

# The Influence of Covid -19 on Human Resources Management at Marymount Teachers College in Mutare

Mashamba Tarashika\*<sup>1</sup>, Mukome Constance H.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer Marymount Teachers College, Mutare, Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup>Human Resources Officer Marymount Teachers College

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## ABSTRACT

The qualitative study was carried out to investigate the role of Covid-19 on human resources management at Marymount Teachers College. A sample twenty purposively selected participants which comprised senior management, human resources officers and staff members was studied. Data was collected through interviewing and was analysed thematically. The study established that high student enrolments militated against effective service delivery at the college especially during execution of preventive measures like social distancing. The data also shows that college information technology has improved business processes at the institution studied. The institution studied did not provide monetary incentives to lure its workers to report for work during Covid 19 period outside the usual teas and lunches and there were many roadblocks and check points from different locations from which the workers came. The study recommends that colleges need to be capacitated through online or remote working through ICT infrastructure upgrading. There is also need to reduce the staff and student populations to greatly mitigate overcrowding during epidemic periods; collaboration among public health professionals, including infectious disease specialists, epidemiologists, social workers, community health workers, and health experts is crucial.

**Keywords:** covid-19, human resources management, Marymount Teachers College

## INTRODUCTION

The ability of Covid 19 to spread like a contagion is well documented (WHO, 2021 Mazza et al., 2020; Razai et al., 2020) and the disease has stimulated questions on what individuals, families, organisations and communities can do in order to contain it (Mashamba, 2021). Consequently, the recent changes brought by the worldwide pandemic (Covid-19) have forced organizations to accelerate transition to digital operations. This shift has also compelled the human resource management (HRM) to navigate employees in this extraordinary situation and Marymount Teachers College was not spared. Human Resource Management has an important role to play. On one hand to help employees in using digital platforms to have access to their jobs, and on the other hand to support organizations in their efforts to continue business processes. Thus, in the digital ecosystem, employees need to upgrade their knowledge, or obtain new skills.

The crisis of the new coronavirus pandemic initiated dramatic changes around the world. In this context, both companies and customers switched instantly to digital models. The Covid19 has intensified digital transformation for companies, and many workers around the world need to have necessary skills to use technologies (Sheppard, 2020) in order to perform their jobs remotely. The digital technologies enable virtual work as well as to automate tasks and make decisions (Parry & Battista, 2019). The pandemic has

made it visible that the most demanded skills for the employees are digital, but also collaborative (Sheppard, 2020). Any problems happening in the interconnected world encourage organizations of any size to respond and adapt to the change, as well as manage their employees accordingly (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has shaped extraordinary demanding conditions for human resource management and teachers colleges were not spared.

Outbreaks of epidemics have affected many work programmes in many places as the world was grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic. A similar study carried out in Africa in Egypt by Elsafty, Ashraf, and Mohammad Ragheb (2020) who examined the role of Human Resource Management towards employee's retention during Covid-19 pandemic. Their study established that Human Resources Managers should play a role in maximizing the satisfaction level of their employees. Nyanga and Chindanya (2020) also carried a study on Covid-19 and the effect of shifting the job satisfaction landscape among employees and established that Covid-19 resulted in decrease of people's salaries, increasing stress due to fear of catching the disease. In this regard, Nyanga and Zirima (2020); Mergel, Edelmann and Haug (2019) have examined the impact of Covid-19 on Human Resources Management, but left gaps on how it affected work programmes in teachers colleges. In the US, Mergel, Edelmann and Haug (2019) undertook a study on defining digital transformation in the workplace and discovered that digital transformation approaches are changing citizens' expectations, ability to deliver high value, real-time digital services. Governments are also changing their mode of operation to improve public service delivery, more efficient and achieve objectives such as increased transparency and citizen satisfaction.

Moreover, Covid-19 impacted profoundly on the employment, and caused career shock for people (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). Thus, HRM needs now to deal with the increasing stress of their workforce caused by remote working when work and family boundaries have blurred (Giurge & Bohns, 2020). In Sub-saharan Africa, there is dearth of literature on the effects of Covid-19 on Human Resource Management from the perspective of digitalization and work-life-balance especially in tertiary institutions. Literature on Covid-19 and effects on human resources management in organisations like correctional services is still evolving and the present study will give some insights.

To keep their heads above water, businesses and organisations should prepare for future changes and emergencies. For example the natural disasters like the cyclone Idai in Chipinge Zimbabwe also hit the country unexpectedly. Previous reports anticipated that the trends towards online workers and platform workforces increase, which presents reskilling needs from employers and workers (World Economic Forum, 2018). According to Sheppard (2020), businesses should prepare for changes and turbulence in the future by introducing and adopting platform-based technologies, and develop business models accordingly (Sheppard, 2020). The studies from previous years confirmed that emerging technologies including digital platforms, artificial intelligence, robotics, augmented reality, and block chain would change the functions human resources professionals perform (Parry & Battista, 2019). To adapt to the digital work, employees should learn new skills that increase their employability (Sheppard, 2020).

Based on the Parry and Battista (2019) study, human resource management should help employees to use the advanced technologies in organization. Since employees alone cannot cope all the challenges the recent Covid-M19 pandemic crisis brought, HR professionals should help them to upgrade their digital skills, and to arrange their wellbeing (Parry & Battista, 2019). In this respect, leaders acknowledge the importance of lifelong learning and developing talents; consequently, they are planning training sessions online (Narayandas, Hebbar, & Liangliang, 2020). The recent survey of Chinese companies showed that they invest resources rather than preserve funds, in strengthening their competitive ability (Narayandas, Hebbar, & Liangliang, 2020). It is also noteworthy that business continuity, employee wellbeing, and customer orientation are considered to be the main challenges (Singer-Velush, Sherman, & Anderson, 2020).

As new technologies increase flexibility and allow the workforce to work remotely, HR management needs

to create appropriate policies and performance systems to ensure that particular with regard the social interactions (Parry & Battista, 2019). The large-scale research of 869 teams and 11,011 workers in 9 European countries confirms that remote working is not beneficial for all employees; especially team performance is reduced and sharing knowledge suffers when co-workers are working from home (Van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2019). However, job characteristics, satisfaction, and commitment are the factors that influence individual performance, while team performance declines when members work from home more than 8 hours per week (Van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2019). Agile teams, earlier confirmed to be effective with remote working, can be inefficient when working fully remotely (Comella-Dorda, Garg, Tharej, & Vasquez-McCall, 2020). However, in grappling with the control of the current global pandemic, many workplaces have reduced manpower. While these findings may suggest that HR function should address those issues and accordingly organize flexible work, the effect of these technologies inside teachers colleges needed to be established in the present study especially in the wake of the Covid-19 disease.

### **Research Objectives**

The following objectives directed the study:

1. To establish the effects of Covid-19 on Human Resources Management functions at Marymount Teachers College.
2. To determine how remote working can be adequately enhanced to respond to Covid -19 pandemic at Marymount Teachers College.
3. To establish strategies that can be employed to reduce Covid-19 on Marymount Teachers College.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Study design**

The study is located in the qualitative paradigm (Morrow & Smith, 2000) as it was intended to explore a social or human problem in more detail (Creswell (2012). The study design adopted was an Exploratory Case Study. This case study was also informed by the principles of Grounded theory which is a philosophy used to generate theories regarding social phenomena and to develop higher level understanding that is grounded in or derived from a systematic analysis of data (Salkind, 2012). The case study design enabled the researchers to conduct an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (in this case, the effect of Covid 19 on human resources management) in depth and within its real life context. This is the type used to describe an intervention or a phenomenon and the real life context in which it occurred.

The study is also tethered in the needs theory. In line with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory which informs the study, Maslow explained that despite the psychological development which usually occur as individuals move up the hierarchy of needs, there has never been a straight forward procession, as a result of needs at the lower levels continuously exist and individuals constantly return to these needs that may have been previously satisfied (Vanugopalan, 2007). In this case, for a worker to be more productive, security and safety needs must continuously be satisfied even as one goes up the hierarchy ladder. Salaries, wages and job security issues must not be compromised even if some people work from home and their efforts must remain appreciated.

### **Population and sampling**

The study population included staff at Marymount Teachers College. Experiences of staff and human resources personnel are important to consider in this research study. These workers play a significant role in the provision of services to students and staff. The population alluded to would have great relevance to the topic on the effects of Covid-19 on human resources management in the Marymount Teachers College environment.

The sample size in this study was two (2) top management. The sample will be composed of three (3) senior management and five (5) human resources officers and ten (10) staff members at Marymount. These twenty participants were purposively and conveniently sampled.

### Data collection procedure

The researchers used face-to-face interviews with interviewee participants. The researchers preferred to use handwritten field notes as a way of data collection in his research. In this study, the researchers had a checklist while asking questions, he noted down answers from the respondents. The data that was used for the research was derived from interviews by capturing verbatim, in some instances, recording oral information using cell phone for transcription later. Recording oral information allows to capture all information that is from respondents.

### Ethical considerations

The researchers observed some ethical considerations like confidentiality, informed consent, privacy, respect and anonymity (Makore-Rukuni, 2004). The research informants were made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could withdraw from the study any time without penalty. At any time, they could decline to answer any questions. The objectives of the study were delineated to the participants. An informed consent statement was sought at the outset and obtained from each research participant before carrying out the study.

## FINDINGS

There is dearth of literature on the effects of covid-19 on human resources management and fewer studies have examined how remote working can be adequately enhanced to respond to Covid -19 pandemic and similar emergencies in the workplace. Thus, the present study sought to establish these effects as well as strategies that can be employed to reduce the spread of Covid-19 as well as identifying interventions for controlling the spread of covid-19 among staff with a particular focus on Marymount Teachers College in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

### The demographic profile of the respondents

The profile of the respondents who participated in this research is shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: The profile of management and human resources personnel N=10**

Participant	Age	Sex	Education Level	Religion	Responsibility
1	45	F	Tertiary	Christian	Senior Management
2	49	M	Tertiary	Christian	Senior Management
3	51	M	Tertiary	Christian	Top Management
4	26	F	Tertiary	Christian	Hr
5	33	M	Tertiary	Christian	Hr
6	41	M	Tertiary	Christian	Hr
7	46	M	Tertiary	Christian	Senior Management
8	42	M	Tertiary	Christian	Staff
9	52	F	Tertiary	Christian	Top Management
10	24	F	Tertiary	Christian	Staff

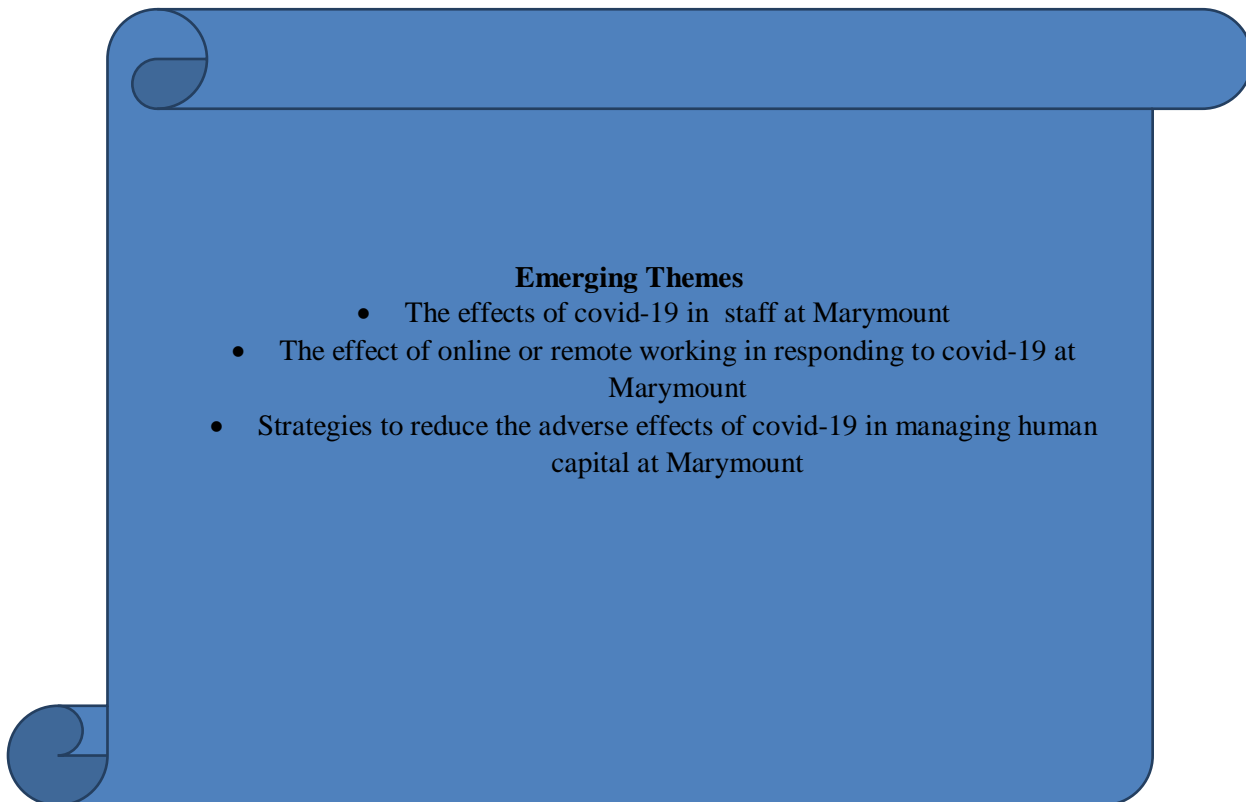
Table 1: The demographic profile of management and human resources personnel (Source: Field data, 2022)

The Table 4.1 above shows the participants, who were identified by numbers to protect their identity, run from 1 up to 10. The table shows 2 respondents were in the 20 to 30 age bracket. Seven respondents were above 40 years. Six respondents were male and (4) females formed the least number of participants. All of the participants had acquired tertiary level of education and all of them also happened to be Christians. The demographic data of the participants shows that they were suitable, mature enough and appropriate to contribute meaningfully to the phenomenon under investigation.

### Information on emerging themes

The research questions which were germane to the study were also subdivided into themes as required under the adopted qualitative data interpretation strategy in order to facilitate presentation, analysis and interpretation. The themes were narrowed down as follows:

### Figure 1: Emerging Themes



Source: Field Data, 2022.

### Theme 1: The effects of covid-19 among staff at Marymount

The respondents were asked to delineate some of the effects of Covid-19 at Marymount Teachers College. The effects which the respondents highlighted were conceptualised in terms of challenges encountered in working as staff during covid-19 outbreak. One such response came from the supervisor:

*“There are a number of college staff and students who have tested positive to the pandemic. There is periodical movement of staff and students in and out of the college, generally across the hours of the day.”*  
[Supervisor]

The other explanation which the supervisors gave was that the periodical movements of students and staff creates a very high risk for the spread of Covid-19 among the staff and the communities which they serve.

The staff movements had a negative influence on covid-19. Asked to describe other health implications for Covid-19 in and around the college, one of the head of department had this to say:

*“The health service delivery system at the college is overwhelmed and has profound implications for lecturers, students and staff working in the facility. This also has a negative impact on community health as staff and students generally come and go between facilities and community settings.”* [Head of Department]

The respondents were also asked to highlight some of the ways in which the Covid-19 epidemic could be managed in the college. One of the HODs studied suggested collaboration among stakeholders:

*“The Covid-19 pandemic highlights the critical need for collaboration among public health professionals, including infectious disease specialists, epidemiologists, social workers, community health workers, and other health experts.”* [Head of Department]

The other information provided from the respondents suggested that the college community had disproportionate rates of underlying health conditions that are also risk factors for Covid-19 infection. According to the respondents, there were some members of staff who had underlying health conditions like diabetes, asthma and kidney ailments and they were on lifelong medication.

The respondents were also asked to describe some of the support programmes needed by Marymount staff for effective discharge of their duties during the covid-19 outbreak. Because of the risk for Covid-19 infection staff and student interaction presented, it was important that administrators implement protocols as formulated by the WHO specifically for infectious disease prevention. A senior Hr personnel explained thus:

*“As you may be aware, Covid-19 is not the first infectious disease crisis to pervade institutions. We also reflect on the public health concerns and strategies in place about the transmission of HIV/AIDS among incarcerated individuals. At Marymount, we currently adhere to public health protocols as proposed by the WHO and similar to skilled nursing facilities such as daily Covid-19 testing of staff and inmates, reporting to public health agencies for contact tracing, isolation and quarantine to reduce the risks of ongoing transmission.”* [Human Resources officer]

Another factor which militates against effective recourse during covid-19 outbreak at Marymount as reported by respondents revolved around high numbers which make social distancing impossible as this staffer bemoaned:

*“We are currently grappling with high enrolments and this makes prevention methods such as social distancing impractical.”* [Head of Department]

According to some of the respondents, one of the ideas that have increasingly gained currency among criminal justice reform advocates and public health professionals is to reduce the jail and prison populations to greatly mitigate overcrowding.

In keeping with the dire need for making the environment at Marymount appropriate for effective staff and student recourse during covid-19 outbreak; many suggestions were proffered by the respondents which included:

*“Isolating students and staff infected with covid-19, providing access to healthcare and other related*

services.”

[Human resources officer]

*“Quarantining those exposed to Covid-19, with limited movement, and separating them from the general prison population.”* [Head of Department].

*“Hospitalizing the seriously ill among students and staff.”* [Supervisor].

The covid-19 pandemic had ramifications for both students and staff at Marymount. Many of the students and staff have been infected by the disease. The health service delivery system at the facility was overwhelmed and this had a negative impact on college community. The high enrolments militated against effective service delivery at the college especially during execution of preventive measures like social distancing. For effective recourse, the respondents suggested that they needed to isolate, quarantine and hospitalise the infected among students and staff.

## **Theme 2: The effect of online or remote working in responding to the Covid-19 crisis at Marymount**

The respondents gave their accounts on online or remote working inroads at Marymount in responding to the covid-19 crisis. Staff at the college did not have adequate ICT skills as one such staff member narrated:

*“Regarding staff with a background in information technology, special recruitment is not carried out, so that most of the requisite grounding in ICT. So, in this case the training of members of staff related to the use of information technology is very important.”*

To support this, one top management administrator at the college added that the development of training for officers related to the use of information technology is occasionally carried out so that they can optimize existing information technology. This will have a positive impact on service quality and the level of job satisfaction of staff members during such present and future emergencies. However, it was noted the absence of special recruitment of staff with a background in information technology education negatively impacted remote working at the college studied.

One senior manager bemoaned the lack of equipment and training to enable college systems to function virtually, where appropriate:

*“Our college needs to be capacitated through online or remote working ICT infrastructure installation. This can include the provision of internet, ICT equipment software with adequate privacy protections and in line with international human rights norms and standards. A rapid assessment of ICT capacities will be necessary to determine gaps and areas of potential support.”*[Senior Manager]

It seemed a noble idea, although another supervisor in the capacity of senior management at Marymount indicated that policies and procedures would need to be improved for remote working

On another note, results from the data collected revealed that staff and students need to be enabled to use technology, including video conferencing facilities, and communicate via telephone or messenger apps to adhere to physical distancing measures during Covid-19 lock down.

The data shows that college information technology has improved business processes at the institution studied. However, results also show that the role of staff in the use of information technology has not been optimally utilized. This can be seen from the absence of special recruitment of staff with a background in information technology education and the lack of in-service training held, even though the need for competent officers in this field is urgently needed.

### **Theme 3: Strategies can be employed to reduce the adverse effects of Covid -19 on management of human capital at Marymount**

The strategies to reduce the adverse effects of covid-19 in Marymount context as highlighted by respondents revolved around alternatives to cutting back on physical work attendance for remote procedures. One senior manager at the college suggested thus:

*“Measures to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 at our college include reducing the number of staff who should report to work daily. [Human resources officer]*

Among the many measures highlighted, it was also suggested that non critical staff needed to stay away from the institution in order to decongest the college as this respondent indicated:

*“Employees whose duties do not require physical presence at college should work from home.” [Head of Department]*

Physical presence in workplaces has been maintained with rigorous protection measures, for example, physical distancing and wearing protection masks, with the implementation of work schedules for different groups of employees as this senior manager indicated:

*“Those employees to be physically present while respecting the measures of physical distancing. We allow an interval of two metres between individuals and wearing personal protective equipment.” [Senior Manager]*

Other measures were focused on the physical worksite with employees wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and working from reconfigured, socially distanced places within the college as this head of department explained:

*“We are setting up color-coded work zones to minimize interaction between different teams. We also check each worker’s temperature and ask a brief set of questions before allowing that person to enter any of the college building. All employees entering the college premises are required to get vaccinated.” [Head of Department]*

It was important to note that the college administrators adhered religiously to vaccination policy. As more college employees got vaccinated, it was also emphasised that these workers still need to adhere to the same safety practices as others. For example, masking up would still be required to protect unvaccinated members, students and their families.

Information obtained from the interview schedule also highlighted unique challenges which affected college operations during the covid-19 epidemic. Thus, digital resources in form of data enabled gadgets, laptops, tablets, computers, network were not readily accessible to some of the workers to facilitate remote working as this head of department bemoaned:

*“The institution is not financially capacitated to provide technological tools for all workers in order to work from home.” [Head of department]*

On the social side it was psychologically demanding for these employees considering the possibilities of family distractions and the multiple roles that they have to assume while working from home.

The institution studied did not provide monetary incentives to lure its workers to report for work during Covid 19 period outside the usual teas and lunches and there were many roadblocks and check points from



different locations from which the workers came as this head of department lamented:

*“Workers who stay out of campus always complain of numerous check points on the way to work which often delay or prevent them from reporting for work.”* [Head of Department]

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

There is dearth of literature on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Human Resource Management in contexts such as the study area. Currently, no studies known to the researchers have recorded the management and tertiary institution workers' voices, in terms of the risks involved their successes and challenges. In order to understand a complete picture, an evaluative investigation focussing on the convergence of the Covid-19 and college administration functions was necessary. In that vein the present study sought to delineate the effects of covid-19 on human resources management at Marymount Teachers College.

### **The effects of covid-19 among college and staff**

Some staff and students were reported have tested positive to the pandemic due to the periodical movement of staff in and out of the college. The incidence of covid-19 in the college was attributable to these interactions. This created a very high risk for the spread of Covid-19 among the staff, the students and the communities in which they serve. This also had profound implications on the health service delivery system at the college studied.

The results suggest that the pandemic also draws much needed attention to socioeconomic and minority health disparities, surrounding communities had disproportionate rates of underlying health conditions that are also risk factors for Covid-19 infection. Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic highlights the critical need for collaboration among public health professionals, including infectious disease specialists, epidemiologists, social workers, community health workers, and correctional health experts. From the literature reviewed, Brennan Centre for Justice (2020) notes that these multi-disciplinary professionals must collaborate across helping professions and leverage their collective expertise as an essential resource to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to be better prepared to address future public health crises.

Another factor which affected effective staff recourse during covid-19 outbreak at Marymount as reported by respondents revolved around high enrolment which made social distancing impossible. One of the ideas that have increasingly gained currency among control measures for covid-19 is to greatly mitigate overcrowding. The high populations militated against effective service delivery at the college especially during execution of preventive measures like social distancing. For effective recourse, the respondents suggested that they needed to isolate, quarantine and hospitalise the infected among students and staff.

### ***The effect of online or remote working in responding to the Covid-19 crisis***

The online or remote working inroads in responding to the covid-19 crisis ranged from facilitating access to ICT services, such as online or remote working. This is supported by Sheppard (2020) who posits that the pandemic has made it visible that the most demanded skills for the employees are digital, but also collaborative.

Regarding staff with a background in information technology, special recruitment is not carried out at the college studied. The development of training for staff related to the use of information technology is occasionally carried out so that they can optimize existing information technology. The use of information technology, supported by trained personnel, will have a positive impact on service quality and the level of job satisfaction of members of staff. The finding weaves into Parry and Battista (2019) who see digital

technologies as enabling virtual work as well as to automate tasks and make decisions.

There was also noted the lack of ICT equipment and training to enable all college systems to function virtually. The college needed to be capacitated through online or remote working ICT infrastructure upgrade. This can include the provision of ICT equipment software with adequate privacy protections and in line with international human rights norms and standards. A rapid assessment of ICT capacities will be necessary to determine gaps and areas of potential support. Also from the literature reviewed, to adapt to the digital work, employees should learn new skills that increase their employability (Sheppard, 2020).

### *Strategies can be employed to reduce the adverse effects of Covid -19 on management of human capital*

The strategies to reduce the adverse effects of covid-19 in Marymount context as highlighted by respondents revolved around alternatives to cutting back on physical work attendance for remote procedures. Physical presence in workplaces has been maintained with rigorous protection measures, for example, physical distancing and wearing protection masks, with the implementation of work schedules for different groups of employees. Other measures were focused on the physical worksite with employees wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and working from reconfigured, socially distanced places within the college.

It was important to note that the college administrators adhered religiously to vaccination policy. As more college employees got vaccinated, it was also emphasised that these workers still need to adhere to the same safety practices as others. For example, masking up would still be required to protect unvaccinated members, students and their families.

Information obtained from the interview schedule also highlighted unique challenges which affected college operations during the covid-19 epidemic. Thus, digital resources in form of data enabled gadgets, laptops, tablets, computers, network were not readily accessible to some of the workers to facilitate remote working. On the social side it was psychologically demanding for these employees considering the possibilities of family distractions and the multiple roles that they have to assume while working from home.

The institution studied did not provide monetary incentives to lure its workers to report for work during Covid-19 period outside the usual teas and lunches and there were many roadblocks and check points from different locations from which the workers came from.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In respect of the research findings, the study therefore recommends that:-

1. Collaboration among public health professionals, including infectious disease specialists, epidemiologists, social workers, community health workers, and health experts is crucial
2. There is need to reduce the staff and student populations to greatly mitigate overcrowding.
3. Colleges need to isolate, quarantine and hospitalise the infected among students and staff.
4. Colleges need to be capacitated through online or remote working ICT infrastructure upgrading.

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profit sectors.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Acknowledgement of the contribution of colleague**

All the authors listed above contributed immensely in the production of the manuscript through literature review and guiding the research process, research data collection, analysis and discussion. All the authors had a chance to proofread the entire manuscript. The researchers acknowledge the work done by research participants during data collection.

### **Place and date of previous oral presentation**

The oral paper presentation was carried out at Marymount Teachers College Hall on Friday 13 January 2023 at 1000 hours. The authors were there and the corresponding author presented. The authors assisted in responding to questions from the audience who included staff from the some lecturers from administration department.

### **Statement on the availability of data**

Data is available and can be accessed from the corresponding author upon request.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The sample size of twenty participants which the study utilised may be considered as relatively small. While qualitative research often involves smaller samples, a larger sample could have provided more broad perceptions and potentially enhanced the study's validity. Due to the specific context of Marymount Teachers College in Mutare, Zimbabwe, the findings might not be easily generalizable to other institutions or regions.

## **CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded from the study that the covid-19 in the college was attributable to staff and student interactions during shifts which created a very high risk for the spread of Covid-19 among the staff, the students and the communities in which they serve. Inroads in remote working made included online remote working. Strategies to reduce spread of covid-19 among staff and students included having no non-critical staff reporting to work on a daily basis. There was also mentioned a need to decongest the institution. The study presented these and other findings which may assist college staff, students and communities they serve to coexist with the covid-19 epidemic as there is no cure yet.

### **Contribution of the study and areas for further research**

The covid-19 pandemic has currently no end in sight. Organisations and individuals should craft strategies on how they could manage the deadly disease. There is need to prevent the spread of the disease and follow guidelines as proffered by the WHO and other stakeholders. This leaves room for further research on the pandemic effects on employee productivity in many human service professions. Therefore, future researchers may examine larger samples or undertake quantitative cross sectional studies to investigate the influence of the epidemic on organisational effectiveness.

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