



**DIGITALIZATION AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS
EXPANSION: A CASE STUDY OF INDO ZAMBIA BANK**

BY

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DECLARATION

I can confirm that this is my own work and that all the sources herein used have been recognized and cited using the Harvard referencing style. This dissertation has been prepared and submitted to ZCAS University as a partial requirement for the degree of MBA International Business.

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DEDICATION

This MBA is dedicated to my husband Davies Kampamba and my three boys; Joshua, Jonathan and Joseph. I cannot thank you enough for all the encouragement and support rendered to me. You have been my biggest cheerleaders, and I will be forever grateful. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my parents, siblings and larger family; I appreciate the encouragement, love and prayerful support.

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Francis Scott Fitzgerald once wrote that “For what it’s worth: it’s never too late or, in my case, too early to be whoever you want to be. There’s no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same..... I hope you live a life you’re proud of. If you find that you’re not, I hope you have the courage to start all over again”. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge all the people that helped make this research a success in one way or another; my supervisor, Dr. Kawimbe, lecturers at ZCAS, classmates, colleagues, my employers and all the respondents who made themselves available. May the good Lord bless you all.

ACRONYMSANDABBREVIATIONS

BOZ	Bank of Zambia
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IZB	Indo Zambia Bank
MNO's	Mobile Network Operators
MTN	Mobile Telecommunications Network
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PU	Perceived Usefulness
SMS	Short Message Service
SPPS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
ZICTA	Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority

ABSTRACT

Corporate sustainability and digitalization are megatrends that are reshaping the International Banking world through sustainable business expansion and growth, which enhances efficiency and performance. This study explored factors that influence the adoption of digitalization as a strategic tool for business expansion with reference to the case of Indo Zambia Bank and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A mixed method was employed in order to carefully handle the problem at hand; the research design involved the use of questionnaires to collect data that measured the views and perceptions of respondents who were drawn from Indo Zambia Bank's internal and external customers. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) gave context to the research through data analysis and the tabulation of findings, which were collaborated by secondary data sources.

The research concluded that digitization plays a pivotal role in the adoption and enhancement of sustainable business practices. It was thus recommended that top management needs to cultivate and encourage the furtherance of digitalization through awareness, desirable advertisements and marketing in order to address the various hindrances that some customers had, therefore fostering a culture of sustainability which would stimulate customer demand, and translate into business growth.

Key words: Zambia, Indo Zambia Bank (IZB/The Bank), financial inclusion, Mobile Banking, Digitalization, Corporate Sustainability, Strategy, Mobile Money, Bank of Zambia (BOZ), International Banking.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The resources used to create goods or services in an economy are known as factors of production, and economic growth mainly happens as a result of properly managing these factors of production which also extend to the provision of services in the banking sector. (Ross, 2019.) A strong financial sector underpins economic growth and supports all economic activities, by facilitating the movement of money in various sectors of an economy.

Owing to the rise of the fourth (4th) industrial revolution, the world has experienced a shift in various dynamics including digitalization, which has created an environment where change is happening extremely quickly. This has facilitated the ease of communication through interconnectedness as real time communications have increased cooperation and collaboration, changing the way organizations conduct business. In order to cope with these technological changes and therefore remain relevant, embracing digital transformation has become vital to business operations, as it changes the way in which we live, work and communicate which is imperative in this era of COVID-19. (Stefanski, 2014). Business value comes from “seeing what customers need and delivering it. Digital disruptors will do all of this at a lower cost, with faster development times, and with greater impact on the customer experience than anything that came before” (McQuivey, 2013)

A great number of changes have been advanced to support digitalization. For instance, the digital economy for Africa initiative (DE4A) was put in place to help expedite the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The DE4A aims to ensure Africa will be digitally enabled by 2030. Forecasts indicate that by the year 2030, Africa will house more than a quarter of the world’s population under the age of 25. By 2017, 44% of the inhabitants in Sub-Saharan Africa had subscribed to a mobile service and by 2025, that number is likely to reach 52%. (Rodriguez, Conrad, Davico, Lonie, & Denyes). These authors state that through the use of mobile phones, tremendous progress has been made towards financial inclusion with this region having great potential. (Rodriguez, Conrad, Davico, Lonie, & Denyes). There is a new ‘scramble’ for Africa called digitalization, thus this study is very current and relevant. (Schelenz & Schopp, 2018).

Technological advancements have tremendously changed the nature of work in the banking industry as well as altered the service that customers receive, as customers have become more

digitally oriented and more demanding due to the increased options available to them, as a direct result of digitalization and competition amongst the various industry players. Banks are not only competing amongst themselves, but against Mobile Network Operators as well, who happen to have the highest uptake levels of non –bank financial service providers in Zambia. (Fin Scope, 2015).

From the Zambian context, and with regards to digitalization, the Central Statistics Office estimated that at the end of the first quarter of 2021, the population of Zambia was 18.4 million people as recorded in the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority report. There were 19.2million registered sim cards, out of which 10, 350,671 were mobile internet users. There was a mobile penetration per 100 inhabitants of 104.7. This is a significant increase from 2015 where the mobile penetration was 74.3, and the number of registered sim cards was 12.1 million. The number of phone subscribers has increased by 63% within the last 6 years.(ZICTA, 2021).

This research paper focused on assessing the link between digitalization as a strategic tool and corporate sustainability, because every business has an environmental, social and economic footprint, which compels them to embrace innovation and technology in order to grow their business and remain competitive. Banks have had to innovate and create opportunities due to the competitive nature of the Banking industry in Zambia. Indo Zambia Bank (IZB), as the case organization has managed to achieve a competitive advantage through strategic digitalization tools. Incorporated in 1984, as a partnership between the Indian and Zambian governments, IZB is a perfect example of how cooperation between international banks and a local bank can encourage the development of the banking sector through embracing diversity; this has greatly helped the Bank foster innovative practices. (IZB Annual Report, 2020). Not only has this practice grown their business but it has also created an opportunity for sustainable operations and the promotion of inclusiveness by assimilating the informal sector. According to The Fin Scope Zambia survey (2015), financial inclusion is a sustainable manner of improving poverty levels.

Indo Zambia Bank is committed to supporting the regulators' call for financial inclusion and the former Minister of Finance; Mr. Alexander Chikwanda once said Indo Zambia Bank has been a long-time partner in fostering development as government makes frantic efforts to reduce poverty.(Nyati & Zimba, 2016).While Indo Zambia Bank has an international flare to it; it is also unique in that it is wholly committed to the local communities and the people of Zambia.

1.2 Research problem

The global trend in banking is leaning towards corporate strategies that favour sustainable practices, it is thus inevitable that the developing world would follow this trajectory as this decade is often called ‘The decade to deliver’ as business houses have been called to rise up to the challenge and deliver on global goals before the year 2030. (Stefanie Mallow, 2020).The achievement of global goals is thus important as it will ultimately lead to a better world, through their embedment incorporate strategy and company purposes.

In order for any business to succeed, they must meet or satisfy their customers’ expectations; with regards to IZB digitalization and growth have been operationalized through one of IZB’s core values of commitment to the delivery of quality and reliable services. Customer behavior changes with the passage of time and with the rise in digitalization, customers expect to experience an enhanced banking experience through various E-services, such as Mobile banking, internet banking and contactless Visa debit cards, to name just a few. In the past few years, IZB’s customer base has increased and by the end of 2021, they had 141,074 accounts in their books with 63,654 of them being registered for mobile banking. (IZB Annual Report, 2021).

However, the extent of the commitment to meeting the customer base, as well as linking the customers that are not yet on the mobile banking platform, leaves much to be desired. The pace of technological innovation and the variety of products on offer lag behind the newer banks such as First National Bank, ABSA, BancABC and the mobile service providers . It has therefore been crucial that the Bank reevaluates its strategy and vision with regards to what customers want and what products would be more convenient, which would result in better service from the bank.

Banking has been identified as a critical sector that will drive digital transformation, as banks are emerging as a major force in reaching the UNSDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 of attaining sustainable growth and development, as Africa has made tremendous strides in the integration of ICT into healthcare, education and banking.(Schelenz & Schopp, 2018). With emphasis on the promotion of sustainability through digitalization, particularly at Indo Zambia Bank, in Zambia, this study is thus cardinal as it will broaden the knowledge base on digitalization in Africa, thus contributing to the body of work that exists on this vast topic. It is against this background that this research paper seeks to evaluate the concept of digitalization as a strategic tool for sustainable business expansion, with reference to Indo Zambia Bank.

1.3 Research aim, Questions and Objectives

1.3.1. Research Aim

The aim of the study is to evaluate digitalization as a strategic tool to promote financial inclusion, corporate sustainability and create business growth, while ensuring customer experience is met. It will be carried out on Indo Zambia Bank staff and customers, in order to ascertain how effective their digitalization drive has been and whether or not it has resulted in sustainable business practices.

1.3.2 Research Questions

- a. To what extent have the megatrends of digitalization and corporate sustainability been applied in the banking sector in Zambia?
- b. What are the benefits of digitalization and how can they benefit Indo Zambia Bank to grow sustainably?
- c. What is the relationship between digitalization, corporate sustainability and financial inclusion in enhancing growth?
- d. How can corporate sustainability through digitization be incorporated in the corporate strategy at Indo Zambia Bank?

1.3.3 Research Objectives/ Hypothesis

- a. To ascertain the extent to which digitalization and corporate sustainability as megatrends have been operationalized in the Zambian banking sector
- b. To establish the benefits of digitalization to Indo Zambia Bank in growing its customer base and coverage
- c. To establish the relationship between digitalization, corporate sustainability and financial inclusion in enhancing growth and efficiency by streamlining operations.
- d. To ascertain how corporate sustainability through digitization can be incorporated in the corporate strategy at Indo Zambia Bank

1.4 Research Contribution

This research contributed to the already existing knowledge on the impact of digitalization and sustainability with a specific focus on Indo Zambia Bank. The study differentiates itself in that it specifically focuses on one Bank as opposed to a general overview of financial institutions and micro lending institutions, which are usually the focus of such studies. More research is required in this field, if the positive impact of digitalization in emerging markets such as Africa is going to

be realised.(Madichie, Halkias, Nwajiuba, & Harkiolakis, 2020). This research further revealed that when implemented correctly, digitalization can improve corporate culture and become a useful strategic tool for gaining a competitive advantage, thus helping with the management of this phenomena in the Bank, while highlight the importance of digitalization in obtaining the UNSDGs and improving one's corporate social responsibility agendas.

1.5 Overview of the Research Design

Mixed method was the basis of the research design and this was largely guided by the research problem. Previous publications on this topic were reviewed in order to draw attention to the research problem and its benefits. Questionnaires were primarily relied on to show how digitalization has impacted IZB and how it can be used to not only gain a competitive advantage but also operate in a sustainable manner in the future.(Jovancic, 2020). Qualitative research is more concerned with the establishment of targeted solutions that help with the gathering of data from specific samples of a case or company in order to get meaningful data. The design typology quickens the process of data capture and minimizes the cost associated with data gathering.(Rahman, 2016).

1.6 Research Approach and Method

Explanatory research examines evidence in order to support or disprove a prediction, by looking for causes and reasons. It is done to discover and report relationships among various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. (Boru, 2018). This approach essentially involved moving from a more specific stance to a general application of the gathered data. This research used questionnaires to gather data which was analysed and used to produce charts which were interpreted to form theoretical contributions with regards to digitalization as a tool for sustainable development. (Sandiford & Ap, 2003).

1.7 Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The primary data for this research was collected using self-administered questionnaires that were distributed to the Indo Zambia Bank employees to hear their views regarding the phenomenon being studied on a purposive sampling method. Likert scale was incorporated in the questionnaires, developed in the 1930's a Likert scale is a series of questions or statements that require the respondent to indicate their level of agreement. (Sandiford & Ap, 2003). Likert scales allow one to easily express perceptions and opinions. Although Sandiford (2003) argues that respondents may get distracted by the multiple descriptions, there is no denying that they are a very popular

and user-friendly method of collecting data and an effective way of keeping the participants engaged

The data gathered was analysed and presented in the form of charts and tables to ease the interpretations of the findings which formed the basis of the conclusion and recommendations chapter. The basic analytical tool was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

1.8 Dissertation Layout

The structure and arrangement of the dissertation was as follows; the paper was divided into five (5) chapters. The introduction covered and discussed the introductory aspects of the research highlighting the background which necessitated this current research, the problem that the study sought to address, and the means of doing so through the research objectives and questions, the methodological techniques applied and the contributions of the research. Chapter two discussed the review of the various literature sources highlighting the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and identifying the gaps in the research. Chapter three discussed the methodological techniques employed by the research covering the design, approach, strategy, sampling, data collection and analysis and the generalizability of the study findings, the reliability and validity issues as well as the ethical considerations. Chapter four looked at the findings of the study by analysis the data that was collected, in order to make sound conclusions and recommendations. Chapter five covered the research findings and their implications, not only on the Bank but also on the wider field of research. The limitations of the studies were also well documented

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the introductory aspects of the research justifying the need for the current research in terms of the research problem, objectives and the contributions thereof. It further highlighted the methods used to gather data as a basis of the conclusion and recommendations chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this era of rapid globalization and technological advancements, technology can be used in such a way that it results in holistic transformation. This in turn causes a strategic shift, culminating in changes in an organizations' practices and culture.(Dunleary & Margetts, 2010). There is a need for a holistic approach that moves an organization from simple digitalization to cultural, managerial, procedural and developmental changes. (Mergel, Edelmann, & Hang, 2019). This chapter critically dealt with the review of previously published literature on digitalization, in an attempt to appreciate these studies and in order to establish relevance and avoid the replication of prior research focus.

2.2 The Concept of Digitalization

Digitalization is the process of converting information into a digital format. It involves improving processes by leveraging digital technologies. (Reis, Amorim, Melao, & Cohen, 2020). According to Chapco (2018), Digitalization is the use of digital technologies and digitized data to impact how work gets done, transforms how customers and companies engage and interact while creating new revenue streams. Digitalization is much more than a trend; it is now a necessity as the entire world is moving in this direction. The way in which society operates has tremendously changed and organizations need to keep abreast of this change.

While it may seem like a recent development, the conversion of analog documents has been going on for decades, digitalization began with the advent of computers in the 1950's and since then there have been non-stop developments, as digitalization has transformed nearly every facet of our lives; the way we shop, work, communicate and bank.(Tarpey, 2020). According to Elliot (2021) digitalization started as far back as 1679 when Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz developed the first ever binary system. In 1847 Boolean algebra was introduced by George Boole, it was used in mathematical analysis of logic and helped the universal spread and adoption of computations. This algebra theory played a massive role in the discovery of the logic that is used in digitalization today. Claude Shannon, an MIT student incorporated the Boolean algebra into digital circuits and this is being used in digital technology even today and has received mass acceptance, as the new and normal way of doing business.

2.3 Relationship between Digitalization and Business Sustainability

With the rise in digital technologies and rapid urbanization in developing countries, many organisations have seen the need to exploit various technologies to their benefit.(Reis, Amoeim, Melao, & Matos, 2018). This is the decade of action as many strive towards the attainment of the UNSDGs. The effective use of technology can help an organization shift towards the promotion of sustainable development. For the banking industry, financial inclusion and digitalization can be used as a vehicle for creating better livelihoods and thus aiding the sustainability fight.(Stolterman, 2004). The complexity and speed of digitalization, paired with the fundamental challenges of achieving sustainable developments goals have propelled these agendas. (George et al., 2016; United Nations, 2016). Despite growing academic interest on how digitalization has positive as well as negative potential for sustainability (e.g., Del Río Castro *et al.*, 2021; Seele, 2016; Seele and Lock, 2017), a profound understanding of the relationship between these megatrends among individual actors is still lacking (Boone et al., 2017; Song et al., 2017).

It is vital to shed light on this relationship as perceptions of digitalization concerning the various facets of sustainability determine how diverse actors would respond to these imperatives (Dubey *et al.*, 2018). For example, managers who aim to decrease their firms' ecological footprint may opt to reduce business travel in favour of hosting virtual meetings if they believe that an increased extent of digitalization can promote ecological sustainability. Similarly, in the past the European Union (EU) policymakers promoted the introduction of smart meters in households in order to achieve the sustainable development goals in their region. (Parliament and Wilsen, 2015).

Digitalization is of critical importance, not only to ecological sustainability, but to the three pillars of development; economic development, social inclusion, and environmental protection, which have been recognized globally (OECD, 2017 p. 18, United Nations, 2015). However, digitalization and sustainability have until only recently been primarily discussed in isolation in top-tier journals (Bansal, 2019). Scholarly contributions concerning perceived links between these challenges have been few. Research addressing the relationship between digitalization and sustainability either focus on one specific element of digitalization, such as the potential influence of information and communications technology (ICT) on sustainable development (Del Río Castro *et al.*, 2021; Melville, 2010), or address only one form of sustainability (ecological, economic, or social), rather than providing a comprehensive picture of digitalization and sustainability. These issues need to be addressed by managers and policymakers; however, very little is known about how different

actors frame the relationship between digitalization and ecological, economic, and social sustainability. By building upon framing theory (Burke, 1937; Weick *et al.*, 2005) and social representations theory (Moscovici, 1981), the research questions will address this gap by seeking to clarify the current understandings of the interrelationship between digitalization and ecological, economic, and social sustainability and which one of these dimensions dominates these frames.

2.4 The Impact of Digitalization on Business Sustainability

Digitalization and sustainability have had a significant influence on the markets and on today's corporate world. Numerous research papers have been written about how they can influence and change management practices, business practices and the greater society. Despite this, the convergence of these trends are rarely explored together. (Kiron and Unruh, 2018). While attention is paid to these shifts individually, seldom do we find the relationship between them and the potential that they have on the spotlight. According to Unruh and Kiron (2017), the effect of digitalization on the business environment is a cause of great concerns for executives the world over. Digitalization has disrupted the way of doing business in countless industries. For instance, the retail industry has experienced a great deal of change, companies like Amazon or Alibaba, and Walmart have had an adverse effect on shopping malls and the traditional retail shops. Unruh and Kiron (2017) have suggested that this trend of disruption caused by digitalization will sweep across to other sectors like the energy sector, hospitality, transportation and eventually manufacturing.

Due to the fact that the needs of customers are ever changing and evolving, executives are creating company strategies that will make them be better prepared to deal with digitalization and the challenges that come with digitalization, as digital technology is ever evolving, and has emerged as an important influencer on the markets. (Unruh, and Kiron. 2017). Some authors suggest that in order to have a better digital future, company executives should take up this challenge and act responsibly with regards to digital technology, taking into account the risks and opportunities. Doing so will place them in a great position to keep up with digital transformations.

2.5 Digitalization amid COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic has been both a blessing and a curse. While the pandemic has greatly disrupted business operations, it has also accelerated digitalization and has provided opportunities for the identification of digital needs. The pandemic has also made people realize that there is need for wider acceptance and harmonization of digitalization, as this will impact the way in which

organizations operate now and even in a post- COVID world.(Malhotra, 2021).This has made most organizations accelerate their digital transformation initiatives.

Solid investments in sustainability initiatives often results in improved resilience, better operational performance and business success. (Frey, 2021). Even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, this principle has held true. COVID-19 has also revealed and exposed our vulnerability to a countless global risks. The Forum’s Global Risks Report 2021 found that, second to infectious diseases, climate action failure is among a subset of environmental risks that pose the second-most imminent threat to our society (Forum’s Global Risks Report 2021). Therefore, improving upon our future readiness means redirecting capital toward sustainable projects, companies, governments and incentivizing sustainable activities, and encouraging customers who show a preference for sustainable products and services. This will undoubtedly lead to more sustainable leadership.

To meet expectations, organizations need to align their digital transformation and sustainability objectives with sound decision making that is grounded in hard data. Rapid digitalization coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity to reevaluate how decisions are made and how technology can be applied in new and meaningful ways. Immense opportunities exist for enterprises that can capture the value of data to drive more sustainable solutions.

Digital transformations of today must be intentional and purpose-led, in order to deliver success for all stakeholders as a precondition for success. Antonio Neri, the CEO of Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE), has been spearheading the efforts on accelerating digital transformation in a post COVID-19 world. The active involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders such as business actors, the government, and consumers, has seen a lot of activities, undertaken in the response to global movement, and has resulted in the uptake of broader strategies of development and new policies, which are strongly rooted in the concepts of sustainable growth, and the green economy, as the most effective remedies to revitalize and rejuvenate the economy. The influx of crisis symptoms and problems in the economic, environmental, social and political spheres have gained pace with the advent of the latest global financial crisis.

The pandemic seems to be evolving with each new wave that sweeps across the globe, thus organizations equally need to adapt in order to continue providing uninterrupted services to their customers. This is a great time to invest in digital tools and intensify learning in order to improve

on digital literacy during these times of limiting of physical distancing and working from home. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlight the fact that healthcare is connected to the economic health of a nation and this pandemic has been an invaluable driving force in accelerating the digitalization of the banking system, as companies have had to change their business models to ones that focus on customers, cultural change and digital transformation. (Stalmachova, Chinoracky, & Strenitzerova, 2021).

2.6 Review of Related Literature Sources

Research conducted by Zuo, (Strauss and Zuo. 2021) focused on the digitalization transformation of commercial banks and the impact on sustainable efficiency improvements, through investments in science and technology in China. By analyzing banks with superior efficiency in science and technology and evaluating their digital maturity, it was revealed that digitalization investment has contributed to substantial production efficiency improvements for commercial banks although diversity still exists across banks.

One qualitative exploratory study, conducted in Germany, Diener and Miroslav, (2021) looked at the aspect of digital transformation in banking from a managerial perspective on barriers to change. The main purpose of this study was to identify the perceived obstacles to digital transformation in both the private and commercial banking sectors from a managerial point of view. The methodological approach that was used was a combination of contextual interviews with German board members of banks, inductive content analysis, and the exploration of best-practice approaches. The research findings revealed that several elements such as strategy and management, technology and regulations, as well as customers, and employees received a high level of attention within the digital transformation. This resulted in the identification of some barriers, such as market and product knowledge as well as employee and customer participation.

Parida, Sjödin and Reim (2021), through their research, revealed that literature on digitalization, business model innovation, and sustainable industry is gaining growth within academia and in practice. However, the greater part of current research is fragmented across disciplines and largely phenomena-driven and lacks conceptual clarity. The proposed framework for digitalization-enabled business model innovation for industry sustainability provides a way of organizing existing studies and of mapping out what has been done and what needs to be further developed.

Research conducted by Forcadell, Aracil and Ubeda (2020), on the impact of corporate sustainability and digitalization on international bank's performance revealed that digitalization requires the complementary action of corporate sustainability-based reputation to enhance a banks' performance. This suggests that there is a need for reputation building in those sectors which are immersed in digital transformation, as this can reduce information imbalance for stakeholders, thus ensuring survival against disruptive forces. By including corporate sustainability in the banking business model, better market performance and efficiency can be achieved.

Research by Hassanien (2018) analyzed the digital banking sector, with a specific focus on the customer and it revealed that the internet and digitalization are unconditional electronic supports that are revolutionising the banking sector. Companies that are technically innovative in the financial services sector are being fundamentally changed with regard to banking transactions with customers. Social and business media have a significant role to play; they provide usability, efficiency and automation of the digital distribution channels, which provides customers with a completely new type of banking service.

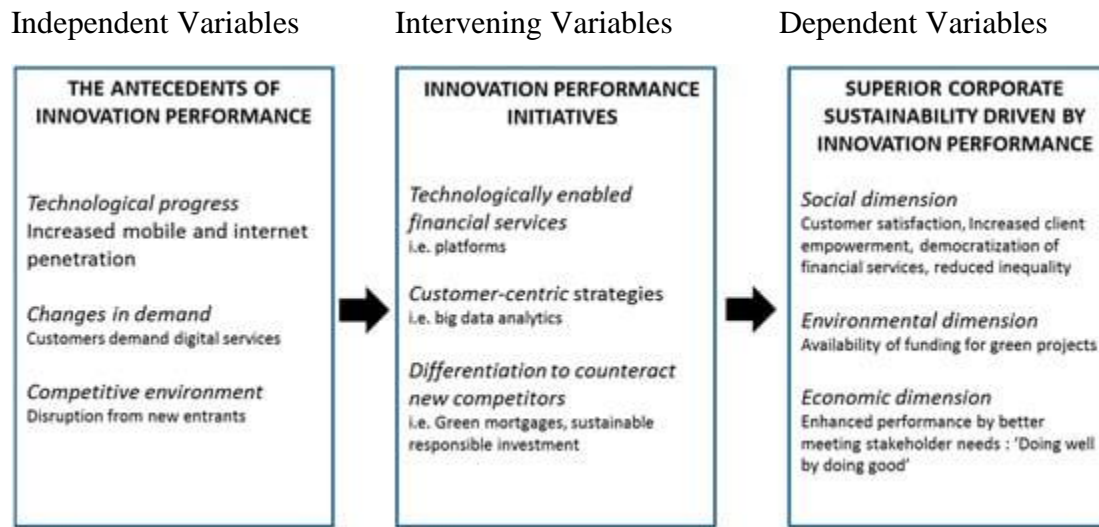
Digital transformation and strategy in the banking sector was investigated by Kitsios, Giatsidis and Kamariotou (2021). By evaluating the acceptance rate of e-services in Greece, the perception of bank employees with regards to new technologies was assessed and used to provide targeted educational programs to facilitate the transition to the new digital era of digitalization. Technology Acceptance Model can be used to provide answers to executives when facing these challenges. In a departure from the typical literature which is commonly written on banks, The TAM was used to address the unique challenges that domestic-based banks in an emerging economy face. (Onyiriuba, 2016).

Research by Agboola (2019), on the effects of digitalization on the performance of commercial banks in Nigeria revealed that banks in Nigeria need to pay more attention to the demands of customers with regards to digitalization. The essence of digitalizing the various banking processes is to reduce on waiting time, and make transactions faster and easier. This study also revealed that product innovation had a positive impact on the performance of the banks in Nigeria, as customers could bank at any time and any place.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, it can be seen that superior corporate sustainability driven by innovative performance is a product of technological progress, changes in demand and competitive

environment that facilitates financial services, customer centric strategies and differentiation to counteract new competitors.



Source: Adapted from Forcadell, Aracil and Ubeda (2020)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This research employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), as the main theoretical framework. TAM is based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and was used to explain individual's acceptance behavior. The Technology Acceptance Model which was developed by Davis (1989) in his Doctorate thesis is one of the most popular research models used to predict the use and acceptance of information systems and technologies by individual users. TAM has been widely and extensively studied by various researchers in an attempt to examine an individual's acceptance of information systems.

There are two main factors that determine the acceptance of a computer system by users, perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of usefulness (PEOU). (Surendran, 2012). Davis defines perceived usefulness by determining whether or not the technology actually does what it says it will do. The degree to which a person believes that the use of a particular system enhances their performance. PEOU addresses whether or not the technology is easy to use, whether it would be free from effort. These two factors are influenced by external variables, such as social factors, cultural factors and political factors. Behavioral intention or attitude is the measure used to determine the likelihood of a person employing the application. While Tam has been criticized on a number of grounds, it has also been found to be generally useful in investigations involving

factors that influence older adults. (K & Willis, 2016). This is comparable to IZB, as their customer base for the uptake of mobile banking services is largely that of older adults.

The relevance of the theory to the current research is attributed to the change acceptance that the banks and customers go through as they get exposed to new changes in technology and methodologies of doing business and shifting away from the traditional way of conducting business.

2.9 Gap in the Literature

There is a fair amount of data and literature that exists on digital transformation, many scholars have studied the impact of digitalization on employment or on customer retention but the research on digitalization as a strategic tool for sustainable business growth is quite limited. (V, Sjodin, & Reim, 2019). Despite the banking industry being identified as one of the major sectors that have great potential for digitization (Reis, Amoeim, Melao, & Matos, 2018); it has been very slow to join the sustainability effort. With the shift towards digitalization, sustainable banking will become inevitable.

Banks also face constant challenges posed by nontraditional banking institutions, such as Airtel and MTN, which force them to constantly innovate and invest in more customer centric products. In order to satisfy their customer's needs, banks will have to continue producing state of the art products. (2018 Zambia Banking and Non-banking Industry Survey, 2019). According to Forcadell (2020), corporate sustainability and digitalization strategies help enhance bank's market performance and efficiency. (Forcadell, Aracil, & Ubeda, 2020). However, the above mentioned study was based on banks from developed countries. This shows that while this topic is gaining valuable attention, a gap still exists in the research into the developing world. (Rachinger, Rauter, Muller, Vorraber, & Schirgi, 2018).

Another challenge that needs to be considered is equal internet access and infrastructure challenges, as these have also caused a gap between the developed and developing nations. (Mondejar, 2021). Culture, sustainability and digitalization can have an immense impact on an organization's strategy. While these concepts have been widely studied and implemented separately, their relationship is scarcely explored. (Iseensee, Teuteberg, Griese, & Topi, 2020).

2.10 Chapter Summary

Digitalization has forced many organizations to change and has also resulted in the implementation of new and innovative products. It has also changed the relationship between organizations and

customers as it has precipitated change in organizational strategy towards the creation of sustainable products. This is an essential chapter as it helped provide a critical literature review on digitalization, sustainability and the impact that these two have on financial inclusion and organizational strategy. It further highlighted the gaps that exist in literature which helped direct the focus of the research with regards to data gathering, which is the basis for the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Following a critical review of literature, which covered the classics & recent developments this section, outlined the methodological approaches used to conduct the research and the analytical framework thereof. Selection of the sampling technique is important as it is a means to aptly address the research question. In this era of globalization and consumerism, it's crucial to also get the opinion or the feedback of the customers who use the products and not just the employees as this will give the study some objectivity, thus both internal and external customers were interviewed.

3.2 Research Approach

The study applied the inductive approach involving the development of theories as well as the interpretation from the analysis of the research findings. The inductive approach starts by making observations and/or interactions with research subjects, it then seeks to find patterns in those observations. For the purpose of this study, this involved the administration of questionnaires to get views and perceptions from research respondents on the subject so as to establish the patterns that are generalisable to the whole population or to the Zambian context with potential applicability to other contexts due to the exploratory nature of the study (Saunders *et al* 2012).

3.3 Strategy Justification

The study used the case study strategy, an exploratory approach that permits the examination of issues related to digitization via conversing with research participants who provided their experience and perceptions about digitization and business sustainability. (Yin. 2013). Justification for using the strategy stems from its successful application in studies such as that by Agboola (2019) on the effects of digitalization on the performance of commercial banks in Nigeria, by Diener and Miroslav (2021) regarding digital transformation in banking from a managerial perspective on barriers to change in Germany and by Zuo, Strauss and Zuo (2021), which focuses on digitalization transformation of commercial banks and the impact on sustainable efficiency improvements through investment in science and technology in China.

3.4 Research Design and Paradigm

Research cannot be done in a vacuum, as one's social reality is affected and determined by how one experiences reality. Our political, cultural and educational circumstances and experiences shape and influence our views of the world which must be taken into account when doing research. (Kumar, 2011). Our belief system dictates how we will choose to do research and this in turn

affects the interpretation of the results. This research study used a mixed method design and applied the interpretivism philosophy or world view which is centred around interpretation of phenomenon from experience and or interactions with the research subjects and/or participants (Bryman & Bell 2011; Myers 2008; Saunders *et al* 2009; Lee *et al* 2008 and Saunders *et al* 2012)

3.5 Inductive Approaches

The study employed the inductive approach by moving from data collection to formulation and/or development of theories based on the analysis of the data (Saunders *et al* 2008) and thus involved the collection of data by making specific observations which were analysed, and by observing the patterns and formulating the topic related theories and literature through generalisation (Goddard and Melville 2004). The approaches' relevance to the study was that it enabled the author to collect data, analyse it and form conclusions in terms of additional literature knowledge and/ or the refutation of assertions and theoretical propositions of other scholars based on the opinions expressed by the research respondents (Saunders *et al* 2012).

3.6 Time Horizon

Longitudinal studies allow the researcher to examine changes in something over time, as the collection of data is repeated over a prolonged time. The purpose of this is to adequately compare different sets of data. (samuellearning.org). Cross sectional studies usually involve the collection of data at a specific point during the study. This method is well suited to this particular research due to the time and resources constraints.

The electronic questionnaires allowed information to be collected within a little time, giving a snapshot of an ongoing situation. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, Research methods for business students, 2009). A longitudinal approach was applied through the use of secondary data or other published data such as Annual reports, websites, Journals and other statistical data which were collected and analysed over time. This data is often useful and is an efficient and cost saving method. (Kapur, 2018). This was particularly helpful because re-analyzed data helped establish the sequence of events thus showing the progression of digitalization in the banking industry over time. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, Research methods for business students, 2009). This step-by-step plan of action gave the research much needed direction and allowed for the timely collection of data and effective analysis. The appropriateness of this time horizon is attributed to its ability to detect developments or changes in the characteristics of the target population at a point in time (Fleetwood 2019).

3.7 Sampling Frame and Sample Size

While there are several ways of picking a sample size, the Saturation principle was used for the purposes of this study. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg, (2010), saturation is achieved when no new data is revealed, as all the questions in a study have been exhausted.(Boru, 2018). For this study, 41 IZB staff and customers were selected. This number is a representation of the chosen population because after a while the participants begin to repeat themselves. The sample size is not the focus of Saturation, but rather the *adequacy* of the selected sample to provide the required results with regards to the research study aim. (Hennink, Kaiser, & Weber, 2019). The study applied non-probabilistic purposive sampling because only those respondents that were willing to participate in the study were chosen.

The focal point of purposive sampling techniques is on specific characteristics that a group within a population possess, which will best enable the research question to be answered. (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). The various participants would thus all help provide information that would enrich the study, through the use of SPSS to analyse the responses and present them in charts/tables that helped with the formulation of conclusions regarding the relationship between digitalization and corporate sustainability, as discussed in Chapter four. Budgetary constraints were also taken into consideration when selecting this method as the online Likert questionnaire is inexpensive and easy to use.

3.8 Data Collection

The study collected primary data in the form of responses from the questionnaires distributed to the research participants regarding digitization and business sustainability and perception as well as acting as a catalyst for one to make the decision to prefer digitized service from the bank as opposed to the traditional manual service (Ajayi, 2017). Secondly, data was also collected from secondary sources such as google scholar, emerald insight in form of books, peer reviewed articles and other publications to inform the research that helped in contextualising the research discourse (Horn 2018) on the subject topic. .

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

The primary data collected from the forty one (41) respondent's questionnaire was analysed by grouping similar responses together to establish patterns which were further numbered and/or coded and inputted in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) version 20.0 (Nie, Bent and Hull 1970) from which charts were produced on each particular question and were then used for interpretation in chapter four which was the basis of the conclusion chapter. Narrative

form was used to present the research findings, as well as pie-charts and bar graphs, which were generated using Microsoft Excel and proved to be useful visual aids when presenting demographic characteristics of the respondents. The secondary data corroborated the responses to the questionnaires and aided in contextualising the views and perceptions from the research respondents and also helped in qualifying the research methodologies employed in the study (Johnson, 2014).

3.10 Reliability of Research Findings

Joppe (2000) defines research reliability as a means of authenticating the research methods employed in the study in terms of getting the same or similar results when one instrument is applied to two or more different studies with a similar focus. For this research, instruments (i.e. questionnaire) as used in other studies highlighted in the justification section of this chapter were replicated with a view of establishing the outcome of the current study. Reliability was also authenticated through asking the same questions to the respondents to ascertain the similarities and differences in perception regarding digitization and business sustainability.

3.11 Validity of Research Findings

Validity relates to the extent to which a test measures what it is expected to measure as argued by Winter (2000), which for this research was achieved through data source triangulation, pilot testing of questionnaires prior to distribution to the research respondents and through a critical review of the various literature sources on the subject from a global, African and Zambian perspective thereby ensuring the internal and external validity of the findings were addressed.

3.12 Generalizability of Research Findings

The research study results were generalised to the Indo Zambia Banking Context. This does not imply that the findings cannot be generalised to other set ups. Considering the exploratory nature of the study, the study findings were useful to other contexts with regard to product packaging and design which is consistent with arguments by Beck and Polit (2010). Generalization enables the drawing of broad inferences from particular observations and/or experiences as was the case in this study.

3.13 Ethical and Access Issues

The study was considerate of the fact that dealing with human subject gives rise to a variety of ethical issues which needs to be addressed prior to undertaking the study.

3.13.1 Accessibility

When dealing with people, a variety of ethical issues are bound to arise, and these need to be addressed prior to the study being undertaken. As such, clearance was obtained from ZCAS University and once this was done, consent was obtained from the Bank (*Appendix*) as well as the respondents of the study, who were informed of their rights and were assured of anonymity. (MacNeil & Fernandez 2006). This research is purely for academic research, as such, the Bank will also be afforded with a copy of the final report. Being an employee of IZB was an added advantage as this provided direct access to the IZB employees and to knowledge of the company culture and practices. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fourth wave swept through Zambia during the research and this hindered the administration of the questionnaires as the Bank implemented measures that restricted the number of customers in the branches, as well as limited the availability of staff. (Ministry of Health, 2021). This resulted in a smaller number of respondents being selected to participate in the study.

3.13.2 Research Ethics

Prior to gaining access to the research subjects, ethical clearance was done in accordance with the University's prescribed ethical clearance procedures which included respecting the respondent's views, avoiding forceful acquisition of information and/or responses, no collusion and doing the rightful and most appropriate task of interacting with the respondents and above all the dignity and integrity to avoid or prevent force or harm to the respondents (Lancet 2002). Further, the researcher avoided biasness in the questioning and/or responses from the research participants through prohibition of fabrications and/or misrepresentation to the research subjects. This essentially involved getting consent from the research subjects on their willingness to participate in the study and the acceptance thereof (Wendler & Rackoff 2002).

3.14 Chapter Summary

The emergence of digitalization in the banking industry has tremendously affected how the industry operates, as Digitalization has accelerated innovation, economic growth and inclusivity. Social trends are moving towards globalization, which means banks will have to operate sustainably in order to not only compete but thrive on a global scale.

This particular chapter was vital to the quality of this research paper, as it covered the discussion of the methodological choices employed with regards to the collection of data from the respondents and the means by which that information was analysed which was through the SPSS package, which used charts for ease of drawing conclusions about the study as a basis for the conclusion

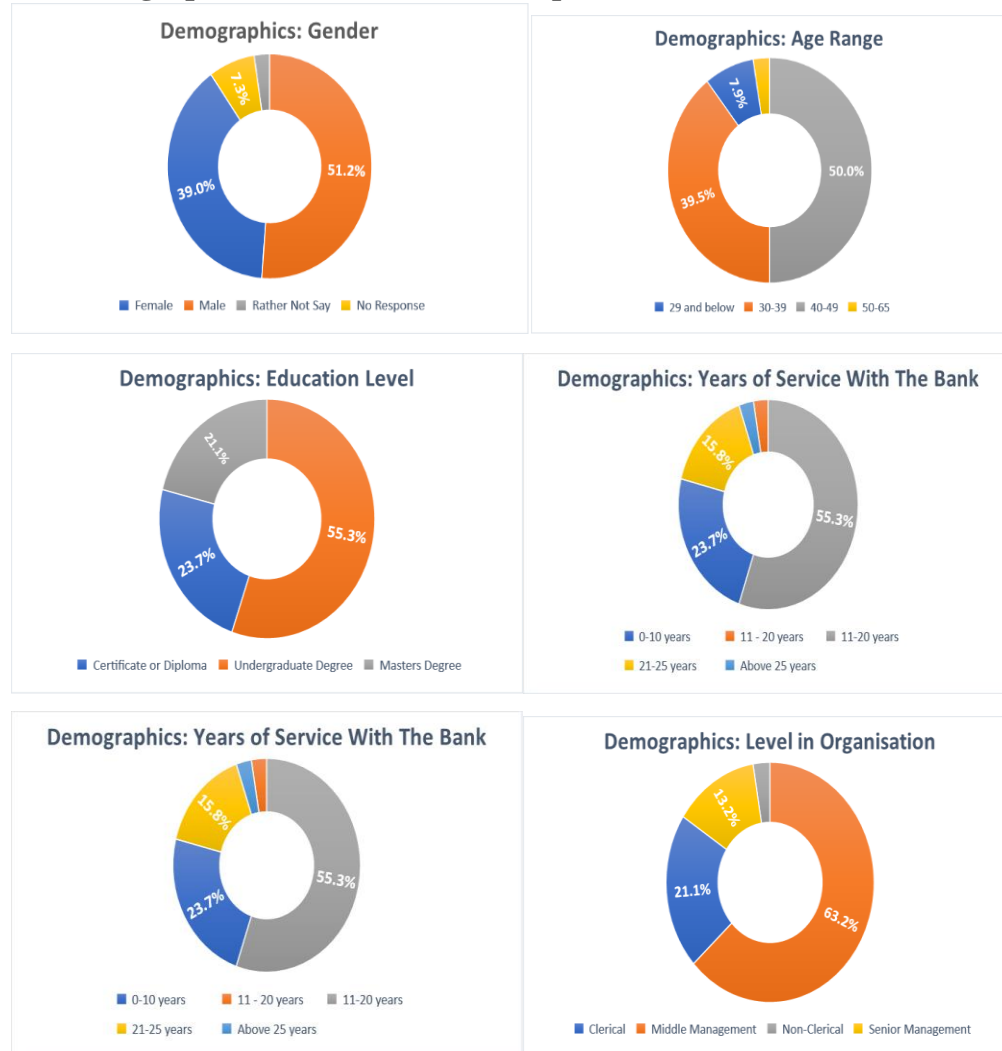
and recommendations chapter. It also discussed the research design which was a mixed method design which adopted the interpretivism philosophy paradigm of employing an inductive research approach as well as the sampling used for the study which showed how generalizability, reliability and validity was achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The study sought to evaluate the concept of Digitalization as a strategic tool for sustainable business expansion with reference to Indo Zambia Bank. This chapter analysed the findings of the data collected from forty-one respondents, and was interpreted and presented in relation to the literature gathered.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents



Source: Author, 2022

Figure 2. Demographic Characteristics

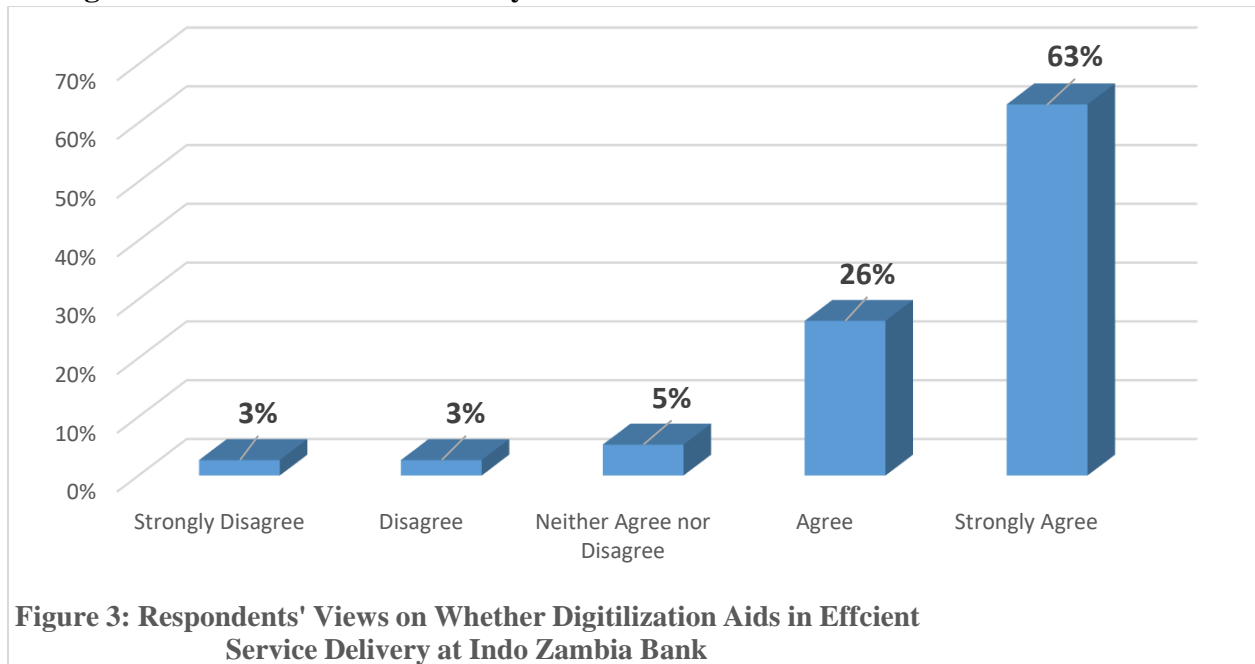
Research findings regarding the respondent's demographic characteristics revealed that 39% were female while 51% were male; one person ticked the 'others' category representing 3%, while 7% gave no response. With regards to the age groups of respondents, research results revealed that

2.6% were between the ages of 50-65, 7.9% were below the age of 29 and 39.5% fell within the 30-39 age group with the majority being between the ages of 40-49 with a representation of 50%. The data revealed a correlation between age being above 50 and respondent view of 'strongly disagree' that digitalization had a positive impact on banking operations and customer service delivery. While in the less than 29 age range respondents had mixed views. In this demographic, the level of education appeared to have no impact on views, while the respondent's level in the organization did, with the managerial level demonstrating higher confidence in the positive effects of digitalization than the clerical level.

Additionally, the research found that 87.5% of respondents with post-graduate degrees rated agreement or strong agreement on the positive impacts of digitalization. However, for the question on digitalization improving the security of service for customers, 12.5% of this demographic strongly disagreed, and 25% were unsure, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The results demonstrated correlation between respondents in senior management positions agreeing or strongly agreeing with the positive impacts of digitalization at a rate of 82.4%, 15.3% rated neutral or unsure, while only 2.4% of responses disagreed that digitalization impacted the Bank positively. Overall, the results covered a balanced population across the various demographic elements, and this showed different views on the subject, adding credibility to the research results.

Limitations of the research are that while patterns emerged to allow for inferences to be drawn on correlation, future work should be done to ascertain whether or not there is a causal relationship between positive or negative views of digitalization and the various demographic groupings.

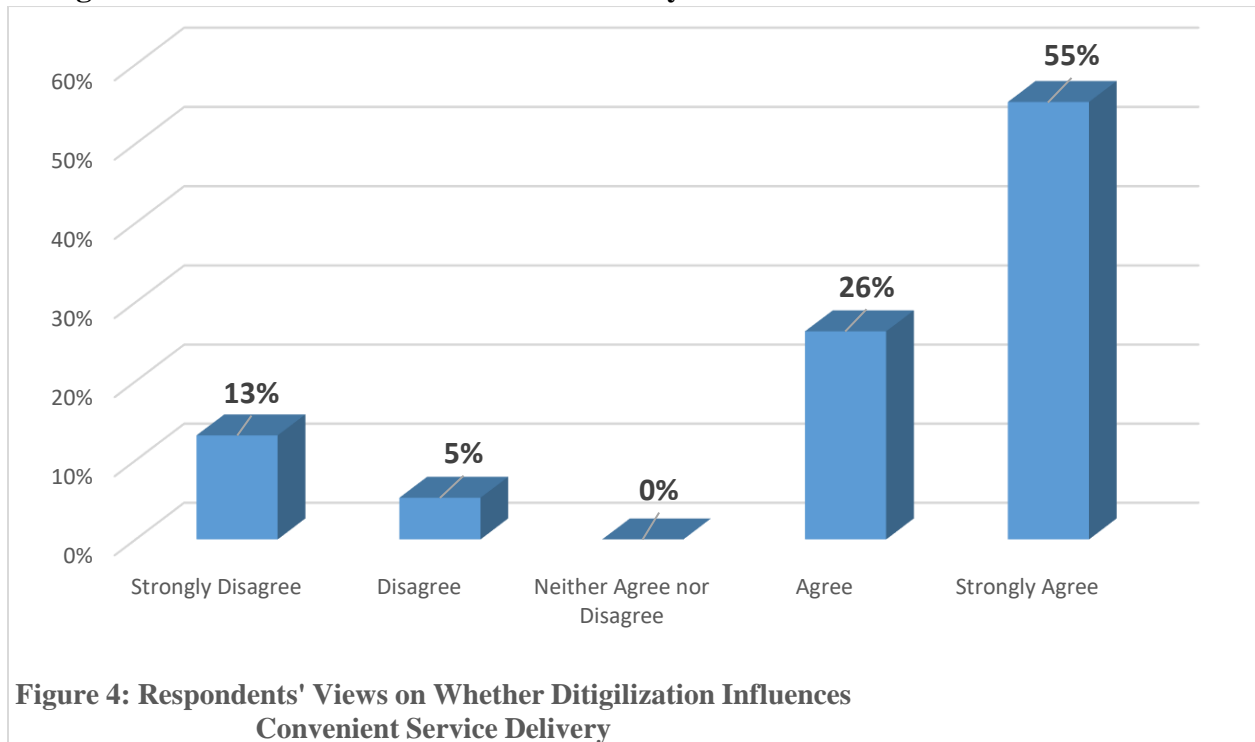
4.3 Digitalization and Service Delivery



Source: Author, 2022

Research results on whether digitization enhances effective service delivery revealed that 89% of the respondents were of the view that digitization enhances efficient service delivery in that processes are completed speedily without wasting much time as compared to manual transactions which take unnecessarily too much time for a transaction to be completed and hence leads to such things as long customer waiting time and customer complaints, with 63% strongly agreeing. 5% of the respondents were not sure owing to the fact that they face some challenges. Notwithstanding the speed with which transactions are processed in a digitized society, respondents in this group valued the completeness of information in a face to face interaction. 6% either disagreed or strongly disagree due to the challenges they encountered when transacting using digital platforms as compared to manually and also due to the lack of technical know-how. This comparatively suggests that digitization to a large extent enhances efficient service delivery.

4.4 Digitalization and Convenient Service Delivery

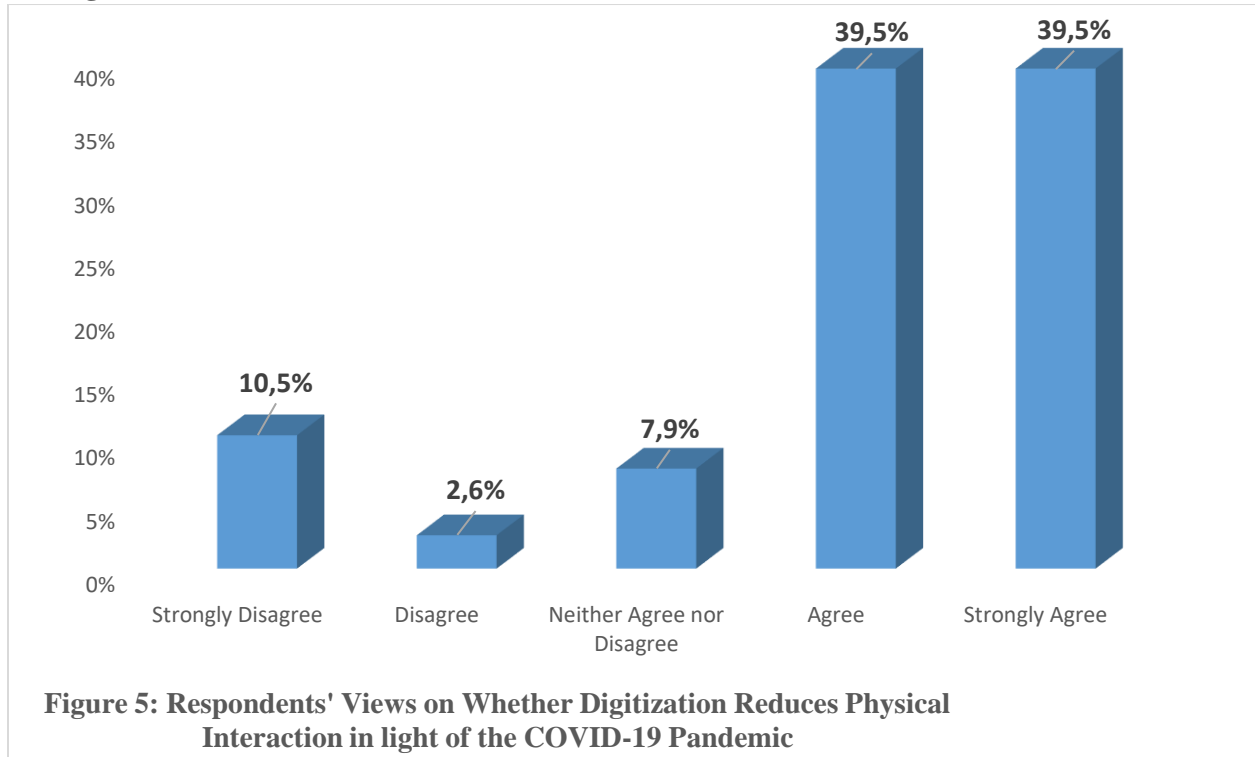


Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that 81% of the respondents were of the view that digitization indeed influences convenience in service delivery in that customers are able to transact at times convenient for them without the need to physically visit the banking facilities such as when they want to make payments such as the purchase of electricity units, talk time (mobile phone credit), transfers, paying for school fees among others.

Further, they argued that with digitization, transactions are not limited to the traditional bank opening hours, which are typically restricted during evenings and weekends when customers tend to have more spare time. Further, 5% and 13% of the remaining respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed respectively with the assertion of convenience, arguing rather that the manual way of transacting was more appropriate than using digitized platforms owing to elements such as insecurities relating to e-transaction scams and their lack of confidence when using platforms that they perceive as a means of swindling people. This suggests that notwithstanding the challenges encountered in using digitization, it is nevertheless a convenient means of doing business with the bank.

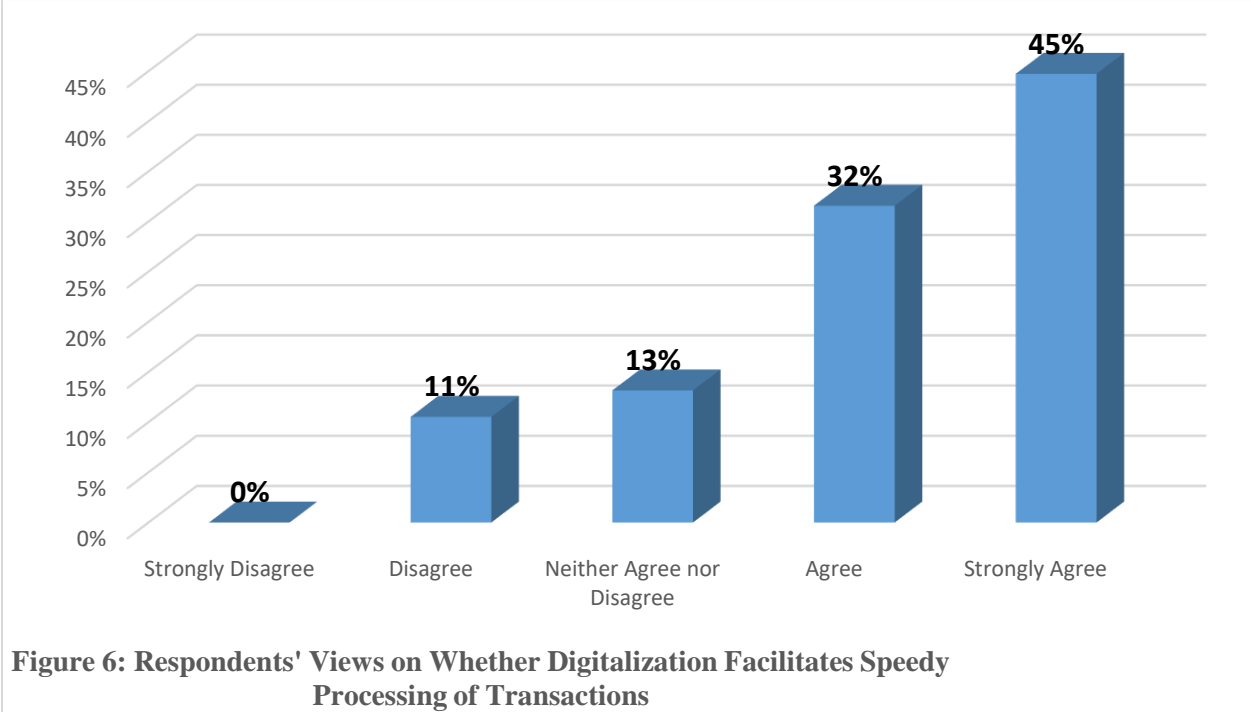
4.5 Digitalization and COVID-19



Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that embracing digitization reduces the transmission of COVID-19 pandemic in that there is reduced physical interaction through the use of available digitized platforms to transact from conveniently at any place and time as can be seen by the 79% who either agreed or strongly agreed. However, 7.9% of the respondents were not sure whether this was true due to the belief that money is safer being handled manually than electronically irrespective of the COVID-19 pandemic, as long as one is able to protect themselves using the available means such as maintaining social distance and the use of masks and hand sanitizers. Further, 2.6% and 10.5% respectively were in disagreement or strong disagreement with this assertion. This suggests that despite the negatives perceptions highlighted by those who were in disagreement, digitization can be used as a control measure to reduce physical interaction and therefore transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic as it allows one to transact outside the bank premises.

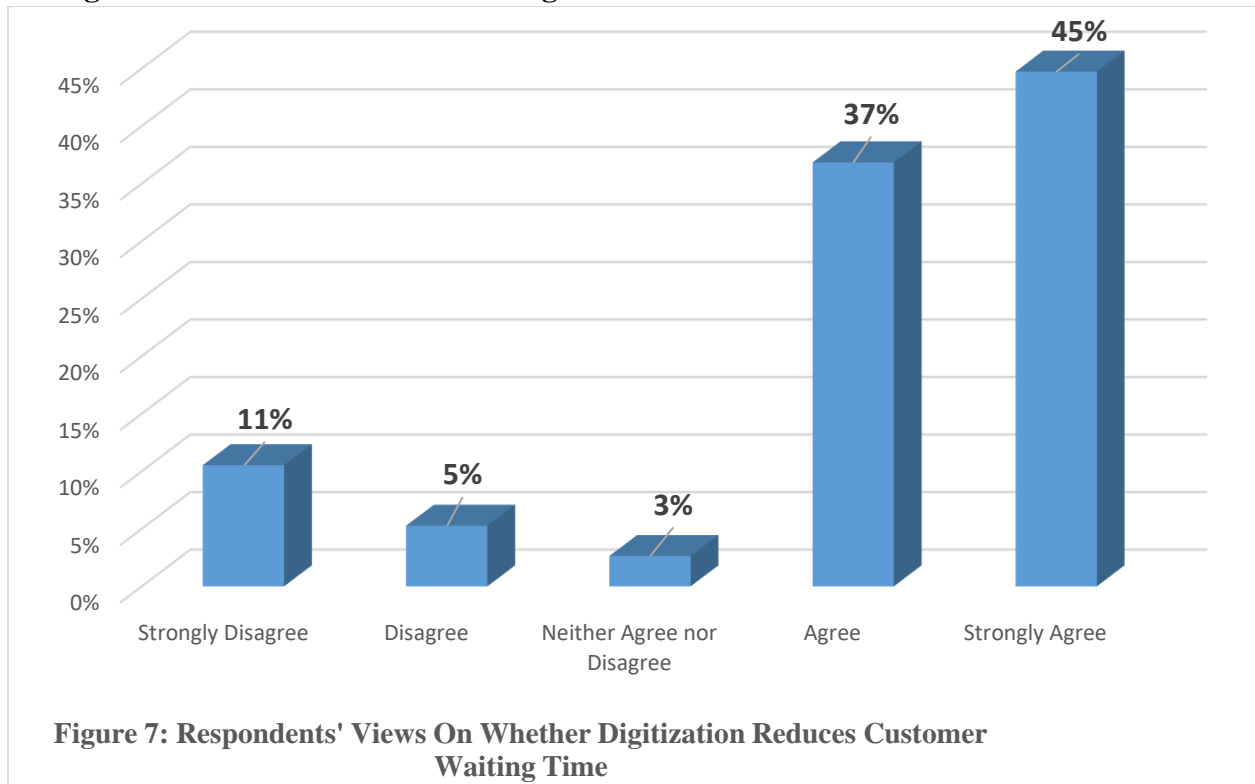
4.6 Digitalization and the Speedy Processing of Transactions



Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that to a large extent digitization facilitates speedy transaction time in that the manual means of transacting requires procedures to be followed and there are just too many approval processes involved compared to transacting through digital platforms as can be seen by the 77% agreement. However, 13% were not sure while the remaining 11% were in disagreement owing to the alluded lack of technical know-how with regards to using digitized platforms to carry out transactions in a more speedy and convenient place and time. They argued that the marketing and advertisement of such facilities and upgrades have also not been so clear and comprehensive. Issues relating to security were perceived as a risk, as people fear having their money stolen, or falling prey to fraudulent activities.

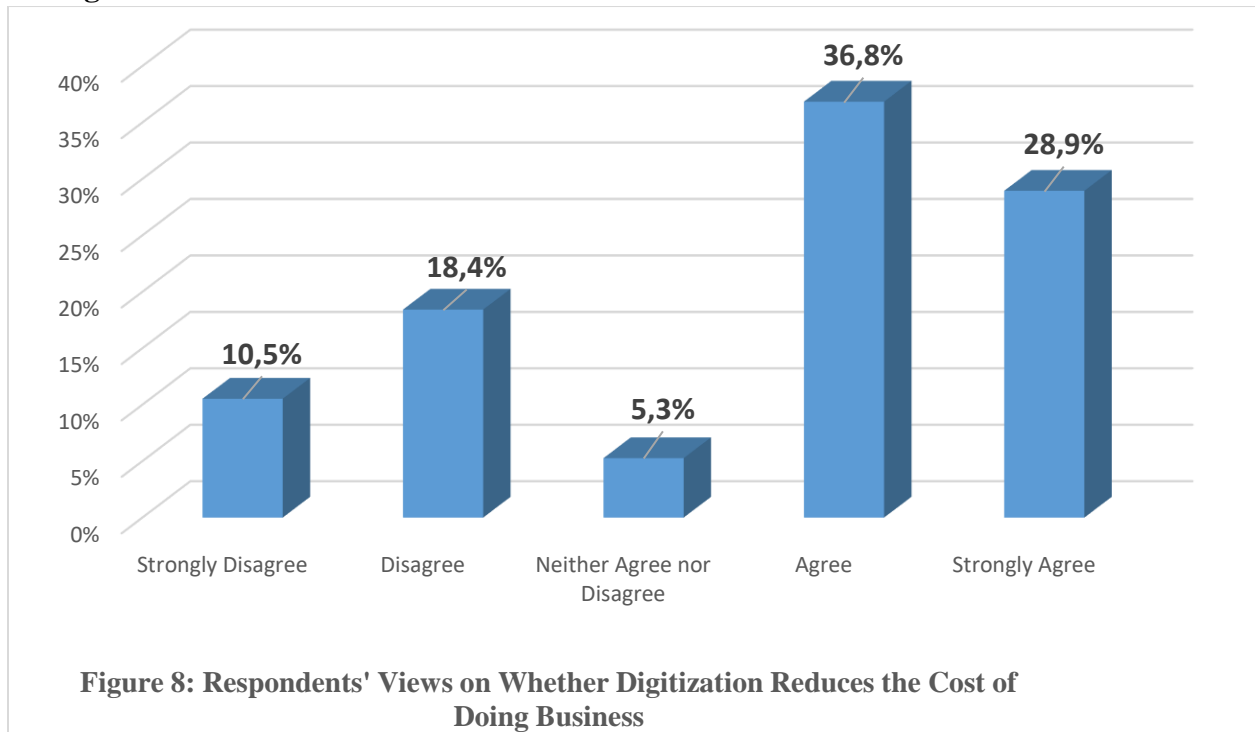
4.7 Digitalization and Customer Waiting Time



Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that 82% of the respondents were of the view that digitization reduces customer waiting time due to the convenient nature of transacting at one's own time rather than needing to wait in line, including outside of the Zambian jurisdiction for those with Visa facilities which has made it easier to do business and avoiding the need for carrying huge sums of cash on international trips. However, 3% were not sure of this assertion probably due to the fact that it may not be safe to do business in that way owing to the risks of theft and making irreversible mistakes when using the platforms, which ultimately increase overall customer time. Further, 5% and 11% were in disagreement or strong disagreement respectively with this assertion, arguing that digitization breeds theft and is often unreliable as compared to physical means. For instance, when a mistake is done, they felt it would be difficult to make follow ups while with physical interaction, one can easily get the contact details of customer service and make follow ups in case their concerns are not addressed. This in the same vein suggests that digitized service reduces customer waiting time comparatively due to the speed at which transactions are carried out with minimal challenges.

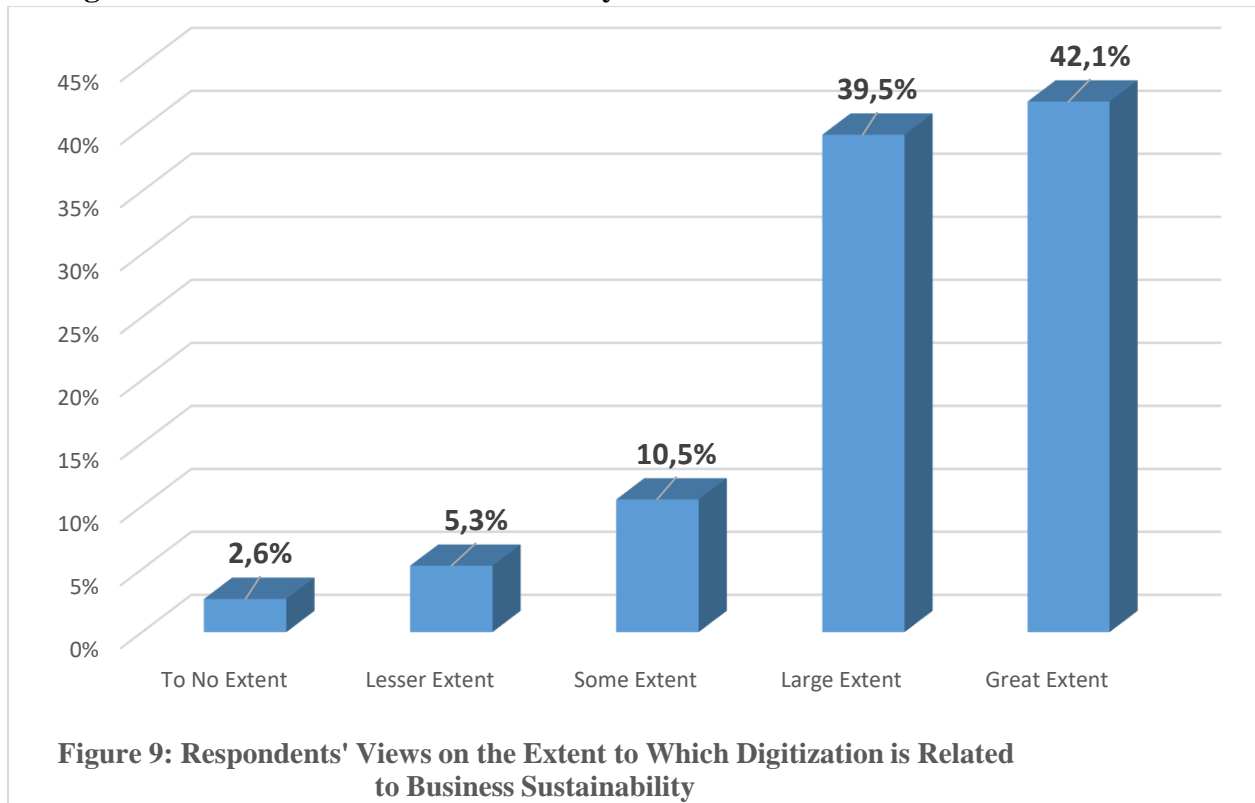
4.8 Digitalization and Cost Effectiveness



Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that digitization reduces the cost of doing business in that the number of clients visiting the banking premises reduces and workers are able to attend to issues in a more effective fashion as demonstrated by the 65.7% agreement. Manual means of transacting makes it costly to do business, due to paperwork needed, approvals and time allocated for such activities. 5.3% of the respondents were not sure owing to the challenges presented by both systems simultaneously (i.e., manual and electronic means of transacting) eroding the expected cost savings associated with digital transactions. Further, 39.4% of the respondents were in disagreement of the assertion alluding to the security concerns which makes them scared of being scammed in the name of convenience, leading to high costs in issue resolution both for the bank and for the individuals who may suffer from liquidity challenges during the resolution period, leading them to borrow money with interest. On a comparative basis, this suggests that while 67.5% of respondents viewed digitalization as a driver of cost reduction, this element is less convincing for the population reviewed than other potential benefits reviewed, showing greater skepticism that the cost benefits of digitalization are realized in practice.

4.9 Digitalization and Business Sustainability

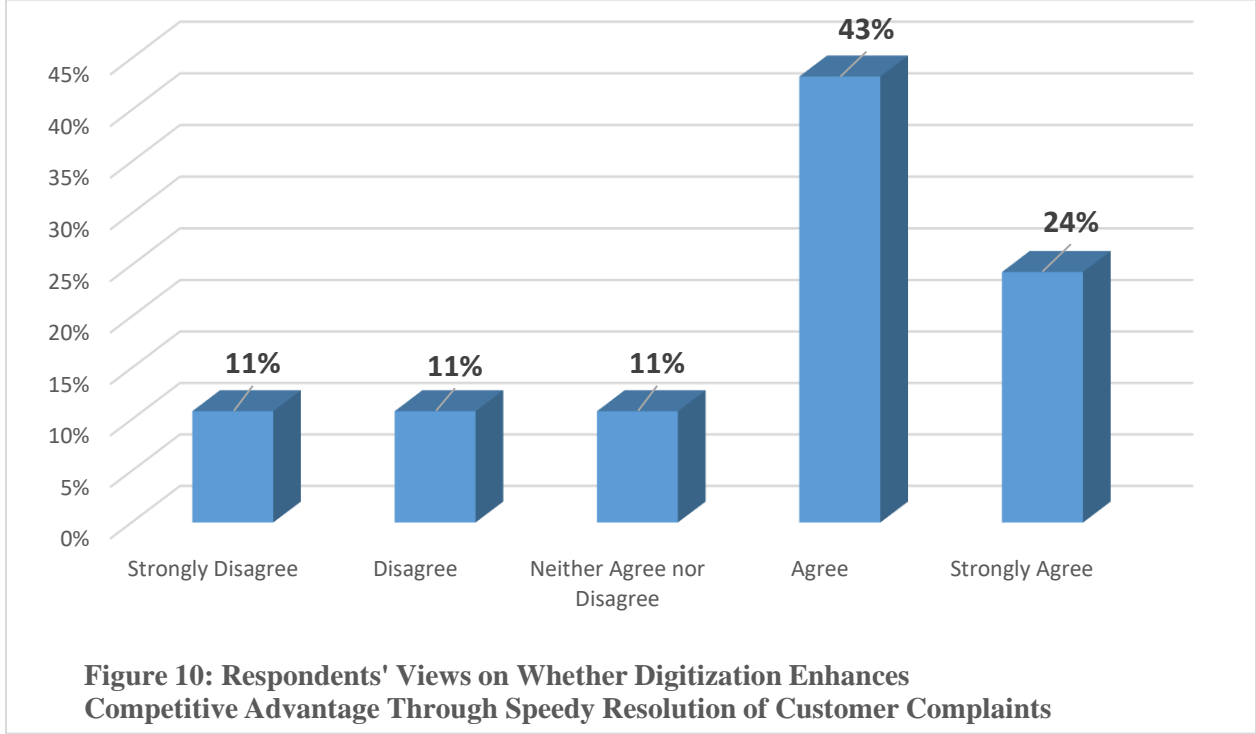


Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed that to a larger extent digitalization results in enhancing competitive advantage and therefore business sustainability. 81.6% of respondents agreed that digitalization is a driver of business sustainability. Customers and employees alike have an awareness of disruption in the banking industry in Zambia stemming not only from traditional competitors in the industry but also from outside the industry, for example, the telecommunications sector, which has leapfrogged many industries in the adoption of disruptive technologies. 2.6% of respondents do not believe digitalization to be key driver of business sustainability, while 5.3% would claim that digitalization would impact sustainability to a less extent, believing the impact to be overstated. 10.5% of respondents believe that digitalization will impact the sustainability of the business to some extent, attributing that to a gap in adoption of digital products and platforms. They indicate that increased adoption would entail the need to do more marketing and advertising so that more clients are able to subscribe to the services in the interest of convenience, security and transaction time. The research therefore demonstrates that the vast majority of respondents draw a direct link between digitalization and the sustainability over the long term of the bank, with some raising concerns over the impact to be realized given a gap in adoption across all customer demographics.

O'Reilly and Tushman argue that businesses that are successful over the long term are those where leaders are able to lead strategic renewal, requiring “executives to explore new opportunities even as they work diligently to exploit existing capabilities” (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2004). This supports the idea that banking institutions that will be sustainably successful over the long term are those that can navigate and adopt digital transformation. “Businesses need to come up with discontinuous innovations – radical advances...that profoundly alter the basis for competition in an industry, often rendering old products or ways of working obsolete” (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2004)

4.10 Digitalization and Customer Complaints



Source: Author, 2022

Research results revealed while 67% of respondents agreed that digitalization helps with the speedy resolution of customer complaints, the trend change with only 24% strongly agreeing and 43% only agreeing. 22% of respondents disagree; with 11% strongly disagreeing that digitalization leads to speedy resolution of customer complaints. The groups in agreement linked this to the fact that clients would not be required to present themselves physically at a bank and save time in travel, queuing and potentially return trips with additional information, as customers can instead interact using digital platforms from any location. However, the neutral and disagreeing groups

indicated that competitive advantage is dependent on the level of satisfaction and tailoring the services and products to the needs of the customers. This group believed that without the face-to-face immediate interaction, customer complaints take longer to resolve as they follow a series of pre-determined system-generated processes, missing the in-person back-and-forth problem-solving opportunity. Comparatively therefore, this suggest that digitization contributes to competitive advantage in that it facilitates the speedy resolution of customers problems without them needing to visit bank's premises. However, respondents are not as strongly inclined as other categories alluding to the hybrid existence of digital and manual processes in the same processes (including approval processes necessitated by a high bar on legal and regulatory compliance) may reduce the effectiveness of speed in back-office banking process resolutions.

4.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter covered the analysis and presentation of research findings as collected from the questionnaires which were distributed to the forty-one (41) respondents regarding digitization as a strategic tool to business sustainability. Of these, thirty-eight (38) provided survey responses and elaborated on the underlying reasons for their scores. Three (3) did not provide responses.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research sought to evaluate the concept of digitization in the banking sector as a strategic tool for business sustainability with specific reference to the case of Indo Zambia Bank. This chapter summarized the findings from the research making appropriate recommendations and proposing the focus of future researchers and highlighting the limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary Findings

The study revealed that digitization is significantly related to business sustainability in that it enhances the means by which the bank interacts with the customers in many ways including reduced transacting time, ability to transact at any time and on any day, resolving customer problems speedily, reducing the cost of doing business in terms of enabling employees of the bank to allocate enough time to other core activities of the bank without wasting much time attending to long queues.

Further, the study revealed that digitization results in competitive advantage in that the platforms have recently gained acceptance by many clients as they feel that the platforms have helped a great deal to conduct and/or do business with ease as they are able to make electronic payments, for example electricity and school fees as well as to make transfers within and outside of the Zambian jurisdiction with little or no challenges.

However, the major challenge that was encountered was that of some customers not having enough technical know-how to use these digitized platforms and owing to inadequate advertisement and marketing, they felt transacting manually safeguards their funds as there are rampant online fraud and theft cases.

RO1: To ascertain the extent to which digitalization and corporate sustainability as megatrends have been operationalized in the Zambian banking sector.

The research revealed that to a large extent, digitization has been operationalized in the Zambian banking sector including at Indo Zambia bank and has yielded desired results in that it has been embraced by numerous clients due to the ease with which they are able to transact conveniently without the need to physically visit the banking premises especially in light of the restriction and measures put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of social distancing.

RO2: To establish the benefits of digitalization to Indo Zambia Bank in growing its customer base and coverage.

Some of the benefits revealed by the research resulting from digitization include being an easy and convenient way of doing business, such as when making transfers online, online banking, making payments such as for school fees, utility bills among others and the security of funds as compared to handling huge sums of cash that carry the risk of being robbed. However, this is notwithstanding the negative assertions made by some respondents regarding the lack of technical know-how and inadequate advertising and marketing.

RO3: To establish the relationship between digitalization, corporate sustainability and financial inclusion in enhancing growth.

The research results revealed that there is a strong relationship between digitization and business sustainability in that most customers have embraced the digitized platforms for transacting which is evolving with global trends as a means of convenience and secure means of doing business, without limitations in terms of working hours and days. One can transact any time and any day, provided the system is operational.

RO4: To ascertain how corporate sustainability through digitization can be incorporated in the corporate strategy at Indo Zambia Bank

From the findings in the research, it is recommended that at the peak of the organization or through relevant boards, it is imperative that the aspect of digitization be taken as a serious milestone and turning point which must cater for every customer including those who have not embraced the paradigm shift through desirable advertisements and marketing to address the insecurities that some customers are facing with regards to the safety of their monies and most importantly on how to use the digital platforms such as when making payments, depositing and resolving problems among others. This in a major way is likely to stimulate customer demand and competitive advantage which will translate into sustainable business operations.

5.3 Limitations of Study

The study had limitations in that gathering information could not be extended to a bigger sample due to the fear of extended physical interaction in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which as a result some questionnaires were sent online just to get all respondents to answer, some of whom took unnecessarily long to respond. However, that did not in any way jeopardize the outcome of the research.

5.4 Proposals for Future Research

The current study proposes for research to be conducted on the challenges presented by the advent of digitization in the banking sector as a means of coming up with a comprehensive list of the challenges and what possible means can be devised to address such challenges.

5.5 Conclusion

The research concludes that digitization plays a pivotal role in sustaining a business which does not preclude the banking sector owing to the myriad of benefits it comes with such as ease of transacting with regards to for example making online payments for school fees, utility bills, transfers, depositing, security of funds and convenience of service delivery which does not require visiting of banking premises physically.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The study evaluated digitization as strategic tool to enhance business sustainability and this chapter summarized the findings, addressing the research objectives and making policy recommendations and propositions for future research undertakings.

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APPENDIX I:

Research Questionnaire



DIGITALIZATION AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS EXPANSION: A CASE STUDY OF INDO ZAMBIA BANK

Greetings. I am a post graduate student pursuing a Master's degree in International Business with the University of Greenwich, UK which is affiliated with ZCAS University. I am undertaking research on the topic of digitalization as a strategic tool for sustainable business expansion, with specific reference to Indo Zambia Bank.

You have been selected to participate in the study through a questionnaire. The questionnaire is confidential and your anonymity will be guaranteed at all times. The data that will be collected will be used for academic purposes only.

Your honest feedback to the questions would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Rachel Musonda.

Instructions

1. Kindly indicate your choice by ticking[√] in the space provided
2. For open ended questions, write your answer in the space provided, by using short sentences or words, that best express your views

For any further questions or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me at rachola.mk@gmail.com

Please click on the link below to accept this invitation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

INSTRUCTIONS; Kindly indicate your choice by ticking the box [√] in the space provided

Gender

- Male
- Female
- I'd rather not say

Age

- 29 and below
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-65
- above 65

Years of experience at Indo Zambia Bank

- 0-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-25 years
- Above 25 years

Educational status

- Grade 12
- Certificate or Diploma
- Degree
- Masters Degree
- PHD

Current Position in the Bank

- Non-Clerical
- Clerical
- Middle Management
- Senior Management
- Executive Management

SECTION B - PERCEPTION OF DIGITALIZATION

5 POINT LIKERT SCALE – Please indicate your level of agreement by selecting one option. Each response is assigned a value ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. Digitalization has enhanced the efficiency of service delivery at Indo Zambia Bank

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

2. The following are characteristics that influence digitalization of services for customers

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Convenience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced physical contact with the Bank	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced waiting time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost effective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection against COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION C – DIGITALIZATION AND CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

1. How do you rate the relationship between digitalization and sustainability?

	1	2	3	4	5	
No relationship exists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Strong relationship

2. Digitalization has helped Indo Zambia Bank to streamline operations and perform effectively and efficiently

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

3. To what extent do you think digitalization, as a strategic tool has helped corporate sustainability

	1	2	3	4	5	
None at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	To a large extent

SECTION D – THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITALIZATION ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

1. Indo Zambia Banks' digital banking products give them a competitive advantage over other banks.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

2. The following is a list of competitive advantages that result from digitalization of banking services. To what extent do you agree?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Superior service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speedy resolution of complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved corporate culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integration of digitalization into corporate strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consent Letter

- Approval to conduct the research was obtained from;
Mr. Christopher Wakung'uma – Chief Manager Human Resources &
Mr. Chenjelani Banda – Assistant General Manager.

Rachel Musonda Kampamba
Plot 14784/917

• Zinc Road-Kamwala South

LUSAKA.

16th February, 2022

The Chief Manager Human Resources
Indo Zambia Bank
Head Office
P. O. Box 35411
LUSAKA

Handwritten notes:
C.M. HR
The MBA Student should share the dissertation with me for my research.
To the Head Office.
1 RECOMMEND APPROVAL.
17/2/22
17/2/22

Dear Sir,

RE: MBA DISSERTATION RESEARCH.

The above captioned matter refers.

I am writing this letter to formally request for permission to undertake a research study. I am currently pursuing an MBA International Business with the University of Greenwich, which is affiliated with ZCAS University.

The research project commenced in October, 2021 and the title of my topic is digitalization as a strategic tool for sustainable business expansion: A case study of Indo Zambia Bank. As part of the process, questionnaires and interviews will be conducted on both staff and customers. The research project will examine the factors that have lead to digitalization at IZB, with a special focus on the upgrading of our digital platforms, social media advertising, business growth, financial inclusion and the Banks strategic goals & objectives.

Any information gathered during the research will be treated in strictest confidence, as this research is purely for academic purposes. However, the findings of the research may be beneficial to the Bank and as such they can be shared upon request.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. Rachel. Musonda. Kampamba.