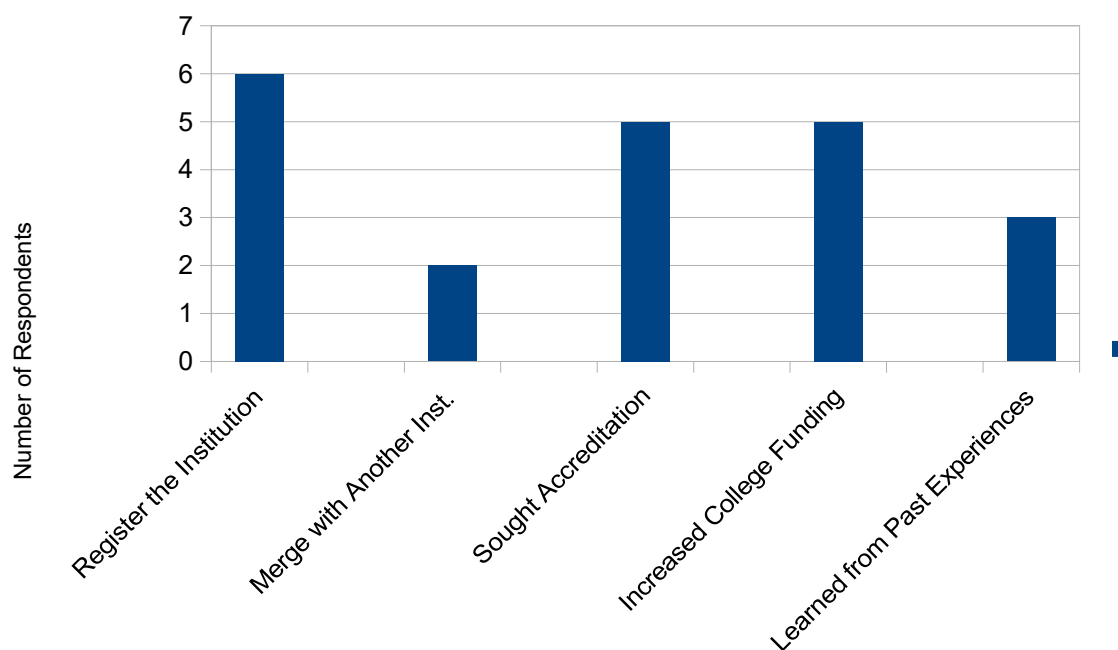
Intervention Measure	Number of Interviewees who Cited the Intervention Measure	What the Intervention Entails
Funding	4	Increasing funding for theological institutions
Compliance to regulatory requirements	6	Complying with requirements set by regulatory bodies
Accreditation	5	Ensuring that the academic programme or the institution meets standards of the licensing agents
Organisational Memory	3	Capturing, organising, disseminating and re-using the knowledge created
Introduce Unique Academic programmes	1	Offering unique programmes that attract students to increase enrolments

Question 3: Is there anything the affected institutions could have done differently in order to avoid their closures or discontinuation of teaching programmes?

Responses from Institution One and Two

All the six (6) interviewees indicated that, what the affected institutions could have done differently was to register their institutions with the relevant regulatory bodies. Five (5) of the interviewees pointed out that, the affected institutions could have sought accreditation for their academic programme offerings, while another five (5) indicated the need for the affected churches to have increased funding for their colleges. However, three interviewees mentioned that, the affected institutions could have learned from past experiences, and only two (2) interviewees suggested that, the affected institutions could have merged with other institutions. Figure 4:2 below, shows the responses from interviewees from the two institutions chosen for this study:

Figure 4.3 What Could Have Been Done Differently to Avoid Closures?



4.3 Presentation of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Results

The FGD was conducted with six participants, at institution number three. The discussion was confined only at institution number 3, because the institution had once closed and then re-opened. The researcher also considered institution number 3 as being rich in information because of its experience. By the mere fact that it once closed and then re-opened, the researcher thought that the participants from this institutions were qualified to articulate the reasons for the closures. It also meant that, the participants were also qualified to talk from experience how they were impacted by the closures, as well as what OM could contribute to promote institutional sustainability. Similar to the individual interviews, the objectives of the FGD were:

- To identify the reasons of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;

- To determine the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
- To assess the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe; and,
- To examine what organisational memory could contribute to promote institutional sustainability among the remaining institutions.

The FGD was conducted in a location convenient for all the participants. The FGD was audio recorded and before beginning the focus group discussion, participants were informed accordingly. The researcher who moderated the FGD asked questions, so as to get the viewpoints of the respondents. The researcher tried to keep the discussion focussed and organised.

When asked to identify the reasons of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, participants identified the following reasons:

1. Non-compliance with regulatory requirements, such as failing to register the institutions with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education
2. Financial constraints
3. Lack of accreditation of academic programmes within the country
4. Poor leadership

When asked about the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, participants indicated that, the closures were concentrated on the capital city of Harare, but were also thinly spread out, over the rest of the country. The participants also revealed that, it was not just theological institutions that were affected by the closures, but all colleges that were non-compliant with regulatory requirements.

When asked about the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, the participants cited both the positive and the negative impacts. For Joshua and Jaison, the positive effect was that closures had brought sanity that was lacking in theological education. They argued that before the closures, many bogus theological institutions had sprouted up across the country. Most of these bogus institutions were unregistered, operating in sub-standard structures, and employing under-qualified personnel, thereby compromising quality in theological education.

Citing a negative impact, James, an alumnus of institution three, lamented the years he had lost as a student when the institution was abruptly shut-down for lack of accreditation, during his third year. He said he had been traumatised by the experience to the extent that every time he drives past the college, he feels anger. Other negative impacts of the closures of theological institutions given by participants included the fact that: the closures caused unemployment for some members of staff and faculty; affected institutions suffered credibility issues; churches were negatively affected by the closures, as they had to spend more finances to enable their students to finish their studies elsewhere.

When asked about what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to promote institutional sustainability, participants indicated that OM plays an important role in transmitting good values that could help take the organisation into the future, while protecting it from repeating past mistakes. Participants maintained that, OM contributes to the continuity of organisations only if it is captured, stored and shared with others in the organisation.

4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings

2. A content analysis approach was used to analyse qualitative interview data as well as qualitative focus group data. According to Dudovskiy (2016), content analysis is one of the five categories of qualitative data analysis and can be conducted through the following three steps:

- Developing and applying codes
- Identifying themes, patterns and relationships
- Summarising the data.

In this study, coding was utilised to sort the data collected from interviews and the FGD. According to Babbie (2011) coding is the process of transforming raw data into a standardised form. Therefore, open coding for this study involved identifying key concepts contained in the respondents' answers to the interview questions and the FGD, which were considered to be relevant to the research question. Some of the codes that were generated included: non-compliance, registration, accreditation, funding, et cetera. In order to establish patterns and relationships between concepts, the coded concepts were put under the identified categories or themes derived from the Interview Guide. For example, some of the concepts that were treated under Category/Theme 1 (Causes of the Closures) included: non-compliance, funding, affiliation, et cetera. Thus, developing and applying codes, as well as identifying themes enabled the researcher to establish patterns and relationships of the collected data.

Based on the work of Dudovskiy (2016), the *primary and secondary data comparisons method* was used to analyse and to interpret the findings from both the interviews and the FGD. According to Dudovskiy (2016), *primary data* are the data collected through the interview, observation, FGD, or any other qualitative data collection method, while *secondary data* are data obtained from the literature review. Therefore, data analysis for this study involved comparing findings from the interviews with the findings from the FGD, as well as comparing them to the findings of my literature review. The differences and similarities between the findings from these data sources, were then discussed.

Theme 1: The reasons for the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

The findings of the study indicated that, non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the most commonly cited reason for the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. One hundred percent (100%) of the study participants

indicated that almost all the affected institutions were operating without proper registration. This aligns well with Garwe's (2015) assertion that, the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe as well as the nullification of some of their academic programmes was due to the institutions' failure to meet the minimum criteria set by regulatory requirements. The Zimbabwe Government has set out minimum standards to be followed by private colleges (theological institutions included), in order for them to meet government registration requirements. These requirements are provided for, in the *Manpower Planning and Development Act Chapter 28:02 and Statutory Instrument 333 of 1996 and 26 of 2001*. The study findings indicated that, it is of great importance for theological institutions to be regulated in order to protect students who will be enrolled or members of the public who might fall prey to the scams of unrecognised institutions.

Similar to other studies examining theological education (Dunsmuir, 2015), participants highlighted the lack of accreditation and finances as other reasons for the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. In fact, findings ranked issues of accreditation and finances as second major causes for the closures. This result reinforces findings by Musto (2022:3) that,

“Without accreditation a college has no standing or respect in the educational world, and without money it cannot operate or build”.

Therefore, the findings from theme 1 aligned with the existing body of knowledge and the conceptual framework for this study.

Theme 2: The extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

The findings of the study indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe were spread throughout the country. For example, data collected from the interview respondents at institution 1 and 2, indicated that closures had been concentrated in the capital city of Harare, but that they were also thinly spread out over the rest of the country. This finding was also corroborated by focus group participants. The participants' opinions regarding the number of institutions closed-down in the past 5 years varied significantly from five (5) to ten (10) institutions, but they unanimously agreed that many closures had taken place. These findings aligned with ZimCHE's list of non-compliant institutions that were given an order of closure. The following is an excerpt taken from the Herald newspaper of March 14, 2018 in which ZimCHE published a statement to inform the public about the closures it had effected.

In terms of section 10 of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act (Chapter 25:27), ZIMCHE wishes to inform all stakeholders in higher education that the degrees offered by institutions which are not registered under the ZIMCHE Act are not recognised in Zimbabwe. It has come to the attention of ZIMCHE that there are colleges offering degrees in association with institutions domiciled outside Zimbabwe. The institutions must be registered in their countries. Further to that, they must be registered with ZIMCHE. Failure to register with ZIMCHE means that the institutions in Zimbabwe that are facilitating the teaching of these degrees are violating the ZIMCHE Act of 2006.

Universities such as Pan African College of Zimbabwe, Megham Consulting, United Theological College, University of Africa (not Africa University), Christ College (except programmes offered under affiliate-ship with Great Zimbabwe University) are officially closed. ZIMCHE has also nullified degree programmes from Triune, Calvary, Atlantic International and Harare Theological College...

Several other media headlines also supported the findings of the study that, closures of institutions were spread throughout the country. Examples of headlines in the media are as follows: ‘250 illegal colleges shut-down’ (The Herald, 2017); ‘Gvt shuts down 57 bogus colleges’ (Newsday Zimbabwe, 2017); ‘Close down illegal private schools, Chiredzi Council urged’ (The Herald, 2018).

It was significant to note that the findings were also consistent with the situation in the United States of America (USA) as echoed by Schmidt’s (2011:1) lament that, “Our seminaries are dying ... is it time to write the eulogy?” Schmidt cited a number of seminaries in the USA that had sold their buildings and property, while some were said to have cut the number of faculty and to have eliminated some of their academic programmes. The author reported that the remaining few seminaries were left competing for a shrinking pool of prospective students, and lowering academic standards to attract the few students that they do have. Therefore, the study findings from theme 2 were also aligned with the existing body of knowledge.

Theme 3: The impact of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

The findings of the study showed that the closure of theological institutions had both a positive, as well as a negative impact. For example, two interview participants cited the closures as having brought ‘sanity’ to theological education. For the two participants, this was quite a welcome and a positive impact considering that many unregistered and bogus colleges had sprouted up across the country. They argued that, most of the affected institutions were operating in sub-standard structures, and employing under-qualified personnel, thereby compromising quality in theological education. They further maintained that closures had a positive impact in that they protected unsuspecting students as well as unsuspecting members of the public, from falling prey to the scams of unregistered and bogus institutions. This finding aligns well with the Republic of South Africa: Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)’s (2019) observation that, higher education is so highly valued thereby making it attractive to criminals who then swindle money out of unsuspecting and often desperate victims. According to DHET, this is usually done through bogus colleges pretending to offer quality education, but in fact offer nothing except misery and hardship to those who they trap. Consequently, the Department takes the curse of bogus colleges very seriously by closing them down, and intensifying efforts to raise public awareness, as well as by producing lists of bogus colleges which then get published in the Register of Private Higher Education institutions.

Concerning negative impacts related to closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, the findings revealed the following list of negative impacts: students' dreams were shattered; lost time for students; staff were left unemployed; loss of income; institutions' reputation left in jeopardy; and churches' staffing plans were affected.

Most of the study participants indicated that, students were the worst sufferers when their institutions abruptly closed. Students were left wondering what to do next, after they had invested their time and money into an education that was suddenly cut short. Jacob, one of the FGD student participants, said he had suffered from depression due to the delay in getting his degree after his institution shut down. For him, lost time for students was also another negative consequence of the closure of theological institutions. Jacob's point was in precise alignment with the study findings from the individual interviews conducted at the two institution. The findings from the current study resonate well with Hegji's (2019:1) assertion that,

When an institution of higher education closes, a student's education may be disrupted. Students enrolled at the closing institution may face numerous issues and may be required to make difficult decisions in the wake of a closure. Two key issues students may face when their institutions close relate to their academic plans and their personal finances. The academic issues faced by students when their institutions close include whether they will continue to pursue their education, and if so, where and how they might do so. The financial issues faced by students when their schools close down include, how they might finance their education should they continue at another institution.

Again, it was worth noting that study participants from both the individual interviews and the FGD indicated that, closure of theological institutions caused sudden job losses and increased an already ballooning percentage of unemployment levels in Zimbabwe. Staff and faculty members who used to serve at some of the affected institutions remained without employment after the closures of their institutions. Jaison one of the FGD participants, added that,

"Loss of employment resulted in the loss of income which also brought with it considerable effects for the affected member's family and the community".

The findings from the current study resonated well with Singagwari's (2016) study, which reveals that retrenched workers often find problems in providing for their families, paying school fees, and usually end up with broken families; and, closed-down institutions usually do not have the capacity to help the situation.

Findings from the research participants' data further indicated that, closures jeopardised the affected institutions' reputation. For example, one of the individual interview participants knew of an institution that was struggling to attract students in its attempt to re-open, after it had been closed down for non-compliance in terms of registration. This was corroborated by findings from the FGD, as it also emerged that appearing on the blacklist changes how the affected institution is perceived by people. Participants in the FGD gave an example of the newspaper article titled: "*250 Illegal Colleges Shut Down*" which appeared in the *Herald* newspaper of August 7, 2017. Participants were in agreement that appearing on such lists, makes the affected institution appear to be a deviant and unattractive investment destination; thereby making potential students shun such institutions. The findings from the current study

were consistent with the body of literature, which indicates that institutional reputation can affect colleges in a big way. Hoover (2014) asserts that,

“The reputation of a college shapes its short-term enrolment fortunes in measurable ways”.

According to the author, some of the ways in which reputation affects colleges is in the number of the applications received, as well as in the competitiveness and the geographic diversity in its first year class. Similarly, Ming (2011) argue that institutional reputation has a tremendous effect on college choice. The authors further argue that, students value the reputation of a college and this rates as an influential factor by students in the college choice. It was significant to note that, the study findings from theme 3 were also aligned with the existing body of knowledge.

Theme 4: What organisational memory could contribute to promote institutional sustainability?

Findings from the interview participants’ data as well as from the FGD data stressed the critical role OM could play in the promotion of institutional sustainability. The findings from interview data were summarised as shown in table 4.3 below, and corroborated information obtained from FGD data:

Table 4.3 Findings from the interview data

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEW DATA
Susan	OM improves decision-making
Sam	OM is critical in ensuring institutional continuity.
Saul	OM enables organisations to remember past experiences
Mark	OM enables organisations to function effectively
Mary	OM ensures that organisations do not repeat past mistakes
Moses	OM enables institutions to learn from the past
FGD	OM contributes to the continuity of organisations if it is captured, stored and shared with others in the organisation

Interview data indicated that OM could promote sustainability by improving decision-making in institutions. This finding is significant because it is consistent with previous evidence in the field of OM. For example, Walsh and Ungson (1991:61) defined organisational memory (OM) as, “Stored information from an organisation's past history that can be brought to bear on present decisions”.

This corresponds closely with Stein’s (2013) assertion that, OM is a way in which organisational knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities. The above authors' argument is that, decisions are likely to be more effective when considered in terms of the organisation's history than when made in an historical vacuum. It therefore,

could be deduced that sound decisions are those made in the light of the organisation's history, and such decisions could enhance institutional sustainability.

Interview data also indicated that OM was critical as it promotes institutional continuity. This finding is important because it aligns well with Bellon's (2017:38) assertion that,

“... with the exit of a senior executive, there is a loss of organisational continuity reflected in an increased potential for the loss of critical corporate memory, explicit and tacit knowledge and increased competency levels.”

Bellon (2017:43) further argues that, an organisation suffers the following losses every time a senior staff member leaves an organisation:

- knowledge of the culture of the organisation;
- knowledge of the day-to-day operation of the organisation;
- knowledge of past success and failures within the organisation, and
- awareness of what went into the planning and decision-making that formed the organisation into what it is today.

Therefore, it stands to reason that whenever a senior staff member or manager leaves an organisation, a part of the organisation's memory is lost as well. This is so at least in as far as his or her managerial functions are concerned. The reason being that, the senior member of staff or manager leaving the organisation will be having a memory with regard to most managerial functions.

Managers have the following primary managerial functions: planning, organising, directing (leading) and controlling (Robbins et al., 2015). As far as planning is concerned, for example, a manager will have a memory of what has been planned in the past. Hence, this is necessary knowledge for future planning. As far as the organising function is concerned, the manager should have a strong memory concerning the formal structure of the organisation. This is essential knowledge for assessing effectiveness, and planning for changes if necessary.

The directing function concerns motivating the organisation's members to focus on achieving the organisation's goals. In this regards Bellon (2017:45) describes this managerial function in relation to organisational memory as follows:

It is a management function that involves motivating subordinates, influencing individuals or teams as they work, selecting the most effective communication channels, or dealing in any way with behavioural issues. A long term senior executive possesses knowledge of how the organisation works. Memory or knowledge of how various departments and individuals have interacted with each other in the past is a key in the manager's ability to be an effective leader and change agent throughout the organisation.

Interview and FGD data further indicated that, OM helps organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes. The findings from the interview data are also significant in that they support what literature suggests. For example, Kransdorff (described the negative consequences of the loss of OM as leading to

“... the pandemic of repeated mistakes, reinvented wheels and other unlearned lessons and inefficiencies across industry and commerce ...”

The loss of memory that leads to the inability for experiential learning results in what Kransdorff calls ‘corporate amnesia’. Eventually, this then leads to poor decision-making and poor service delivery, thereby compromising the continuity of an institution.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and analysed the results from the qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. Important themes emerged from the analysis of the interview and FGD data. The following themes were used in presenting and analysing the data:

- Reasons of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
- Extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe;
- Impact of the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe; and,
- What organisational memory could contribute to promote institutional sustainability?

The research findings overwhelmingly stressed that OM has a lot to contribute to promoting sustainability of enterprises, including theological institutions. Research findings were significantly aligned with the existing body of knowledge and the conceptual framework for this study. These findings will be used to consolidate the summary, recommendations and conclusions of this study, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study, and draws conclusions. Finally, the chapter will offer specific recommendations in order to promote sustainability of theological institutions in Zimbabwe

5.2 Summary of the Research Findings

The research topic for the study was:

Closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and what organisational memory could contribute to promote institutional sustainability.

In chapter one, the researcher explained the motivation of the study as coming from many years of observing issues of institutional unsustainability affecting theological institutions in Zimbabwe. The researcher noted that, most theological colleges that had been in operation had closed down, at least once in their institutional history; while other institutions never re-opened following their closure. It was further noted that, not only were these institutions closing down but that some of their academic programmes had been discontinued. Therefore, to answer the main research question, '*What has caused the closures of so many theological institutions in Zimbabwe, and what can organisational memory contribute to promote the sustainability for the remaining institutions?*', the following sub-questions were created:

- What are the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
- What is the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
- What is the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
- What can organisational memory contribute to promote sustainability for the remaining theological institutions in Zimbabwe?

Chapter one also included a statement of the problem and explained the aim of the study which was *to investigate the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe in order to recommend interventions so as to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions.* The aim was to be fulfilled in the following ways:

- Identifying the reasons of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe
- Determining the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe
- Assessing the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe
- Exploring what organisational memory could contribute to promote sustainability for the remaining theological institutions in Zimbabwe?

The researcher consulted with students who were enrolled, as well as with staff members who were employed at the sampled theological institutions, in order to establish their opinions on and experiences of closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe. Finally, the gathered data from the literature review and field research was used to put forward the thesis that organisational memory has something to contribute in order to promote sustainability for the remaining institutions in Zimbabwe.

Table 5.1: Summary of research questions and findings

Research Question:	What are the causes of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
Main Findings:	<p>Non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the most commonly cited reason for the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. One hundred percent (100%) of the study participants indicated that almost all the affected institutions were operating without proper registration. This finding aligned well with Garwe’s (2015) assertion that, the closure of theological institutions in Zimbabwe as well as the nullification of some of their academic programmes was due to the institutions' failure to meet the minimum criteria set by regulatory requirements. The research findings also established that, the Zimbabwe Government had set out minimum standards to be followed by private colleges (theological institutions included), in order for them to meet government registration requirements. These requirements were provided for, in the <i>Manpower Planning and Development Act Chapter 28:02</i> and <i>Statutory Instrument 333 of 1996 and 26 of 2001</i>. The study findings indicated that, it is of great importance for theological institutions to be regulated in order to protect students who will be enrolled or members of the public who might fall prey to the scams of unrecognised institutions.</p> <p>Findings also ranked the lack of adequate financial management as the second major cause for the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe.</p>
Conclusion:	This research question was answered by using findings from both the individual interviews and from the focus group discussion.

Research Question:	What is the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
Main Findings:	<p>The findings of the study indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had occurred throughout the country. Data collected indicated, however, that closures had been concentrated in the capital city of Harare, but were also thinly spread out, over the rest of the country.</p> <p>Participants were unanimous in reporting that there had been, to their knowledge, many closures of theological institutions and that this was cause for concern. Each of the participants recalled anything between five and 10 institutions that had seriously been affected by the closures or suspensions of academic programmes. It was significant to note that, these findings aligned with ZimCHE's lists of closed down institutions published in many Zimbabwe's local newspapers. The findings from field research were also consistent with the data gathered from the literature review that prompted the question: "Our seminaries are dying ... is it time to write the eulogy?" (Schmidt 2011:1). There are several reasons proffered by Schmidt why seminaries are dying. But, one of the reasons proffered by Schmidt and which is of particular relevance to this study was the reason that, "seminaries have not always <i>'remembered'</i> that preparing clergy was the mission and the lifeblood of their institutional survival". This is because, remembering conceptually involves the retention of past knowledge, which is memory. In this case, the memory of remembering the mission of theological institutions, is developing pastors for the church. For Schmidt, seminaries have produced academics, not pastors; intellectuals not spiritual leaders.</p>
Conclusion:	The research question was answered from field research and the gathered data from the literature review.

Research Question:	What is the impact of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe?
Main Findings:	<p>The findings of the study were that, closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative impacts. Two interview participants indicated that the closures had brought a degree of sanity to the chaos that had prevailed in theological education. Their argument was that, before the government clamp down, the proliferation of bogus and unregistered educational</p>

	<p>institutions had become a worrying development, as standards and quality was being compromised. They further maintained that the closures had a positive impact in that they protected unsuspecting students as well as unsuspecting members of the public, from falling prey to the scams of unregistered and bogus institutions. This finding aligned well with the Republic of South Africa: Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)'s (2019) observation that, higher education is so highly valued thereby making it attractive to criminals who then swindle money out of unsuspecting and often desperate victims. According to DHET, this is usually done through bogus colleges pretending to offer quality education, but in fact offer nothing except misery and hardship to those who they trap.</p> <p>The research findings revealed the following list of negative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' dreams were shattered; • There was lost time for students; • Staff were left unemployed; • There was a loss of income for all employees affected; • Institutions' reputations were left in jeopardy; and churches' staffing plans were negatively affected. <p>These findings resonated with other research in the literature (Hegji, 2019; Singagwari, 2016; Hoover, 2014; and Ming, 2010).</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>The research question was answered using conclusions drawn from both the individual interviews and focus group discussion, as well as from the findings of the literature review.</p>

<p>Research Question:</p>	<p>What can organisational memory (OM) contribute to promote the sustainability of the remaining theological institutions in Zimbabwe?</p>
<p>Main Findings:</p>	<p>Findings from the interviews as well as from the FGD unanimously pointed to the fact that, organisational memory had an important role that it could play in promoting institutional sustainability. This finding came out very clearly after participants were asked to relate organisational memory to human memory, just as a way of removing potential ambiguities related to the concept <i>organisational memory</i>. As a result, the findings revealed that organisational memory could contribute to informed institutional decision-making. It is significant to note that, this study's finding is aligned to Walsh & Ungson's (1991) argument that, the purpose of OM is to connect past and present situations to allow for</p>

	<p>decision- making. The findings also indicated that, OM could help organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes and that, OM could help institutions to learn from past mistakes. In addition, participants indicated that OM could contribute to the continuity of organisations if it is captured, stored and shared with others in the organisation. The findings from field research were also consistent with the data gathered from the literature review (Walsh & Ungson, 1991; Stein, 2013; Bellon, 2017; Kransdorff 2014).</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The research question was answered using data from both the individual interviews and focus group discussion, as well as from findings of the literature review.</p>

5.3 Conclusions of the Research Findings

The following conclusions were drawn from the results discussed above:

1. Non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the main cause of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. The findings ranked, firstly, the lack of accreditation, and lack of astute financial managements as a second major cause of the closures.
2. The findings of the study indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe were a national problem, as they were spread throughout the country. Although the researcher failed to obtain an official register of closed-down institutions in the last five years, ZimCHE's lists of closed down institutions published in many Zimbabwe's local newspapers was considered official enough and subsequently used to substantiate the claim that closures were indeed a national problem.
3. The findings of the study revealed that, closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative impacts. One of the positive impacts was that, the closures had brought a degree of sanity to the chaos that had prevailed in theological education. Before the government clamp down, the theological sector in Zimbabwe had witnessed a high proliferation of bogus and unregistered educational institutions, and this had become a worrying development especially to the members of the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ), as standards were being affected and quality of theological education was being compromised. Another positive impact of the closures was that, unsuspecting students as well as unsuspecting members of the public had been protected from falling prey to the scams of unregistered and bogus institutions.

However, there were negative impacts of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe which the study listed as:

- Students' dreams were shattered, and their time had been wasted in the process;
 - Staff and faculty members were left unemployed, and without an income;
 - The affected institutions' reputations were left in jeopardy;
 - The sending churches' staffing plans were negatively affected. In addition, the sending churches lost out in terms of use of the tuition fees paid and students lost out in terms of the financial aid sending churches could contribute towards their welfare.
4. Regarding what OM could contribute to promote the sustainability of theological institutions in Zimbabwe, the findings revealed that OM could contribute by influencing the institutional decision-making process. Findings also indicated that, OM could help organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes; the idea being that institutional sustainability could be enhanced if staff and faculty members could draw on the past experiences to solve current and future challenges, rather than to repeat past mistakes. The findings further suggested that, if captured, stored and shared with others in the organisation OM could contribute to institutional sustainability.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions formulated, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. Because the findings revealed that non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the main cause of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe this study recommends that theological institutions should comply with the *Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act chapter 25:27*, as well as with the *Manpower Planning and Development Act Chapter 28:02 and Statutory Instrument 333 of 1996 and 26 of 2001*. The two legislative frameworks are important as they set out minimum standards to be followed by private colleges (theological institutions included), in order to guarantee and maintain quality in higher education. They also create stable and reliable reference standards for registering and accrediting higher education providers' programmes and courses.
2. As the findings indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe was a national problem, as the closures were spread throughout the country, this study recommends that ZimCHE should intensify its efforts to raise public awareness regarding the issue of bogus and unregistered educational institutions. At the time when the research was conducted, public awareness initiatives were limited to publishing lists of unregistered colleges in the local newspapers. However, it was the researcher's considered view that, public awareness efforts should include publishing such lists on the ZimCHE's website and regularly updating it. Regular radio

and television announcements about the issue should be considered; to the extent that information regarding the registration-status of all institutions becomes readily available to prospective students and members of the public.

3. As the findings revealed that, closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative impacts this study recommends that closures should be intensified in order to rid the country of bogus and unregistered institutions. It is also recommended that theological institutions should regularise their registration-status with the relevant legislative authorities as the eventual close-down of their institutions would negatively affect their stakeholders including: students, staff and faculty members, as well as churches. It is further recommended that, prospective students as the worst affected by the closures, should make thorough background research before enrolling in any institution; just in case the institution they end up choosing is bogus and unregistered.
4. As the findings revealed that, organisational memory (OM) contributes to achieving institutional sustainability, by influencing institutional decision-making processes, as well as by helping organisations avoid repeating past mistakes the recommendation of the study is for theological institutions to start considering OM as an important knowledge resource. Once such a consideration is made, it will subsequently impact positively on how OM is managed institution-wide, in order to promote the sustainability of institutions. It is therefore recommended that, theological institutions should consider the implementation of organisational memory information systems (OMIS) which could facilitate the capturing, searching and sharing of information drawn from the past and shared with all major stakeholders in the institution, in order to facilitate the solving of new and future problems.

5.5 Conclusions of the Research Findings

The following conclusions were drawn from the results discussed above:

1. Non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the main cause of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. The findings also ranked the lack of accreditation and finances as second major causes for the closures.
2. The findings of the study indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe was a national problem, as the closures were spread throughout the country. Although the researcher failed to obtain an official register of closed-down institutions in the last five years, ZimCHE's lists of closed down institutions published in many Zimbabwe's local newspapers was considered official enough and subsequently used to authenticate the claim that closures was indeed a national problem.

3. The findings of the study revealed that, closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative impacts. One of the positive impacts was that, the closures had brought a degree of sanity to the chaos that had been prevailing in theological education. Before the government clamp down, the theological sector in Zimbabwe had witnessed a high proliferation of bogus and unregistered educational institutions, and that it had become a worrying development especially to the members of the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ), as standards and quality of theological education was being compromised. Another positive impact of the closures was that, unsuspecting students as well as unsuspecting members of the public had been protected from falling prey to the scams of unregistered and bogus institutions.

However, the negative impacts of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe which the study revealed included that:

- Students' dreams were shattered, and that their time had been wasted in the process
 - Staff and faculty members were left unemployed, which then led to a loss of income
 - The affected institutions' reputation was left in jeopardy
 - The sending churches' staffing plans were negatively affected. In addition, the sending churches lost out in terms of the tuition paid as well as in terms of the financial aid towards students' welfare.
4. Regarding what OM could contribute to promote the sustainability for theological institutions in Zimbabwe, the findings revealed that OM could contribute by influencing the institutional decision making process. Findings also indicated that, OM could help organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes. The idea being that institutional sustainability could be enhanced if staff and faculty members could draw on the past experiences to solve current and future challenges, rather than repeating past mistakes. The findings further revealed that, if captured, stored and shared with others in the organisation OM could contribute to institutional sustainability.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions formulated, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. The findings revealed that non-compliance with regulatory requirements was the main cause of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. The study recommends that theological institutions should comply with the *Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act chapter 25:27*, as well as the *Manpower Planning and Development Act Chapter 28:02 and Statutory Instrument 333 of 1996 and 26 of 2001*. The two legislative frameworks are important as they set out minimum standards to be followed by private colleges (theological

institutions included), in order to guarantee and maintain quality in higher education. They also create stable and reliable reference standards for registering and accrediting higher education providers, their programmes and courses.

2. The findings indicated that closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe was a national problem, as the closures were spread throughout the country. The study recommends that ZimCHE should intensify its efforts to raise public awareness regarding the issue of bogus and unregistered educational institutions. At the time when the research was conducted, public awareness initiatives were limited to publishing names of unregistered colleges in the local newspapers. However, it was the researcher's considered view that, public awareness efforts should include publishing such lists on the ZimCHE's website and regularly updating it. Regular radio and television announcements about the issue should be considered; to an extent that information regarding the registration-status of all institutions is readily available to prospective students and members of the public.
3. The findings revealed that, closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe had both positive and negative impacts. The study recommends that closures should be intensified in order to rid the country of bogus and unregistered institutions. It is also recommended that theological institutions should regularise their registration-status with the relevant legislative authorities as the eventual close-down of their institutions would negatively affect their stakeholders including: students, staff and faculty members, as well as churches. It is further recommended that, prospective students as the worst affected by the closures, should make thorough background research before enrolling in any institution; just in case the institution they end up choosing is bogus and unregistered.

The findings revealed that, organisational memory (OM) contributes in achieving institutional sustainability, by influencing institutional decision-making process, as well by helping organisations avoid repeating past mistakes. Based on the usefulness of OM in supporting the institutional decision-making processes as well as help organisations to avoid repeating past mistakes; the recommendations of the study point towards the need for theological institutions to start considering OM as an important knowledge resource. Once such a consideration is made, it would subsequently impact on how OM is managed institution-wide, in order to promote the sustainability of institutions. It is therefore recommended that, theological institutions should consider the implementation of organisational memory information systems (OMIS) which could facilitate the capturing, searching and sharing of information in the past to other people in the institution, while solving new and future problems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Review Report



PROPOSAL REVIEW REPORT (ETHICAL ASPECTS ONLY)

NO.	ITEM	YES	NO	N/A
1.	Was section C of PG2a (“Humans”, “Organizations”, “Animals”, and “Environment” correctly completed?		X	
2.	Were the responses to the 34 questions in the “Ethics Issues Checklist” appropriate, and where comments were required, were they provided, and were they appropriate? List incorrectly answered questions: 5, 27,	X		
3.1	Was the Letter of Information submitted?	X		
3.2	Was the Letter of Information correctly completed?	X		
4.1	Was the Letter of Consent submitted?	X		
4.2	Was the Letter of Consent correctly completed?	X		
5.1	Was the draft questionnaire and/or interview schedule submitted?	X		
5.2	Were there any ethical issues arising from the draft questionnaire/interview schedule? If yes, what were the issues? !	X		
6.1	In terms of the proposed study, is a Gatekeeper’s letter required?	X		
6.2	If a Gatekeeper’s letter is necessary, was it submitted?		X	
7.	Other (please state)			

DECISION:

Ethics Classification	Level correct	Level Incorrect	Recommendation from both Reviewers
Full Approval			
Approved Subject To Minor Changes			MdBeer
Re-Submission			
Rejected			

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS:

I would like to review the final questionnaire before research commences		I am satisfied that the FREC Chair review and approve the final questionnaire	Yes
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Name of primary reviewer: Dr M de Beer	Name of secondary reviewer: DR ZONDO
Date: 9th September 2016	Date: 19/9/2016
Signature:	Signatur

Appendix B: Declarations

Student Declaration

I, the undersigned, certify that:

- I am familiar with the rules regulating higher qualifications at Durban University of Technology, and understand the seriousness with which DUT will deal with violations of ethical practice in my research.
- Where I have used the work of others this has been correctly referenced in the proposal and again referenced in the bibliography. Any research of a similar nature that has been used in the development of my research project is also referenced.
- This project has not been submitted to any other educational institution for the purpose of a qualification.
- All subsidy-earning outputs (artefacts and publications) from postgraduate studies will be in accordance with the Intellectual Property Policy of the Durban University of Technology.
- Where patents are developed under the supervision of the Durban University of Technology involving institutional expenditure, such patents will be regarded as joint property entitling the Durban University of Technology to its share, subject to the Durban University of Technology's policy on the Management and Commercialisation of Intellectual Property.
- I understand that I am expected to publish an article based on my research results.
- I understand that plagiarism is wrong, and incurs severe penalties.

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE FACTS ARE CORRECT.

Signed: _____

_____ Date: 10 August 2016

Supervisor Declaration

- (a) I approve the student's provisional title of research project.
- (b) I acknowledge that the topic is researchable and the student has the potential to complete the dissertation in the suggested time frame allowed.
- (c) I am satisfied with and approve the research proposal;
- (d) *I approve of the Co-Supervisor(s) proposed by the HoD and student.
- (e) I have checked that the student has complied with all the instructions outlined in the Postgraduate Student Guidelines and those appended to the Research Proposal, and confirm that the Research Proposal is ready for submission to the FRC.
- (f) I accept responsibility to advise and guide the student.
- (g) I accept the appointment of Supervisor.

**delete and sign alongside if not applicable*

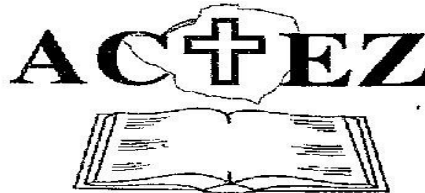
Signed: _____

_____ Date: 09/08/2016

Appendix C: Research Editor's Declaration

Appendix D: Gatekeeper Consent

1 PG 2a



ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

23C Maribou Rd
Tynwald
Sanganayi
Harare

C/o Living Waters Theological Seminary

0773 962 026
0773 929 486
0773 022 357

Email: bheaton@tczonline.com

20 July 2016

The Principal,

RE: Letter of consent

Mr Inock Siziba, the Head Librarian at the Theological College of Zimbabwe is preparing for a Doctorate in Technology degree through the Durban University of Technology.

May I please request your kind assistance as an ACTEZ member college to assist him with access to your college, to enable him to distribute questionnaires as well as conduct interviews for his research.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Robert Heaton
ACTEZ Chairperson

Appendix E: Letter of Information

Title of the Research Study:

An inquiry into the causes of the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe and what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to promote institutional sustainability for the remaining institutions.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Inock Siziba, (MSc; BInf; PGDE)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Professor Dennis Schaffer, (PhD)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

A close look at most of the theological institutions and seminaries in Zimbabwe, reveals that at the centre of their struggles are issues of institutional sustainability. The closures of many theological institutions is of growing concern among theological educators and the Church at large, in Zimbabwe. Despite government efforts, such as establishing the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE) to regulate higher education providers by registering and accrediting them, closures of theological institutions continued to be on the increase. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to inquire into the causes of the closures of many theological institutions in Zimbabwe, in order to recommend interventions so as to promote sustainability of the remaining institutions.

Outline of the Procedures:

The participant/s were required to hold interview sessions with the researcher. The participating institutions were chosen on the basis of the important information the institutions were able to provide, in the light of the research objectives. Several steps were taken to protect participants' anonymity and personal identity. Participation in this research was completely voluntary and no payment was received for taking part in the research. The results from this study may also be presented to the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ) to help them appreciate the possible inter-play between organisational memory and sustainability in order to enhance sustainable theological institutions.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There were no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research.

Benefits: The results from this study could also be presented to the Association of Colleges for Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ) to help them appreciate the possible inter-play between organisational memory and sustainability in order to enhance sustainable theological institutions.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:

Participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If they did this, all information from them was to be destroyed.

Remuneration: Participation in this research was completely voluntary and no payment was given for taking part in the research.

Costs of the Study: Participants were not expected to cover any costs towards the study.

Confidentiality:

The researcher treated issues of the participants' anonymity and confidentiality with the seriousness they deserve. Respondents were assured that the information they provided will be treated confidentially and that their anonymity will be guaranteed. The researcher will also honour his word. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also applied during the processes of data collection, analysis, and presentation.

Research-related Injury: There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher on the following number: +263 773 962 026, my supervisor (tel no. +27(0) 8365 07817) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

General:

Potential participants were assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter was issued to participants. The information letter and consent form were provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

1. Pre-Interview Activities

Participant consent: The researcher introduces himself and explains the purpose of both the study and interview. The participant is informed of his/her rights to withdraw from the study at any point due to any reason he/she deems fit. There are no consequences from withdrawing from the interview or focus group discussion.

Setting the Voice Recorder: The researcher informs the participant/s that the interview or focus group discussion will be recorded. The interviewer requests the consent of the interview/s to be recorded and promise to avail the recording should the participant/s request it. During the setting of the recorder, the researcher discusses topical issues with the participant/s in order to make them feel comfortable.

2. Interview Guide:

The following are the guiding questions, the researcher will probe further for deeper explanations:

Main themes / Researcher questions	Interviewer questions
<u>Introductory questions</u>	Tell me about the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe. Possible prompts: Who was or are involved in the decision to close-down these institutions?
	Has your institution ever closed down or been forced to discontinue some of its academic programmes, in the past?
	What did you do as an institution once a decision was made to close-down the school?
<u>Extent of the closures:</u>	What do you think about the extent of the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe? Is it wide-spread, or just targeted at a select few institutions?
	How many theological institutions are you aware of, that have closed down or been forced to discontinue the teaching of programmes in the past 5 years?
<u>Causes of the closures:</u>	In your opinion, what are the reasons for the closures of theological institutions?
	To what extent could competition among educational institutions contribute to the closures of theological institutions?
	How about issues of accreditation, affiliations, Institutional registration, standards, etc.; to what extent do these contribute to the closures of institutions or discontinuation of teaching programmes? To what extent could the lack of funding and leadership styles of theological institutions contribute to their demise?
<u>Impact of the closures:</u>	What were or are the effects of the closures of seminaries and Bible colleges on: faculty / staff, students, churches?
	To what extent are the closures of theological institutions more difficult to accept for some people than others?

	How would you handle the closure of your institution if it were to happen today? (Would it be any different from how it was handled in the past?)
	What are some of the lessons that might be learned from the closures of theological institutions?
<u>Intervention measures to prevent the closures:</u>	In your opinion, is there anything the affected institutions could have done differently in order to avoid their closures or discontinuation of teaching programmes?
	What are some of the intervention measures that can be applied in order to achieve institutional sustainability?
	To what extent can memory stored in an organisation ensure institutional sustainability?
<u>Conclusion</u>	Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

3. Post Interview Activities

Playing the Recorded Interview: The recorded interview will be played while both researcher and participant will be listening. The researcher will ask for the participants' consent to use the recorded interview data. The researcher will summarise what the participant will have said. The respondents will be thanked and promised to be given the study findings, if they so wish.

Appendix G: Consent Form

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Inock Siziba** (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: Category 1,
- 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
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I, **Inock Siziba** (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Inock Siziba	10 August 2019	
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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Appendix H: Letter of Introduction to Respondents



Faculty of Management Sciences
Department of Entrepreneurial Studies

Date: 10 August 2019

Dear Participant

I am a student in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), located in Durban South Africa. As part of my studies and to qualify for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy degree, I have to complete a thesis. I am therefore conducting a study titled:

An inquiry into the closures of theological institutions in Zimbabwe and what organisational memory (OM) could contribute to promote institutional sustainability for the remaining institutions.

I have to conduct interviews at selected theological colleges, so I kindly request you to participate in an interview and contribute to this study. The interview will not take more than 20 minutes of your valued time. All the data collected in this study will solely be applied for research purposes and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours faithfully

Inock Siziba

