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Digital Technology Platforms and Operational Efficiencies of a South African Short-Term Insurer.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to delve into the intricate interplay between digital technology platforms and operational efficiencies in the contextual setting of a South African short-term insurance company. Specifically, the research scrutinized how the adoption and integration of digital platforms influence pivotal operational functions such as sales, services, and claims, with the overarching objective of unravelling the nuanced dynamics of digital transitions to mitigate high operational costs.

In addressing these objectives, the research delineated the specific challenges confronted by the insurer and evaluated the potential solutions offered by digital technology, drawing insights from personal perspectives shared by key senior and strategic decision-making stakeholders as the targeted population sample for this study through purposive sampling. Through this investigation, the study not only sought to identify the hurdles but also examined the tangible impact of digital platforms and adoption on essential aspects of the company's operations. Furthermore, the research endeavoured to assess both the advantages and disadvantages associated with the implementation of these platforms, providing valuable insights into their effectiveness in enhancing overall operational efficiency.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the study employed qualitative interviews with the selected industry experts and performed thematic analysis to scrutinize key themes and patterns by focusing on these major topics.

The findings revealed that the use of digital technology platforms to improve operational efficiencies within a short-term insurance business is non-negotiable if insurers are to remain competitive. This study has shown that with the right mix of a well-articulated business problem statements, stakeholder buy-in during implementation, and a well-suited technology for the context of the business, digital technology platforms can contribute immensely to operational efficiencies and in time aid in the reduction of operational costs.

Key words: Digital platforms, technology, operational efficiencies, operational costs, short-term insurance, cost optimisation, automation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT **i**

DECLARATION **1**

DEDICATION **2**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS **3**

LIST OF TABLES **4**

LIST OF FIGURES **5**

CHAPTER ONE **6**

INTRODUCTION **6**

1.1 Background of the study 6

1.2 Research Problem 8

1.3 Justification of the Study 10

1.4 Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations of the Study 10

1.5 Operational Definitions 11

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation 12

CHAPTER TWO **13**

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE **13**

2.1 Introduction 13

2.2 Defining Digital Platforms 14

2.3 Benefits and Challenges 15

2.4 Systematic Literature Review 16

2.4.1 Digital Platforms & Business Transformation. 18

2.4.2 Digital Transformation for cost optimisation in South African insurance companies 19

2.4.3 Contextualising digital platforms to South African insurers 19

2.4.4 Cost reduction strategies in other African regions 19

2.4.5 Improving Operational Efficiency, reducing operational cost & and improving customer experience. 20
2.4.6 Adoption of artificial intelligence and robotics process automation 20
2.5 Research Framework 20
2.5.1 Value Chain Analysis Framework 20
2.5.1.1 Linking digital platforms to sales & and servicing and operational efficiencies. 21
2.5.1.2 Linking digital platforms to claims processing and operational efficiencies. 22
2.6 Conclusion - Literature Review 22
CHAPTER THREE **24**
RESEARCH APPROACH **24**
3.1 Introduction 24
3.2 Research Paradigm, Approach and Design 24
3.3 Data Collection Methods. 25
3.4 Population and Sampling Method 25
3.4.1 Population – Case Site 25
3.4.2 Sample and Sampling Method 26
3.5 The Research Instrument 27
3.6 Procedure for Data Collection 29
3.7 Data Analysis Strategies and Interpretation 30
3.8 Measurement 32
3.9 Possible Limitations and Challenges of the Study 32
3.10 Quality Assurance 33
3.10.1 Transferability 33
3.10.2 Credibility 33
3.10.3 Dependability & Confirmability 33
3.11 Ethical Considerations 34

3.11.1 Permissions to conduct the study. 34

3.11.2 Informed Consent 34

3.11.3 Voluntary Participation & Confidentiality 34

3.11.4 Anonymity 34

CHAPTER FOUR 35

RESULTS 35

4.1 Introduction 35

4.2 Descriptive Results 35

4.3 Qualitative Findings 36

4.3.1 Understanding the current operational processes and challenges. 36

4.3.2 Assessing the robustness and effectiveness of digital technology platforms in achieving the of goals of improved operational efficiencies. 37

4.3.3 Challenges faced by short-term insurers when implementing digital technology platforms 38

4.3.4 Summary of the Qualitative Data Results 39

CHAPTER FIVE 41

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 41

5.1 Introduction 41

5.2 Key Findings 42

5.2.1 Digital technology platforms used by insurers. 42

5.2.3 Robustness and effectiveness of digital technology platforms 44

Customer-centric interactions 44

5.2.5 Challenges faced by short-term insurers during implementation. 45

5.3 Conclusion 45

CHAPTER SIX 46

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 46

6.1 Introduction 46

6.2 Researching Findings 47

6.2.1 Findings for the research problem 47

6.2.2 Overall Research Findings 48

6.3 Framework Proposal 48

6.4 Business and Management implications 50

6.5 Limitations 51

6.6 Recommendations for future research 51

6.7 Conclusion 51

ANNEXURE A: Consistency Matrix 53

ANNEXURE B: Interview Guide 54

Section 1: Understanding the Current Operational Processes and Challenges. 54

Section 3: Digital Platform Implementation & Effectiveness 55

ANNEXURE C: LETTER OF REQUESTING PERMISSION 56

ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF GRANTING PERMISSION 58

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM 60

REFERENCES 61

DECLARATION

I, Josiah Moloi, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements sections. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

Name: Josiah Moloi

Signature:

Place: Signed in Johannesburg

Date: On the 27th day of May 2024

DEDICATION

To my loving family, your unwavering support and encouragement have been a driving force behind my academic journey. I dedicate this degree to all of you, with gratitude and love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The mercy and grace of the Lord is indeed bountiful. I am thankful to God for leading me throughout this academic journey as I sharpened my expertise and knowledge, for the ability to translate and implement that knowledge into meaningful work and granting me the commitment required to complete this academic milestone.

Borrowing from the words of my Lord and personal saviour Jesus Christ – *"You are the light of the world, like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden"* (Matthew 5:14), the real work starts now, the work of not shying away from using the skills acquired from this degree.

Thank you to every participant who willingly participated in this research. Especially the industry leaders and experts who carved out time from their busy schedules to engage in the data collection of this study.

To my supervisor, Dr Dinah Natto, thank you for your guidance and time commitment in supporting me to get this over the line.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Literature gap analysis 17
Table 2 Participants of the research and their context 35
Table 3 Themes and codes 41
Table 4: Consistency Matrix 53

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Insurance Specific value-chain.....21
Figure 2. Propose technology acceptance model.....48

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The financial services industry is confronted with significant pressures to curtail operational costs while concurrently upholding high levels of customer satisfaction and delivering shareholder value (Wang & He, 2020). The enhancement of operational efficiencies, as an integral component of an organization's strategic management, serves to augment its agility in spearheading innovations and responding adeptly to competitive forces within its industry (Rounaghi, Jarrar, & Dana, 2021).

The insurance sector is not exempt from challenges associated with operational cost (Hufbauer & Elliott, 1994; Cummins & Lamm-Tennant ,1994). Numerous top-level executives in insurance companies have expressed concerns regarding escalating operational costs, primarily attributed to inflation, increase, increases in commodity prices, and rising costs of auto parts, consequently elevating the expenses related to claims (The Guardian, 2022; Kader et al.,2010). Unsurprisingly, in many markets, customers perceive insurance as a necessary yet begrudging expense prioritizing basic needs such as food, shelter, and health, thereby exerting additional strain on the revenue streams of most insurers (KPMG, 2023).

Defined by the Act 53 of 1998 for South African Short-term Insurance, short-term insurance business involves "providing or undertaking to provide policy benefits under short-term policies" (South African Government, 1998, p. 12). The roots of the insurance industry in South Africa trace back to the 1800s, stemming from the increased demands of business operations and activities spurred by the migration of British citizens to South Africa (Oxford Business Group, 2016). Short-term insurance has played a pivotal role within the South African financial services industry. Yet it has not remained untouched by the technological disruptions experienced by other players in the wider financial services sector (Moodley, 2019).

A leading association in South African, SAIA - South African Insurance Association (2022) confirms that the non-life, short-term insurance industry in South Africa is contending with escalating operational costs driven by global factors such as inflation, changes in climate

conditions and natural disasters. Instances of this challenge include the substantial business interruption claims resulting from the COVID-19 (Clyde & Co LLP., 2023),the catastrophic KZN floods of 2022 (Wits University, 2023), the risk of grid failure and the surge in cybercrime (Moonstone, 2022). The servicing, management, and administration of these claims-triggering activities have exerted significant pressure on operating costs.

While the digitalization of business operations is not a novel concept in the short-term insurance industry, The sector has faced, a necessity to expedite its digital transformation due to the emergence of Insurtech start-ups (Pillay,2019). Recent research underscores the imperative for short-term insurers to invest in digital transformation and cybersecurity (Xie et al., 2020; Grace et al.,2019; Kshetri,2019). This imperative must be balanced with essential goal of minimizing operational costs and maintaining a heightened focus on customer centricity (Striata, 2021).

In the highly competitive South African insurance market, insurers are actively exploring ways to deliver convenient and personalized experiences to customers while concurrently enhancing operational efficiencies through the reduction of operating costs (Wright, 2021).

McKinsey & Company (2015) reports that IT and Operations (including policy issuance, policy servicing & and claims management) constitute up to 61% of both life & and non-life insurer costs. Unlike newer non-traditional players in the insurance sector, established insurers grapple the challenge of balancing legacy costs, infrastructure burdens, and the imperative to invest in new capabilities across the business. Consequently, insurers are compelled to adopt a more strategic approach to cost transformation (Ernst & Young, 2021).

Beyond the core value chain costs of IT and operations, insurance companies have expenses related to the product design, marketing, and asset management. It is paramount for insurance companies to strategically implement sustainable and cost-effective operational methods (Gartner, 2023).

Pillay et al., (2021) underscore the effectiveness and impact of digital platforms in short-term Insurance companies. Companies with limited digital-enabled channels tend to pass on high operational costs in the form of expensive premiums, rendering them less competitive than counterparts offering more digital-enabled channels. This often results into policyholders cancelling their policies for reduced premiums due to ongoing customer cost pressures (Kruger, 2018).

As elucidated by Deloitte (2022), digital platforms present an opportunity for insurers to delve into the realm of utilising technology as an enabler of this strategic approach to cost transformation. Nevertheless, within the South African context, the integration of digital platforms in well-established and traditional short-term insurers is still emerging, given the need to balance these advancements with challenges such as rising inflation, interest rates, climate change, geopolitical upheaval, and ongoing competition from Insurtech players.

Additionally, Christensen et al., (2018) assert that most short-term insurance companies overly rely on an already diminishing existing customer base and broker networks. The pivotal role of digital platforms and underlying technologies such as RPA – Robotics Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence - AI cannot be overstated in optimizing business processes, including straight-through processing of claims, reduction of claims handling errors, and the detection of fraud. This encompasses the deployment of chatbots to enhance customer service processes (Hall, 2017).

Christensen et al. (2018) further affirm the expanding body of evidence demonstrating that digital platforms have the potential to reduce insurers' operating costs while enhancing customer engagement. However, it is imperative to address significant implementation concerns.

The goal and intended objective of this study was to investigate the role of digital platforms with underlying technologies, such as RPA, in enhancing operational efficiencies for South African short-term insurers, with a focus on identifying the benefits and drawbacks of their utilisation. The study aimed to provide insights that can assist South African insurers in formulating effective digital strategies.

1.2 Research Problem

Previous research in this domain addresses the relationship between digital innovations and insurance product pricing structures (Pillay & Njenga, 2021), the complexities of insurers navigating and adhering to stringent regulatory standards (Sen & Humphry, 2018), increased cybersecurity risk due to the substantial reliance of digital systems for the collecting and processing large customer data (Chronopoulos, Panaousis, & Grossklags, 2018), changing customer expectations (Pugnetti, & Seitz, 2021), the intensification of the competitive

landscape, and economic volatility as well as financial losses driven by significant insurance fraud (Kasman, Gökalp,, & Kasman, 2020).

The short-term insurance industry in South Africa faces significant challenges in maintaining operational efficiencies due to rapidly changing market dynamics, customer expectations, and regulatory requirements. Digital technology platforms offer promising solutions to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer service, and reduce costs. However, there is limited research on how these digital platforms specifically impact the operational efficiencies of South African short-term insurers.

According to the insurance-specific value chain based on Porter (1985) and Rahlfs (2007), digital technologies can improve operational efficiencies. This study sought to address the following problem: How do digital technology platforms influence the operational efficiencies of a South African short-term insurer?

Therefore, this study's research gap centred on addressing specific ways in which technological disruptions, arising from global and rapid advancements in technology, such as robotics process automation, enable South African short-term insurers to enhance operational efficiencies within the South African insurance industry.

1.2.1 The Purpose of the Study and Primary Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the role that digital technology platforms play in the improving operational efficiencies for a short-term insurer in South Africa. The study shall be guided by the following objectives.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this research was to address the following:

1. To establish the critical digital technology platforms used by short-term insurers in improving efficiencies on current operational processes.
2. To assess the robustness and effectiveness of these digital technology platforms in achieving the goals of improved operational efficiencies.
3. To understand the major challenges faced by short-term insurers when embarking on an implementation of these digital technology platforms.

1.2.3 Research questions

1. What are the critical digital technology platforms used by short-term insurers to improve efficiencies in their current operational processes?
2. How robust and effective are these digital technology platforms in achieving the goals of improved operational efficiencies for short-term insurers?
3. What are the major challenges faced by short-term insurers when implementing these digital technology platforms?

1.3 Justification of the Study

Like other industries, the South African financial services sector faces the imperative of minimizing challenges operational costs while concurrently maintaining a high level of service delivery amid the competitive landscape.

This research investigated the pivotal role of digital technology platforms in enhancing operational efficiencies and as a result, reducing operational costs for a South African non-life short-term insurer, contributing to a gap in the existing and established literature. By probing the most effective digital platforms employed by a short-term insurer, the study aimed to provide fresh insights and formulate new strategies for effective digital platforms in improving operational efficiencies, subsequently decreasing operating expenses for other short-term insurers with the South African region.

The findings of this research hold significance for policymakers and practitioners, offering insights into various approaches for improving operation efficiency and operational expense. Additionally, the study provides valuable insights into to the effective implementation digital platforms for cost reduction.

Academics stand to from the development of cost cost-optimization models tailored to the South African insurance context.

1.4 Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The assumption of this study was that short-term insurers actively use digital technology platforms to enhance operational efficiencies with clear objectives related to efficiency gains through digitization and that the data on platform usage, operational processes and challenges are accessible for the analysis of this study.

The study's findings were limited by the size of the representatives of the sample and was constrained by time limitations. The dynamic nature of technology also means that platforms and their effectiveness evolve over time. This study covers a timeframe up to 2023, with no consideration of events beyond this timeframe, aligning with the outlined delimitations.

The contributions of this study are timely, necessary, and useful in the context of a South African Short-term insurer in utilising technologically digital platforms to enhance operational efficiencies and reduce operational costs. The study focuses solely on specific digital technological platforms used by the short-term insurers and considers only the perspectives of these insures assessing the effectiveness of technology platforms in achieving operational efficiencies.

1.5 Operational Definitions

Digital Platforms: In the context of this study, digital platforms encompass tools such as customer portals, claims processing software, and online chatbots, leveraging technologies such as Robotics Process Automation and Artificial intelligence (McKinsey, 2017).

Operational Costs: Operational costs specifically refer to the expenses incurred by an insurance company to processing claims, managing customer accounts, and handling other administrative tasks across the insurance value chain (Investopedia, 2022).

Robotics Process Automation (RPA): Tornbohm (2017) explains Robotics Process Automation (RPA) as a set of tools that perform repetitive human tasks to reduce the time required for these tasks. In the context of operational efficiency, RPA is considered an effective means to cut operational costs within an insurance business (Aguirre & Rodriguez, 2017; Russell, 2010).

Artificial Intelligence: Artificial intelligence is the dynamic reproduction of human intelligence in repetitive and complex tasks with minimal to no human intervention (Wintston, 1984); Russell, 2010).

Customer Experience: To this research paper, customer experience is defined is defined within the context of service encounter, as per the definition of Kumar et al., (2014). It pertains to how customers experience the service an organization provides based on the product and processes enabling the delivery of said products.

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

The research is organized in sectional chapters. The introduction chapter establishes the research topic, provides the contextual importance, and discusses factors such as the increasing pressure on companies to operate more efficiently and the growing prevalence of digital platforms in business operations.

Subsequent chapters summarise key points, including a brief background on South Africa's insurance industry, the guiding research question, a systematic review of literature, and the research framework methodology and main tools.

The analysis and findings chapters focus on demonstrating how technology and digital platforms improve operational efficiencies, ultimately reducing operational costs while considering any limitation or potential weaknesses of the research.

Implications for business and future research are discussed in subsequent chapters, addressing the practical inferences of the research findings for businesses considering technology and digital platforms implementation to reduce operational costs, along with areas of future research in this field.

The references, comprising of the associated literature used in the writing of this research article, are included in the bibliographical section of the paper.

CHAPTER TWO

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

According to Zulu et al. (2023), the short-term insurance market in South Africa constitutes a crucial facet of the financial services sector, providing protection for individuals and businesses against a variety of risks. The sector has witnessed significant technological advancements in recent years, giving rise to digital platforms designed to enhance operational effectiveness and reduce costs (Moodley, 2019).

While short-term insures in South Africa have embraced the trend of deploying digital technology platforms to bolster overall company performance (Cappiello, 2018), the sheer diversity of available digital platforms poses a challenge for company leaders in identifying the most effective ones to achieve their objectives. Christensen et al. (2016) delineate various opportunities for cost reduction related to product pricing and product structuring through digital innovation.

This literature review aims to classify and analyse gaps in the utilization of digital technology platforms by short-term insurers for reducing their operational costs, offering insights into best practices and optimization strategies derived from existing literature

2.2 Defining Digital Platforms

The utilisation of digital platforms has become pervasive across various industries, including insurance, to streamline operations, manage costs, and enhance customer irrespective of geographical location (Parker, Van Alstyne, & Choudary, 2016; Gawer & Cusumano, 2014;). These platforms typically involve a network of users, producers, and consumers, and relying on digital technologies to mediate transactions and communication (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011).

Hagiu and Wright (2015) classify digital platforms into four categories: transaction platforms, innovation platforms, hybrid platforms, and investment platforms, with categorization also based on structures.

Examples include centralised or decentralised and proprietary or open source, each with distinct access and control characteristics (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014; Parker et al., 2016) Noteworthy concepts related to digital platforms in insurance encompasses Insurtech, digital insurance platforms, data analytics, the internet of things, each contributing to operational efficiencies and cost reduction. The difference between these is that open platforms allow anyone to freely participate and contribute to the further development of the platforms while more closed or proprietary platforms have stringent access and control over the platform's content and functionality (Parker et al., 2016).

Yan et al., (2019) detail Insurtech as being the use of technology innovations to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the insurance industry, this being seen as the use of digital platforms to efficiently provide insurance products, underwriting, and claims management.

Another concept is the concept of digital insurance platforms as unpacked by (EY, 2017). These are digital online platforms used to offer a range of insurance services, from product development to underwriting and claims processing. These platforms leverage digital technology specifically to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and further enhance customer experience.

Data analytics also feature in the realm of digital platforms for the insurance industry. In general, data analytics refers to the process of analysing large amounts of data for the provision of insights and trends in helping to drive better decision-making. In the insurance industry, data analytics can be used to assess risk, personalise insurance products and further optimise claims management (Chekriy & Mukhin, 2018).

Lee (2019) went on to demonstrate how the Internet of Things can be used in the insurance industry. As a network of devices, sensors, and other physical objects that are connected to the internet, insurers use these to collect data on customer behaviour and associated risks and to automate claims management.

With regards to the allowance of secure, transparent, and tamper-proof record keeping, Blockchain as a distributed ledger technology features as a concept around digital platforms within insurance. This can be used to automate claims processing, reduce fraud, and increase transparency (Tasca, 2019).

2.3 Benefits and Challenges

Digital platforms offer significant benefits to an insurer but also present challenges. This section synthesises the potential benefits and challenges of digital platforms for insurers.

Benefits:

Improved efficiency: Digital platforms can be used to streamline insurance processes, helping with the reduction in the time and resources required to underwrite policies, manage claims, and interact with customers. This can lead to cost savings and improved profitability for insurers (Leon, Pan, Leidner, & Haung, 2019).

Enhanced customer experience: Digital platforms can make the experience of purchasing and managing insurance policies seamless. This can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty when engaging with an insurer which employs digital platforms within their value chain and customer engagement processes (Lee & Lee, 2020).

Better risk management: Digital platforms can collect and analyse data on customer behaviour and risks, enabling insurers to develop more accurate underwriting models and tailor insurance products to individual customers. This can reduce risk and improve the profitability of insurance portfolios (Ivanov, Dolgui, & Sokolov, 2019).

Challenges:

Data security and privacy: This poses a significant risk to both insurers and their customers (Khan et al., 2020). This also spills over to regulatory and compliance challenges where digital platforms are subject to a range of regulatory and compliance requirements including data protection, anti-fraud measures, and consumer protection. (Khan, Brohi, & Zaman, 2020).

Talent and skills: The development and implementation of digital platforms require specialized skills and talent, including expertise in data analytics, software development, and user experience design. Insurers must invest in recruiting and retaining these professionals to ensure the success of their digital initiatives (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021). Although the war on talent is big across financial services, once onboarded, these individuals will need to deal with resistance to change in implementing digital platforms due to traditional insurance practices and processes being deeply ingrained in the industry (Guzmán-Ortiz et al.,2020).

2.4 Systematic Literature Review

The literature review employed a systematic search strategy, utilizing databases such as Google Scholar and keywords like "Insurance", "Cost Optimisation", "Digital Platforms", "Operational Costs", and "Cost Reduction". Limited to articles and journals published between 2018 and 2023, the synthesis is organized around themes that emerging from the systematic review, providing a comprehensive overview of relevant research findings.

Table 1 Literature gap analysis

Theme	References	Research Gap
Impact of InsurTech on traditional insurance companies.	(Lui et al.,2023)	Exploring and growing exiting research between the level of innovative technological advancement of established insurance companies and insurtechs.
Digital platforms and how they transform Business Models in Industry 4.0	(Veile et al.,2022)	Analysis the strategies exercised by providers in the aims of attracting new customers. Further to this, examining the least successful platform which have become obsolete over time.
Digitisation & Business Strategies	(Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021)	Understanding the influences of slow digitalization in leading to possible business failures.
Digital Platform Openness	(Broekhuizen, Emrich, Gijsenberg, Donkers, & Sloot, 2021)	Understanding platform openness, dynamics and interdependencies within specific drivers in this area.
Digital Innovation in insurance: How digital innovation can reduce expenses for an insurer	(Pillay, Njenga, & Kariuki, 2021)	Understanding how to improve technology adoption in traditional insurance companies. Exploring how an organisation's culture impacts businesses and how staff behaviours anchored in certain ways of work tend to contribute to an organisation's cost challenges.

The impact of information technology on insurance development in sub-Saharan Africa.	(Akinlo, 2021)	Unpacks technological advances in a specific region in Africa.
Digital Transformation: A South African Context for the Short-Term Insurance Sector	(Moodley, 2019)	The adoption of other disruptive technology in improving the effectiveness of the insurance sector.
Cost reduction strategies	(Egbide, et al., 2019)	An in-depth analysis of how existing cost reduction strategies can leverage technology in implementing sustainable cost reduction strategies.
Disruptive Technology in Insurance	(Owuor, 2018)	Focusing on the effects of driving high levels of automations as a strategic lever for operations management when managing the performance of underwriting and claims processes of insurers.

2.4.1 Digital Platforms & Business Transformation.

Zutshi et al. (2021) elucidates how digital platforms reshape the value creation process in traditional companies. Veile et al. (2022) underscore the continuous role of digital platforms in driving business model transformation and innovation. The delayed adoption of digitalization strategies may lead to operational failures and subsequent cost inefficiencies (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021).

Diamandis & Kotler (2021) also highlights the disruptive nature of business models used by platform businesses integrating value chain activities. Barber et al (2019) corroborate this, illustrating that businesses evolve through the transformation of digital technology platforms.

2.4.2 Digital Transformation for cost optimisation in South African insurance companies

Pillay & Njenga (2021) present a case study emphasising the sheer necessity for digital transformation in the insurance sector to achieve cost reduction through streamlined processes. The study reveals that digital platforms enable insurers to trim down operational costs, leading to more competitive pricing and affordable products for customers.

Accenture (2021) reinforces this perspective, emphasising the pivotal role of digital technologies and contributing to cost optimization cost optimisation.

2.4.3 Contextualising digital platforms to South African insurers

Moodley (2019) contextualizes the responses of South African insurers to the Internet of Things and Insurtech disruption. Despite proven use cases, the study notes slow adoption of the Internet of Things and collaboration with agile Insurtech start-ups among South African insurers, impacting their competitiveness.

2.4.4 Cost reduction strategies in other African regions

Egbibe et al. (2019) analyses the relationship between the strategies applied to reduce costs and the how that relates to business growth of manufacturing companies in Nigeria, highlighting the imperative of leveraging technology for sustainable cost reduction. Owuor (2018) emphasizes the adoption of industry altering technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Analytics, and Digital Currency to improve key performance indicators such related to financial and non-financial metrics as well as the market competitiveness of insurance companies.

2.4.5 Improving Operational Efficiency, reducing operational cost & and improving customer experience.

Digital platforms as demonstrated by Moodley (2019), contribute significantly to lowering operational costs, for insurers in South Africa. The study emphasizes the value of digital platforms in enhancing customer engagement, business effectiveness, and cost reduction in the non-life insurance sector. It contends that digital platforms improve customer interaction and experience, fostering client loyalty and retention.

2.4.6 Adoption of artificial intelligence and robotics process automation

AI and RPA, as highlighted by Jarrahi (2018), have potential to substantially lower operational expenses for organizations through the automation of repetitive tasks. These technologies not only lead to cost savings but also enhance resource allocation efficiency.

2.5 Research Framework

The purpose of this section is to investigate using the VCA - Value Chain Analysis framework as a conceptual tool to establish the research direction through sound theoretical grounding.

2.5.1 Value Chain Analysis Framework

Scholars have studied value chains in examining a range of activities that make the success of an organization possible. This perspective of value chains was introduced by Porter (1985) and the literature has grown over the years. In examining the areas where digital platforms have an impact in reducing operational costs, the insurance-specific value chain based on Porter (1985) and Rahlfs (2007) will be used as per Figure 1 depicted below.

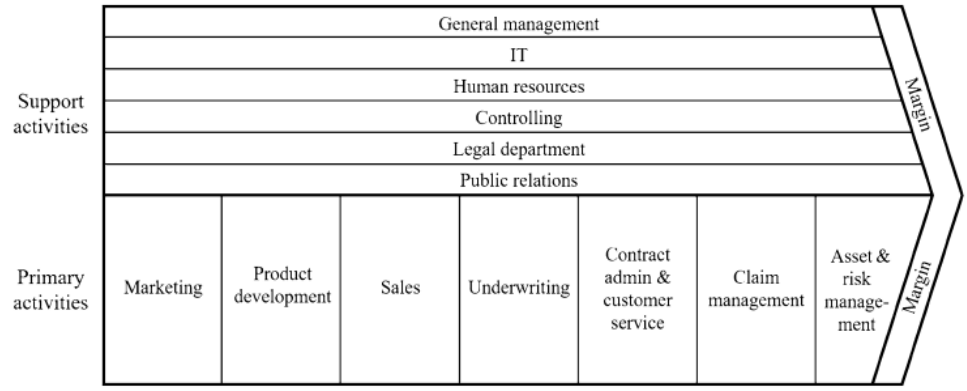


Figure 1. Insurance Specific value-chain

Source: The Impact of Digitalization on the Insurance Value Chain and the Insurability of Risks by M. Eling & M. Lehmann, 2018.

The activities with the value chain can be split into two categories of activity: the core or primary activities and supporting activities as detailed in figure 1 above. This helps insurers identify areas of potential rationalisation and is the way insurers create value for their customers (Eling & Lehmann, 2018). Deloitte (2023) further notes that the short-term insurance value chain is made up of sales, underwriting, claims, and servicing with reinsurance featuring as a key balance sheet mover.

For the intent of this research, the processes of **Claims, Sales, and servicing** will be contextually unpacked to better understand how digital platforms with embedded robotics process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence (AI) help in reducing operational costs for a short-term insurer.

2.5.1.1 Linking digital platforms to sales & and servicing and operational efficiencies.

The use of digital platforms has enabled short-term insurers to reach customers through various channels, including social media, mobile applications, and online platforms. This has resulted in a reduction in the cost of attaining new clients and increased revenue from existing customers (Liermann & Waizner, 2021).

Digital platforms have also enabled insurers to personalize their marketing and sales efforts, resulting in higher conversion rates and increased customer satisfaction. Robotics process automation (RPA) has been used in sales activities to automate repetitive tasks such as data entry, resulting in increased productivity and reduced errors (Guha, Alahmadi, Samanta, Khan, & Alahmadi, 2022).

The use of digital platforms has further enabled short-term insurers to provide better customer service by automating policy administration and management processes. Customers can now access their policy information online, make changes to their policies, and submit claims electronically.

This has resulted in a reduction in the time it takes to process customer requests, improved accuracy, and increased customer satisfaction which eventually leads to a reduction in costs (Devenrajan, 2018). RPA has also been used in service activities to automate back-office processes such as policy administration, resulting in increased productivity and reduced errors. (Nicoletti, 2021).

2.5.1.2 Linking digital platforms to claims processing and operational efficiencies.

The use of digital platforms has enabled short-term insurers to process and settle claims faster and more accurately. Customers can now submit claims electronically, and insurers can use RPA to automate claims processing tasks such as data capturing and fraud detection (Oza, Padhuyar, & Patil, 2020). This has resulted in reduced times for the processing of claims, improved accuracy, and increased customer fulfilment. Insurers can also use data analytics to better study the trends and patterns in customer claims data, enabling them to improve their underwriting and claims management processes and in turn avoid revenue leakage (Kaya, Türkyılmaz, & Birol, 2019).

2.6 Conclusion - Literature Review

The following observations have been made through the literature review thereby confirming the research questions in Chapter 1.

The Value chain analysis as per Porter (1985) has been instrumental in identifying areas where digital platforms can be used to improve efficiency and create value for customers and which digital platforms would drive this value in the context of the short-term insurance industry.

Literature has pointed toward RPA (Robotics Process Automation) as being widely and successfully used in sales, services, and claims activities to automate processes, resulting in increased productivity, reduced errors, and improved customer satisfaction (Deloitte, 2022; Guha, Alahmadi, Samanta, Khan, & Alahmadi, 2022; Kaya, Türkyılmaz, & Birol, 2019).

Furthermore that, Robotics process automation has been a key enabler in this transformation, and insurers who embrace this technology are likely to benefit significantly from reduced operational costs and increased profitability (Yarlagadda, 2018).

About the challenges faced by short-term insurers in implementing digital platforms which aid in the reduction of costs, the culture of the organisation in adopting change and executives actively driving this came up as major hinderances (Pillay, Njenga, & Kariuki, 2021).

The use of digital platforms in reducing operational costs is not a new research field and has been studied in length but continued research on the use of digital platforms to reduce operational costs within the context of short-term insurance is still required to bridge gaps in the literature, particularly about digitalization in the insurance segment (Eling & Lehmann, 2018).

Short-term insurance businesses are going through rapid changes due to the disruption taking place within this industry providing an ideal opportunity in which existing theories and frameworks can be affirmed, disproved or additions can be introduced.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1 Introduction

This chapter charts the research approach for this study being qualitative in nature. The importance of qualitative research may be ascribed to its ability to offer rich explanations and descriptions of processes in a clearly identifiable local context. It further provides the researcher with insights into the identified participants experiences and understanding the world as the participant experiences it (Agius, 2018).

The primary premise is that by using a method such as interviews this research has been capable of gathering extensive and contextual data required for a thorough understanding of the phenomena under inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In-depth interviews were carried out as part of the process with the management and staff of the organisations. As part of the data-collecting process. The data was evaluated using thematic analysis, which is the process of identifying patterns and themes in the data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

3.2 Research Paradigm, Approach and Design

This qualitative study took the form of a case study to collect broad and context-specific data to better understand the research objectives (Yin, 2018). Qualitative research allowed the exploration of complex phenomena in the context of this study. In this study, understanding how digital technology platforms impact operational efficiencies within a specific South African short-term insurance context required a deeper exploration beyond quantitative metrics.

The study aimed to explore rather than confirm a hypothesis. The Qualitative research was therefore well-suited for identifying patterns and discovering unexpected insights. This approach allowed for flexibility in the research design. The qualitative paradigm therefore aligned with the study's exploratory nature, the need for contextual understanding, and the desire to capture diverse perspectives related to digital technology platforms and operational efficiencies in South African short-term insurance (Turcotte, 2021).

3.3 Data Collection Methods.

The data collection methods for this study included in-depth interviews with senior stakeholders who make investments in digital platforms to improve operational efficiencies and thereby reduce operational costs and the effectiveness of these digital platforms in achieving this goal.

Rubin & Rubin, 2011 advise that the choice of in-depth interviews as the data collection method is justified by their ability to gather rich, detailed, and contextual data from key stakeholders. The open-ended nature of interviews allows for a comprehensive exploration of their experiences, perceptions, and insights, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs in the setting of the short-term insurance sector in South Africa (Fontana & Frey, 2018).

3.4 Population and Sampling Method

3.4.1 Population – Case Site

This study's population consists of senior leaders and industry experts from Old Mutual Insure, a well-known South African short-term insurance company with over 180 years of insurance expertise providing a broad range of insurance products and services to people, businesses, farms, and organizations (Old Mutual Insure, 2022). The participants have prior expertise in ways to improve operational efficiencies and reduce expenses in the insurance industry and other corporate contexts that make use of digital platforms.

Old Mutual Insure was chosen as the case site for several reasons. Firstly, the organisation's size and market presence make it representative of the South African short-term insurance industry, allowing for insights that can be generalised to similar companies within the industry. Secondly, Old Mutual Insure has embraced implementing digital platforms as a strategic imperative to enhance its operations and customer experience, making it an appropriate setting to examine the impact of digital platforms on operational cost.

The organization's stakeholders who have been involved in the study include:

Company executives: This group consists of senior-level executives responsible for strategic decision-making and overseeing the implementation of digital platforms within the organization. Their insights provide valuable perspectives on the strategic goals, challenges, and outcomes associated with using digital platforms for cost reduction.

Employees: This group encompasses various departments and roles within Old Mutual Insure, such as operations, IT, claims, sales, customer experience experts, and customer service. Interviews with employees shed light on their experiences, customer expectations and perceptions, and operational practices related to digital platforms and their role in reducing operational costs.

By including diverse stakeholders, this research study aims to capture multiple viewpoints and provide an inclusive understanding of the role of digital platforms in improving operational efficiencies and in turn reducing operational costs within Old Mutual Insure. The insights gained from this population will contribute to the development of a holistic and context-specific analysis, highlighting the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of technologically digital platforms in the short-term insurance sector of South Africa.

3.4.2 Sample and Sampling Method

The sample for this case study research was purposefully selected to include a range of stakeholders associated with Old Mutual Insure, representing different roles and perspectives within the organization. Purposeful sampling, also known as purposive or selective sampling, is appropriate for a case study as it allows for the intentional selection of participants who possess the necessary knowledge and experience to provide valuable insights related to the research questions (Patton, 2014).

The number of participants in the sample for this study was 6 participants for the in-depth senior leader interviews to gather from experiences in the areas of company executives and customer experience experts who understand the voice of the customer. . This sample size is adequate for a case study as it enables a detailed and in-depth analysis of each participant's experiences, perspectives, and insights, providing rich data that aligns with the qualitative nature of the research design (Creswell, 2013).

The selection of participants has been carried out through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. Initially, company executives and key decision-makers within Old Mutual Insure have been purposefully selected based on their roles and involvement in digital platform implementation and operational cost reduction strategies.

For employees, a similar approach was followed. The initial selection was also purposeful, targeting individuals from various departments and customer segments. Then, snowball sampling was utilized to identify additional participants who could provide unique perspectives and experiences related to digital platforms and operational cost reduction.

The desired demographic profile of executives includes individuals from diverse backgrounds with expertise in strategic decision-making and technology implementation. Employees encompass individuals from different departments, such as operations, IT Engineering, marketing, and customer service.

The number of interviews or data points obtained from the sample is 6 in-depth interviews for executive leaders. This number is deemed sufficient to gather comprehensive and detailed insights from each participant, ensuring saturation of data and allowing for a thorough exploration of the research questions (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

To encourage participation, potential participants were approached personally through email and direct contact, explaining the purpose and significance of the research. They have been assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and their voluntary participation has been emphasized. Informed consent has been obtained from each participant before conducting the interviews, ensuring ethical considerations are upheld throughout the research process.

By employing purposeful and snowball sampling methods and targeting a sample of participants, this case study research aims to gather diverse perspectives and in-depth insights from key stakeholders of Old Mutual Insure, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs within the organization.

3.5 The Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study consists of an interview guide. The interview guide has been designed to gather qualitative data on the use of digital platforms to improve operational efficiencies and in turn, reduce operational costs for short-term insurers.

An interviewing guide has been utilized as the research tool to gather information from the participants of the study. The interview guide is designed to address the study's theoretical framework (Value Chain Analysis Framework), relevant literature, and research questions. The interview comprised a series of open-ended questions and prompts that have helped delve into the participants' viewpoints, experiences, and difficulties about using digital platforms to improve operational efficiencies for a South African short-term insurer.

The theoretical framework and the research questions are both taken into consideration when constructing the interview guide. Each component of the instrument has a distinct function:

Introduction: A brief introduction that outlines the goals of the study and builds rapport with the participants preceding the interview. A brief description of the interview procedure, a guarantee of anonymity, and information about volunteer involvement were also included in this section.

Background Information: The interview included questions about the participants' roles within the organization, their experience in the short-term insurance industry, their familiarity with digital platforms, and their knowledge of operational cost-reduction strategies to contextualize the participants' experiences. To understand the participants' opinions and areas of competence, this section tries to collect demographic and professional data.

Digital Platforms: The interview guide includes questions specifically focused on the digital platforms used by South African short-term insurers to improve operational efficiencies. The discussion focused on participants' experiences using various digital platforms, including concrete examples of those they have found to be successful. This part immediately responds to the first research query concerning the industry's most effective digital technology platforms.

Effectiveness of Technology Platforms: The interview guide includes questions that delve into the participants' impressions of the influence of digital platforms on operational efficiencies and costs to evaluate the effectiveness of technology platforms in attaining the necessary cost savings. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences using technological platforms to reduce costs, including their views, achievements, and obstacles. This section specifically responds to the second study question and offers details on how participants assessed the efficiency of digital platforms.

Challenges Faced by Short-term Insurers: The interview guide also includes questions aimed at identifying the key difficulties encountered in the context of a short-term insurer.

Discussion of roadblocks, restrictions, and difficulties experienced during the implementation process will be encouraged among the participants. This section explains the difficulties the organization has experienced using technological platforms and immediately responds to the third research question.

The ability of an interview to collect in-depth qualitative data directly from the participants justifies its selection as the research instrument for this study. Interviews enable a thorough grasp of the research issue by allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The flexibility and possibility of unanticipated themes or topics emerging from open-ended interviews also ensure a thorough examination of the study questions (Fontana & Frey, 2018).

The interview guide is also created to be compatible with the Value Chain Analysis Framework, which serves as the study's theoretical foundation. This methodology offers a methodical way to evaluate the cost and value-adding processes in the short-term insurance sector. The interview questions were specifically designed to gather information about each step of the value chain and the unique cost-reduction prospects connected to digital platforms.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The data for this qualitative study has been gathered through a combination of in-depth face-to-face and virtual interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams depending on the participants' preferences.

The procedure for data collection is as follows:

Identification of Potential Participants: Potential participants with experience in digital platforms have been identified within Old Mutual Insure. This includes the following key stakeholders:

- Executive: Blue Sky & Strategy
- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Head of project management office: Digital Platforms & Channels
- Head: Claims & Enterprise Architect
- Executive Head: Customer Experience and Responsible Business

1. **Contacting Participants:** All Potential participants were directly approached to explain the purpose of the study provide an overview of the research objectives and request their participation in the interviews. This was followed by a consent form for participants to review and sign, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses.

2. **Interview scheduling:** Once consent was provided by the participants, there was a mix of in-person or online interviews because of logistical limitations and geographic restrictions based on the participants' availability.

3. **Interviewing:** The interview guide was the main tool used to collect data during the interviews. Using a semi-structured technique that enables open-ended discussions depending on the participants' responses. Face-to-face interviews were held in a private, relaxing setting with the least amount of noise possible. Video conferencing capabilities were used to conduct virtual interviews with Microsoft Teams.

4. **Recording and transcription**: With the consent of the participants, the interviews were audio recorded to accurately capture their responses and to speed up the process of analysing the collected data. Every word and utterance from the audio recordings were captured because they were transcribed verbatim. The interviews' complete transcription enables a thorough study of the data, ensuring that no important information is overlooked.

5. **Data Management:** On password-protected devices and cloud storage systems, all data gathered, including the audio recordings and transcripts, have been safely preserved. To preserve anonymity, participant identification data will be anonymized. To ensure the integrity and privacy of the participant's responses, the data will be kept private and only available to the study team (Researcher, Supervisor, and relevant Wits business school committees with vested interest in the study).

3.7 Data Analysis Strategies and Interpretation

Thematic analysis, a popular and rigorous technique for locating, deciphering, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data, has been utilized to evaluate the data gathered from the interviews in this qualitative study.

The use of thematic analysis enables a methodical and thorough examination of the experiences, viewpoints, and difficulties of the participants about the use of digital platforms for lowering operational costs in the South African short-term insurance sector (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the context of this study, the following steps were applied in the analysis process:

1. **Familiarisation with the data**: To get a full understanding of the data, a careful review and listening of the interview transcripts was undertaken numerous times. This step required immersion in the data and spotting early notions and trends that occur as the narrative of each participant is considered.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** Initial codes were created, which are labels or tags that identify significant themes or patterns in the data. Finding noteworthy sentences, phrases, or words that relate to the study topics and theoretical framework is the goal of this approach.
3. **Searching for themes:** To find probable themes in the data, the generated codes were gathered in groups. Themes are patterns of meaning that traverse multiple codes and effectively convey significant facets of the participants' perspectives or experiences. A methodical search for themes, making sure they are logical, significant, and pertinent to the research goals was carried out.
4. **Reviewing & Refining themes:** The themes that have been found were examined, improved upon, and further developed. The relationship between themes was analysed and alternative interpretations were considered to aid in refining the definitions and boundaries of each theme. The strength and dependability of the selected themes are ensured by this iterative procedure.
5. **Defining & and naming themes:** Each theme has been identified and named in depth, offering concise justifications and proofs to support the interpretation.
6. **Creating a thematic map:** The thematic map was used to emphasize linkages, overlaps, and patterns in the data and to show the links between the themes. A thorough grasp of the data structure is possible thanks to this map's summary of the major themes and sub-themes.

3.8 Measurement

The comparative analysis derived from the interviews was the overarching measurement method for this qualitative study.

Consistency Across Participants: Inter-rater reliability was evaluated by comparing the results obtained from the different stakeholders interviewed.

Detailed Field Notes: Detailed notes were maintained during the collection of data. This helped to ensure consistency and provide context for interpreting findings.

Recording Devices and Transcription: Microsoft team recording was used during interviews to allow for accurate transcription. This has ensured that original data was preserved.

Expert Review: Feedback was sought from experts in the short-term insurance industry to assess the content validity. These experts provided insights in the adequate measurement over time.

3.9 Possible Limitations and Challenges of the Study

Sampling Limitations: The study's sample has been selected based on predetermined criteria and the availability and willingness of participants to participate in the interviews. As people who agree to participate might have distinctive opinions or experiences that are different from those who decline involvement, this could introduce a sampling bias.

Subjectivity in data analysis: Thematic analysis involves the interpretation of qualitative data, which is subject to the subjectivity and prejudices of the researcher. Qualitative research has the possibility for subjective interpretations and researcher bias despite efforts to increase rigor and impartiality through systematic coding and analysis techniques.

Time and resource constraints: Qualitative research, especially in-depth interviews, takes a significant amount of time and resources. Time restrictions were an issue when arranging and conducting interviews, transcribing data, and performing the analysis. The effective use of available resources, planning, and allotting enough time to meet these constraints was focused on to mitigate this constraint.

3.10 Quality Assurance

3.10.1 Transferability

Transferability has been ensured by selecting participants who have relevant expertise and experience in the use of digital platforms to reduce operational costs for short-term insurers in South Africa. Although statistical generalization is not the goal of qualitative research, efforts have been made to improve the findings' applicability. This has been accomplished by providing thorough and in-depth descriptions of the research context, case study (Old Mutual Insure), and participant characteristics. In addition, readers will be able to judge if the findings apply to their circumstances thanks to the inclusion of direct excerpts from the interviews (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

3.10.2 Credibility

Credibility has been ensured by using appropriate data collection methods, ensuring that the research instrument is reliable and valid, and analysing the data using appropriate qualitative data analysis techniques. Several techniques were used to build trustworthiness. The study uses a strong theoretical framework like the Value Chain Analysis Framework, and the interpretations will be more credible as a result. There is a level of familiarity to fully comprehend the perspectives and experiences given by the subjects. To ensure further credibility; reflexivity was practiced, reflecting critically on biases, preconceptions, and assumptions that may affect the readings (Shenton, 2004).

3.10.3 Dependability & Confirmability

To ensure dependability and confirmability, a record and audit trail that gives a thorough account of the research process, including decisions taken, data gathering techniques, and analytical phases, to increase reliability will be kept. This documentation will make it easier to replicate the study and provide other researchers a chance to gauge how reliable the results are. To improve the trustworthiness of the interpretations, regular peer debriefing and member checking (verifying findings with participants) will also be carried out (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Further to that, the impartiality and neutrality of the findings are related to confirmability. A variety of tactics have been used to improve confirmability. The interpretations are based on the data and unaffected by personal prejudices by first using an explicit and methodical approach to data analysis, such as theme analysis.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

3.11.1 Permissions to conduct the study.

The collaborating company (Old Mutual Insure) and any necessary ethical review boards or committees had all their permissions and approvals secured before the research was conducted. This guarantees that the study is carried out by ethical standards and laws.

3.11.2 Informed Consent

All participants in the study have provided their informed permission, advantages, and possible drawbacks of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.11.3 Voluntary Participation & Confidentiality

The study is completely voluntary, and participants have been free to leave at any time without suffering any repercussions. The data's privacy has been protected during the entire research procedure. The identity of participants and any personally identifiable data is completely anonymous and kept private. Only the researcher and authorized individuals as set by the university's ethics committee will have access to the data, which will be securely preserved (Guest et al., 2018).

3.11.4 Anonymity

All information gathered, including interview transcripts and any other personally identifiable data, has been anonymized to guarantee the privacy of participants. Pseudonyms or identifying numbers have been given to participants to further protect their anonymity. The responses of participants will be kept private and confidential using this strategy (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the results that have been attained from the collected data during the process of conducting interviews in a semi-structured manner from leaders in a short-term insurance company. The interview guide was formulated and mapped against the objectives for this study, which is to, which is to establish the critical technology platforms used by short-term insurers on improving efficiencies on current operating processes; to assess the robustness and effectiveness of these platforms in achieving the goals of improved operational efficiencies and lastly to understand the major challenges faced by short-term insurers when embarking on an implementation of digital technology platforms.

This chapter starts by describing the participants of this research study, accompanied by the results derived from the qualitative analysis of the data collected.

4.2 Descriptive Results

Table 2 Participants of the research and their context

Participant	Business Unit	Position
Interviewee 1	Group Technology	Enterprise Architecture
Interviewee 2	Project Management Office	Head of Project Management Office
Interviewee 3	Finance	Chief Operations Officer
Interviewee 4	Group Technology	Chief Information Officer
Interviewee 5	Claims, Sales & Services	Head of Technology: Claims and Service
Interviewee 6	Office of Chief Commercial Officer	Executive Head: Customer Experience

The names of all the stakeholders and participants have been withheld as per the requirements of the ethics clearances of this research to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure that the insights obtained for this research provided different perspectives, the participants for this study were chosen from a diverse group of divisions within the business.

A total of 6 in-depth interviews were conducted for this research as the participants met the selection prerequired criteria of executives with expertise in strategic decision-making and technology implementations with varied experiences in information technology, claims, sales, customer services and finance. service consultants, and customer experience experts.

The interviewees provided valuable insights ranging from human-centric approaches to digital platforms within short-term insurance, underwriting, claims automation, advanced algorithms for risk management, challenges of integrating with legacy platforms when driving digital modernization, and the power of marketing perception from implementing digital technology platforms within short-term insurance. The exposure of the participants within short-term insurance is not limited to the current organisation they work for but widened to the financial services industry.

The interviews were conducted through a combination of face-to-face and virtual settings with the consent of all participants and the transcription of all was created. All the participants are full-time executive-level employees of the organisation. To further explain the purpose of the research, the objectives of the research were explained at the start of each interview and the participants provided a verbal agreement to their consent which was also transcribed.

4.3 Qualitative Findings

The results of the research are presented by the consistency matrix in Annexure A in addressing the research questions.

4.3.1 Understanding the current operational processes and challenges.

To understand the current operational processes and challenges faced by short-term insurers participants were asked to explain their understanding of the current operational processes and challenges within their organisation.

The data collected from the interviews highlighted the significance of the underwriting and claims processes in the short-term insurance value chain.

Regarding challenges, integrating digital platforms into core policy administration systems, and policy issuance due to overly customised systems were leading challenges.

Interviewee 1: “The first sort of the entry point would probably be the pricing and the underwriting that's attached to our processes” … “How we evaluate and pay out claims is essential"…” difficulties of our policy administration system and the over-customization that we've made in that space.”

Interviewee 3: “Underwriting, surveying, policy issuance, and claims processing are critical processes” … “Delays in policy issuance due to overly bespoke systems can pose risks, leaving clients without coverage”.

Interviewee 5: “Legacy system integration is very big in our space as we have customised our current systems over the years.” … “The other big challenge is employee training and change management to ensure a seamless transition.”

4.3.2 Assessing the robustness and effectiveness of digital technology platforms in achieving the of goals of improved operational efficiencies.

The objective of this section was to understand the participant's knowledge and experience with digital platforms in the context of short-term insurance and to explore the participant's views on the robustness and effectiveness of digital platforms in reducing operational costs within the short-term insurance value chain.

Most of the interviewees weighed in on how critical the role of digital platforms is in improving operational efficiencies, improving customer experience and in turn reducing operational costs. With that said, the data collected demonstrates that unless the root cause of operational efficiencies is well understood, overlaying digital technology platforms across the value chain will not automatically solve the problems linked to high operational costs.

Interviewee 1: “Technology platforms promise enhanced operational efficiencies.”

Interviewee 2: “We've gone and digitalised quite a lot of our processes and reviewing our claims process and making it more efficient through the use of technology.”

Interviewee 3: “Digital platforms contribute to the value chain by enhancing customer experience through algorithms aligned with real-time, underlying risks.”

Interviewee 4: “The price of insurance has become unnecessarily expensive due to our operational overheads” ... “We should focus on simplifying our products, our pricing, and our internal processing mechanisms to service the industry.” … “Through digital interfaces, insurers can provide personalized services, leading to improved customer satisfaction and retention, indirectly impacting the bottom line.”

4.3.3 Challenges faced by short-term insurers when implementing digital technology platforms

The objective of this section of the interview was to focus on the participant's experiences and perceptions of implementing digital platforms for improving operational efficiencies and in turn cost reduction purposes and to inquire about the participant's experiences with the adoption and implementation of digital platforms. Furthermore, it was to assess the participant's perception of the effectiveness of digital platforms in improving efficiencies and in turn reducing operational costs.

The data collected for this section indicate that the initial intent of implementing digital platforms for improving operational efficiencies is usually met by the issues in fully understanding what the solution provides during scoping, change management aspects with issues of adoption, and the challenge of integrating to existing legacy platforms. There were some cases where the successful reduction of operational costs was a result of implementing digital technology platforms.

Interviewee 1: “Every time we can see a solution at face value, it is an ideal solution, as soon as it plugs into our policy admin system, things slow down completely.”

Interviewee 2: “When we buy technology, we hardly factor in the amount of customization required to get the solution to work in our environment” … “Some of our implementations have led to us being able to approve more claims in a short space of time because that's been our main goal and I must say...we have seen cost savings.” … “The benefits for cost reduction allow you to redirect what we would have picked up in terms of costs and routing them into other revenue-generating initiatives” … “The limitation is the aspect of the technology gaining momentum in the organization. This is why change management is critical, especially with high investment initiatives.” … “80% of our claims and servicing requests have been digitized thereby creating cost savings”.

Interviewee 3: “Investment decisions are guided by solving end-of-life system issues, executing financial strategies, and identifying emerging technologies. Proof of values is utilized for selecting suitable platforms” … “Challenges in the implementation process include a lack of detailed understanding at the executive sponsor level and persistent issues like change management”.

Interviewee 5: “Legacy system integration is very big in our space as we have customised our current systems over the years." "The other big challenge is employee training, and change management to ensure a seamless transition” … “Implementing robotics process automation for straight-through processing of claims has played a big role in our business” … “We have also embarked on introducing a business-wide CRM to optimise sales and marketing costs”.

Interviewee 6: “There has been some impact on operational costs such as license and headcount reduction in the claims, sales, and servicing environment as a result of introducing digital technology platforms”.

4.3.4 Summary of the Qualitative Data Results

The participants of the interviews provided insights across all the sections addressing the research questions. The interviewees provided valuable insights into how digital technology platforms contribute to improving operational efficiencies.

The respondents have consistently highlighted how the implementation of digital technology platforms is a significant contributor to operational efficiencies within short-term insurance. This was particularly most prevalent in claims processing using robotics for straight-through processing which emerged as one of the success stories in reducing operational costs and improving the time it takes to process requests.

With regards to the adoption of digital technologies, platforms such as CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems and digital marketing tools were strongly emphasised when looking at the optimisation of sales and distribution channels.

It was evident throughout the interviews that there have been efforts to specifically address challenges birthed from inefficient sales processes resulting in painful customer acquisitions and delayed policy issuance.

The interviewees were also in favour of digital platforms driving customer-centric interactions. This was observed through how most of the interviewees made mention of how customer portals, self-service options, and automated renewal processes contribute to impactful customer interactions. Albeit there are successes in using digital platforms to reduce operational costs, it was clear from some of the respondents who indicated that a significant shift is yet to be seen within the short-term insurance market, especially for businesses that have a lot of legacy systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter continues with discussing the results of the executive interviews presented in the previous chapter. The spotlight and focal point of the discussion will be on the key findings from the interviews. The findings are coded into groups and linked to the research problem of this research outlined in Chapter 1.

Table 3 Themes and codes

Theme	Codes
Claims Automation	Automated claims processing, Robotics, Straight-through processing
Sales and Distribution Enhancement	CRM systems, Digital marketing tools
Customer-centric Interactions	Customer portals, Self-service options, and Automated renewal processes with a balance between technology and human touch.
Cost-effective operations	Workflow rationalization, Operational license reduction, Robotic processes.
Factors driving and hindering adoption	Competitive landscape, Changing customer expectations, Legacy system integration.
Underwriting Efficiency	Data-driven underwriting, Geocoding, AI-powered assessment tools.
Impact on Operational Costs	Success in reducing costs, Waiting for significant uplift.

5.2 Key Findings

The themes identified have led to eight key findings which will be discussed in this section. These findings are related to the research question "How do digital technology platforms influence the operational efficiencies of a South African short-term insurer?"

5.2.1 Digital technology platforms used by insurers.

Claims automation for efficiency

Notable scholars on insurance topics have emphasised the importance of the claims process in the value chain and how it shapes the perception of your organisation to customers where the promise to pay needs to be exercised (Carson & Dumm, 1999; Berry-Stölzle et al.,2010).

The findings of the study affirm that where digital technology platforms are implemented particularly in claims processing, they become a significant contributor to the efficiencies of operations.

There is also an indication that using robotics process automation for straight-through processing, the automation of claims assessments, and settlement processes have emerged as success stories in the reduction of operational costs and improving processing times.

Sales and Distribution

Expert scholars have highlighted that technology is transforming sales and distribution strategies in the insurance industry, especially regarding the channels products are distributed (Boobier, 2020; Wanduto, 2019; Cappiello, 2020; Wang et al, 2020).

During the process of data collection, the participants of the interviews expressed the importance of optimising sales and distribution channels through the adoption of digital technology platforms.

It was also evident that there are efforts to address the inefficient processes within sales processes showcasing the importance of digital solutions in customer acquisition and policy issuance.

Underwriting Efficiencies

Scholars in insurance underwriting excellence highlight the power of enabling underwriting using technology which adds tremendous value to the overall value chain. Scholars emphasise the importance of minimising mistakes during the underwriting process albeit this expertise requires a well-balanced combination of the using human expertise and technology in ensuring efficient underwriting operations (Oyetayo & Abass, 2020; Wang et al., 2019; Zheng & Guo, 2020).

The importance of having effective underwriting practices enabled by data-driven processes and AI-powered assessment tools came up as an important part of the insurance value chain which is supported by scholars who confirm that underwriting practices can make or break an insurance business because that is where the origination of the risk take up is and requires meticulous consideration.

Impact on operational cost reduction

The impact of technology on the reduction of operational costs has been highlighted by scholars. Albeit there is some coloration to the use of technology with reducing operational costs, scholars note the importance of zoning into the correct use cases to yield the most impactful results (Schmidt & Wagner, 2019; Bello et al.,2021).

The findings of the research provided mixed insights about the impact digital technology platforms have on the reduction of operational costs. Some participants relayed success stories where they indicated to have seen a significant uplift in reducing costs, other participants indicated a different view of them still waiting and hoping to see the impact.

This suggests that the impact of digital technology costs on cost may differ across different operational domains within the short-term insurance industry.

5.2.3 Robustness and effectiveness of digital technology platforms

Customer-centric interactions

Scholars such as Kumar et al.,2014 highlighted the role of technology in maintaining a customer-centric approach to how services are delivered. It is critical to maintain a perspective that at the end of any business process, there is a customer on the other end who still wants to relate in a human form enabled by technology which provides a frictionless experience.

The findings of the research pointed to the important role digital technology platforms play in enhancing customer experiences throughout the short-term insurance value chain by removing friction with how customers engage with insurers.

The data showed how customer portals for self-service options and automated renewal processes positively contribute to the experience of customers. There is also the recognition of the importance of maintaining a balance between technology-driven processes and the human touch.

Cost-effective operations

Key scholars in effective operational management argue that for operations to be effective and cost-effective, there needs to be a combination of excellent process design which is enabled by central technology such as workflows and robotics process automation (Haniff et al.,2013; Westgard & Burnett,1990; Shehadeh et al., 2016; Lamberton et al.,2017).

The findings also confirm that the rationalization of workflow systems and in turn the reduction of operational software licenses through the consolidation of digital platforms can result in cost reduction. This further asserted how the use of robotics process automation not only improved operational efficiency but aided in the elimination of the need for handoffs in the process which then leads to cost savings and streamlined operations.

5.2.5 Challenges faced by short-term insurers during implementation.

Factors driving and hindering adoption.

Scholars in technology implementation and change management have found that industries are being disrupted and left no choice but to digitise albeit many organisations grapple with competing legacies and where technology investment should be routed within the business (Kostoff et al.,2004; Diamandis & Kotler, 2020; Bongomin et al.,2020).

The results from the findings align with the scholarly view of how the competitive landscape within the insurance industry and the ever-changing expectations of customers are some of the driving forces behind the primary adoption of digital technology platforms. With that said, the findings also confirm how the challenges related to integrating to existing legacy platforms are an ever-growing confirm with regards to implementing digital technology platforms for insures and this necessitates careful planning and change management to ensure a smooth transition when introducing new technology.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter focused on outlining the results of this research project. The main purpose and objectives of this research are discussed in chapter 1 of this report, followed by a systemic review of related literature, and resurfacing of what is already known with regards to scholarly work done in insurance, and digital technology and merging it with value chain analysis. This review of literature was followed by an outline of the research approach and method which informed the way data was to be collated. The results of the gathered data were then presented and linked to the research objectives based on the earlier literature review.

The findings of the results support the research objective that digital technology platforms influence the operational efficiencies for a South African short-term insurance company. This was guided by the evidence provided in the data from the respondents which underscores the transformative role of digital platforms in addressing specific pain points within the business, enhancing customer interactions, and optimising various operational processes. The challenges, such as legacy system integration and the need for a human-centric approach, highlight the nuanced nature of digital transformation in the insurance sector.

The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations that can be drawn from the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research project set to better understand how digital technology platforms with underlying technologies such as Robotics Process Automation (RPA) in improving operational efficiencies and in turn contributing to a reduction of operational costs for a South African short-term insurer with a focus on identifying the benefits and drawbacks of their use. Further, it set out to understand the impact of digital technology platforms in line with work done by Porter (1985) and Rahlfs (2007) on the impact of digitalization on the insurance value chain.

As established in Chapter 1, the South African insurance market is highly competitive, and most established insurers are having to find new ways of offering excellent and smooth customer experiences while balancing that with improving operational efficiencies through the reduction of their operating costs (Wright, 2021). This streamlining of business operations which is enabled by technology has led to improved customer engagement and effective operations to service those customers (Rubbio et al.,2019; Acharya & Hebbar, 2018).

The insurance industry grapples with managing operational costs given the increase in other factors such as inflation, climate change, and natural disaster claims (The Guardian, 2022; Kader et al.,2010). It is of no surprise that many insurers have been looking at ways to optimise their business operations using technology which in turn helps them to redeploy their squeezed finances to other burning parts of the business while remaining competitive.

The increasing use of technology within the insurance value chain has led to a shift in how businesses are organized to better respond to changes in customer preferences (Lee & Lee, 2020). This shift is accelerating due to digital technology platforms contributing to the reduction of cots along the value chain (Diamandis & Kotler, 2020).

This chapter outlines the conclusions of this research project through the summation of the key findings from undertaking the research, and their associated implications to key business decision makers and influential stakeholders, pointing out the confines of the research and further suggesting areas of future undertakings of scholarly research.

6.2 Researching Findings

This qualitative research project has effectively addressed the research problem established in the first chapter through a deep understanding of established scholarly literature addressing what is currently studied and detailed regarding the research problem. The said scholarly literature was detailed in the second chapter with key findings of this study summated in fifth chapter of this report.

6.2.1 Findings for the research problem

The literature merged with the findings from the interviews confirm that the adoption of digital technology platforms such as RPA, makes a substantial contribution to improving operational efficiencies for a South African short-term insurer's operations.

The use of digital technology platforms plays a very critical role in any organisation wanting to have a positive impact seen to its revenues and market perception (Deloitte, 2023).

The key findings of the study suggest that the use of technology to enable streamlined operational processes in underwriting, claims, sales, and distribution gives an organisation a strong value proposition.

Scholars have noted that for any technology implementation to be successful, there needs to be buy-in from all stakeholders involved and a big drive to ensure that change management is infused from the beginning of any implementation (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021). This aligns with the findings of the study where stakeholder buy-in and change management were highlighted as crucial to ensuring that the implementation of digital platforms is taken up and used to better yield the return on investment made to digital platforms.

There is vast research that highlights the success of using technology such as Robotics Process Automation (RPA) to streamline and optimize operations (Madakam et al.,2019; Dandale et al.,2023).

The results of this study highlighted instances where operational costs such as software licenses were reduced using robotics. This in turn enabled the short-term insurer to be able to repurpose resources to other parts of the business.

Although there were cases where the implementation of digital technology platforms contributed to some form of cost reduction, the findings of the research also indicated that where the investment was substantial and the impact of the change introduced by the implementation of the digital technology, the business case will take some time to materialize the full benefits of cost reduction.

6.2.2 Overall Research Findings

As highlighted in the preceding chapters, the use of digital technology platforms to improve operational efficiencies within a short-term insurance business is non-negotiable if insurers are to remain competitive. This study has shown that with the right mix of a well-articulated business problem statement, stakeholder buy-in during implementation, and a well-suited technology for the context of the business, digital technology platforms can contribute immensely to operational efficiencies and in time aid in the reduction of operational costs.

6.3 Framework Proposal

Below is framework which decision makers can refer to as an enabler for decision making when considering the introduction of digital technology platforms in their respective short-term insurance company with the intention of improving operational efficiencies.

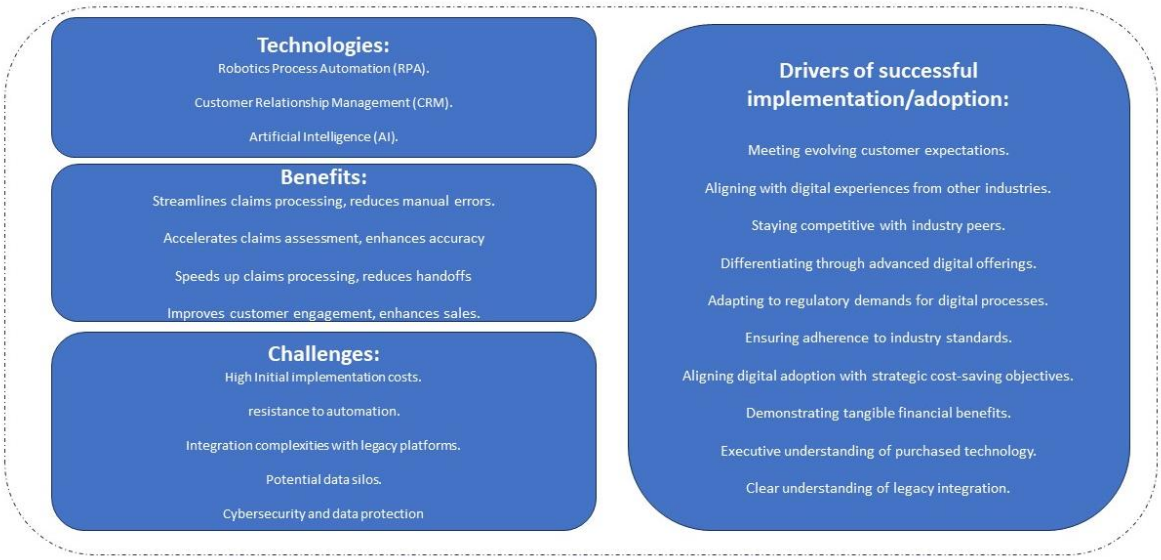


Figure 2. Propose technology acceptance model

The findings of this study have highlighted how pivotal the integration of digital technologies where short-term insurers seek to enhance operational efficiencies. This proposed framework amalgamates key technologies, challenges, benefits, and drivers associated with the adoption of digital technology platforms within the South African short-term insurance sector.

Key Technologies

Embracing technology like as Robotic Process Automation (RPA) can help streamline claims processing and reduce manual errors. Furthermore, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems improve sales, marketing, and customer service, albeit integration issues may develop. Artificial intelligence (AI) for claims evaluation speeds up processes and improves accuracy, but it must be used ethically and without bias. Finally, Straight-Through Processing (STP) is useful for speeding up claims processing but requires strong connectivity with legacy systems.

Benefits

The adoption of these digital technology provides various benefits to short-term insurance. Simplifying claims processing, sales, and services improves operational efficiency. Automated processes save time while simultaneously reducing errors. Lower administrative costs are achieved through automation, combined with streamlined workflows, resulting in financial benefits. Furthermore, improved customer experience is a significant benefit which contribute to increased customer satisfaction.

Challenges during implementation

While the benefits are significant, there are inherent problems throughout the implementation process of these technologies. Integration issues arise from the need to adapt new technologies to existing legacy systems while also guaranteeing continuous data flow between platforms. Resistance to change is a significant barrier, demanding measures for overcoming employee rejection and managing cultural transitions toward digital procedures.

Security and ethical considerations take precedence, necessitating strict safeguards to protect sensitive client data and ensure ethical AI use in claims evaluations.

Drivers for successful implementation and adoption

The success of digital implementation depends on a variety of factors. It is vital to respond to customer demand while also keeping up with changing expectations and experiences in other industries. The competitive situation in the sector needs constant adaptation to stay ahead and differentiate through innovative digital solutions. Finally, linking digital adoption with cost-saving goals is critical for delivering concrete financial benefits.

Conclusion

This framework offers a comprehensive summary for short-term insurers embarking on the challenging journey of digital transformation. Understanding the subtleties of major technologies, benefits, difficulties, and drivers is critical for a successful, long-term, and customer-centric digital evolution in the South African short-term insurance industry.

6.4 Business and Management implications

This research project has outlined the numerous means in which technology platforms impact the key parts of the insurance value chain in the setting a South African short-term insurance business operation. Regarding the implications for business, the study presents the following:

- The lack of executive sponsors having a detailed understanding of the details of the technology investments they are making contributes to the challenges experienced when implementing and embarking on a digital platform implementation. This relates to what the study highlighted in matching what the platforms promise to provide about the value the executive sponsors want to extract over time given the nuances of different business operations.
- The strong reliance on technology implementation partners hinders the enterprise contextual application of any technology. The study has shown that having human capital who understand the enterprise context as part of any digital technology implementation can improve this.
- Business leaders tend to solve executive egos instead of core business problems. This speaks about how digital technology projects are prioritized which influences the technology choice for the business to bring about the desired benefits such as optimisation and cost reduction.

- Insurers have over-complicated their operations through multi-layering technology. The study has shown that over-customizing systems and integrating into legacy systems are a key hurdle to overcome.

6.5 Limitations

With this backdrop, the limitations of the study from the data collection analysis are as follows:

- The sample of this project was selected based on predetermined criteria and the availability and willingness of participants to participate in the interviews. The participants who agreed to participate in the interviews have distinctive opinions or experiences that are different from those who declined involvement, this could have introduced sampling bias.
- The focus of the study was on an organisation within the short-term insurance industry in South Africa; because of this, there is a limitation in applying this study to other forms of insurance such as life insurance and other financial services sectors. This impacts on the general applicability of the outcomes of this research.
- The premise of existing relationships between all participants and the researcher ma in some shape affected the extent of the veracity of the responses which were provided by the respondents and in turn may render the results to be somewhat skewed.

6.6 Recommendations for future research

As a result of the findings and insights extracted out of this research study, it is recommended that for future research, the study should be extended to assess the impact of digital technology platforms in improving a firm's performance. The recommended study should be longer through a mixed method study to take care of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of research.

6.7 Conclusion

This study has provided intel into the role of digital technology platforms in improving operational efficiencies for a South African short-term insurer. Through the conducted interviews, insights were developed and analysed.

The opening chapter of this research outlined research problem and was succeeded by a systemic review of the literature in the second chapter.

This study was anchored, and guard railed by a research design and methodology detailed in the third chapter which was followed by the presentation of the results in the fourth chapter. These results were discussed, compared, and contrasted in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter has offered the conclusion of the research study with recommendations for future studies.

As it is indicated in the first chapter of this report, the purpose of this study was to investigate how digital technology platforms influence the operational efficiencies of a South African short-term insurer. The study was also guided by the following objectives:

- To establish the critical digital technology platforms used by short-term insurers in improving operational efficiencies.
- To assess the robustness and effectiveness of these digital technology platforms in achieving the goals of improved operational efficiencies.
- To understand the major challenges faced by short-term insurers when embarking on an implementation of these digital technology platforms.

Based on the data collected as part of this study, the study concludes that digital technology platforms contribute to some degree to the improvement of operational efficiencies and therefore influence the operational efficiencies of a South African short-term insurer.

Further to this, technology such as RPA is highly used to optimise and automate critical operations within the insurance value chain such as sales, claims, and servicing.

Regarding major challenges faced by short-term insurers when embarking on the implementation of these digital platforms, the research findings highlighted the detailed involvement of executive sponsors during platform acquisition, platform integration to legacy systems, and the usage of implemented platforms as major challenges.

This research study has therefore effectively and successfully met its intended purpose.

ANNEXURE A: CONSISTENCY MATRIX

Table 4: Consistency Matrix

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	Prop/hyp #	State Proposition or Hypothesis	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
1	How do digital technology platforms influence the operational efficiencies of a South African short-term insurer?	1	The adoption of digital technology platforms makes a substantial contribution to improving operational efficiencies for a South African short-term insurer's operations.	Interview guide sections 1-3	Thematic analysis for key theme identification and analysis.

ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section 1: Understanding the Current Operational Processes and Challenges.

Objective: This section aims to gather information about the existing operational processes and challenges faced by short-term insurers.

Operational Processes: To inquire about the participant's understanding of the current operational processes within their organisation.

- Can you describe critical operational processes involved in the short-term insurance value chain?
- Are there any specific challenges or pain points experienced within the business associated with these processes?

Section 2: Digital Platforms and Value Chain Analysis

Objective: This section aims to understand the participant's knowledge and experience with digital platforms in the context of short-term insurance.

Digital Platforms & Value Chain: To explore the participant's views on the role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs within the value chain.

- How do digital platforms contribute to the different stages of the value chain in the context of short-term insurance?
- Can you provide examples of digital platforms that have been implemented to address specific cost-related challenges in the value chain?
- What are the potential benefits and limitations of using digital platforms for cost reduction in the insurance value chain?

Section 3: Digital Platform Implementation & Effectiveness

Objective: This section focuses on the participant's experiences and perceptions of implementing digital platforms for cost reduction purposes.

Digital Platform Adoption: To inquire about the participant's experiences with the adoption and implementation of digital platforms.

- What are the main factors that drive the adoption of digital platforms within the organization?
- How are digital platforms selected and evaluated before implementation?
- Are there any challenges or considerations specific to the implementation process?

Cost Reduction Effectiveness: To assess the participant's perception of the effectiveness of digital platforms in reducing operational costs.

- How has the implementation of digital platforms impacted operational costs within the organisation?
- Can you provide specific examples or success stories of cost reduction achieved through digital platforms?
- Have there been any unexpected or unintended consequences of implementing digital platforms for cost reduction?

ANNEXURE C: LETTER OF REQUESTING PERMISSION



University of the Witwatersrand,
Wits Business School

Ludwyn Lortan & Xoli Mabuza
Old Mutual Insure
Wanooka Place. St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193

17 May 2023

Dear Ludwyn & Xoli

Re: Permission to conduct research at Old Mutual Insure

I am writing to formally request permission to conduct my research as an MBA Candidate at Wits Business School on "The role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs for a South African short-term insurer," with a specific focus on Old Mutual Insure. I believe this research will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of our current digital platforms in achieving cost reduction objectives and will contribute to the ongoing development of our organization.

Purpose and Scope of the Research:
The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs within Old Mutual Insure. The study will specifically investigate the perspectives of executives and senior leaders who are responsible for making investments towards digital platforms, as well as employees and customer experience experts who possess a deep understanding of the voice of the customer.

Research Methodology:

The research will employ qualitative research methods, primarily through interviews with a sample of 10 participants. These participants will comprise a combination of company executives, employees, and customer experience experts. The interviews will be conducted in a structured manner, focusing on gathering insights about the investments made in digital platforms, their impact on operational costs, and the overall effectiveness of these platforms in achieving cost reduction goals.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations:

All information obtained during the research will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of academic research. I will ensure that the identities of the participants are anonymized, and any sensitive or proprietary information will be handled with strict adherence to ethical standards. The research will comply with the regulations and guidelines set forth by Wits Business School's ethics committee.

Benefits to Old Mutual Insure:

The findings of this research will be valuable to Old Mutual Insure in multiple ways. Firstly, it will provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of our current digital platforms in reducing operational costs. This insight can guide future decision-making processes and optimize investments in digital initiatives. Secondly, it will shed light on potential areas for improvement and identify best practices within the industry, helping us stay ahead of competitors and enhance our operational efficiency. Finally, the research can serve as a knowledge-sharing platform, allowing us to contribute to the broader industry's understanding of digital platforms' impact on cost reduction in the short-term insurance sector.

Timeframe and Support:

The research is anticipated to be completed once I have received ethics clearance from the university within a timeframe of 3 months. I kindly request the support and cooperation of the company's executives and senior leaders in granting me access to the participants for interviews. I understand that the time of these individuals is valuable, and I assure you that the interviews will be conducted at their convenience, with minimal disruption to their daily responsibilities.

I would appreciate it if you could kindly grant me permission to proceed with this research and provide access to the executives, senior leaders, employees, and customer experience experts who will participate in the interviews.

Yours sincerely,

Josiah Moloi (1240896)
072 126 7211
1240896@students.wits.ac.za

Dr Pius Oba
011 717 3976
Pius.oba@wits.ac.za

ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF GRANTING PERMISSION



OLDMUTUAL

INSURE

Wanooka Place, St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193
Tel +27 (0)11 374 9111, www.ominsure.co.za

26 May 2023

Permission to conduct research

Dear Josiah Moloi (Student Number – 1240896),

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to grant you permission to undertake your case study research titled "The Role of Digital Platforms in Reducing Operational Costs for a South African Short-Term Insurer" at Old Mutual Insure. As the Chief Information Officer and your line manager, I understand the nature and importance of your research topic, and I appreciate your interest in studying the impact of digital platforms on operational costs within our organization.

Before commencing your research, it is essential to clarify the working conditions under which the interviews should take place. You are granted permission to conduct interviews with various stakeholders of Old Mutual Insure. To ensure a conducive and professional environment, please schedule interviews in advance and seek the consent of participants to ensure their availability. You should make use of both face-to-face or virtual interviews via Microsoft Teams, as per your proposed methodology, to accommodate the preferences and convenience of the participants.

I would like to emphasize the utmost importance of strict adherence to privacy and anonymity of the subjects participating in the interviews. It is imperative that their identities and any confidential or proprietary information related to Old Mutual Insure remain strictly confidential. Please ensure that all data collected as part of this research study is used solely for the purpose of academic research and that it is stored securely and protected from unauthorised access.

Moreover, I would like to emphasize that no proprietary information or sensitive data of Old Mutual Insure should be gathered during the interviews. We value the trust placed in us by our customers and stakeholders, and we must always safeguard their information. Any insights or findings derived from the research study should be presented in a generalized manner that does not disclose specific proprietary information or compromise the confidentiality of our operations.



OLDMUTUAL

INSURE

Wanooka Place, St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193
Tel +27 (0)11 374 9111, www.ominsure.co.za

I trust that you will conduct your research with the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and respect for privacy.

Thank you for your interest in studying the role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs at Old Mutual Insure. We appreciate your contribution to the academic field and the potential insights that your research may provide.

We look forward to the successful completion of your study.

Yours sincerely,

Ludwyn Lortan
26/05/2023 22:28:56(UTC+02:00)
Signed by Ludwyn Lortan,
ludwyn.lortan@ominsure.co.za

Ludwyn Lortan – Chief Information Officer (Old Mutual Insure)

ludwyn.lortan@ominsure.co.za

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Title of Project: The role of digital platforms in reducing operational costs for a South African short-term insurer

Researcher: Josiah Moloi

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview/ may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

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