



Challenges of ICT Integration in Social Work Practicums in African Higher Education: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: This systematic review explores the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing social work practicums within higher learning institutions across developing African nations. Key challenges identified include the absence of clear institutional policies for ICT integration, insufficient funding for welfare organizations, particularly from the South African Department of Social Development, and unreliable internet access in rural regions. Additionally, the lack of clarity within the Department of Education's policy framework regarding appropriate technologies for educational curricula hinders students' practical experiences. Using the PRISMA methodology, this review analyzed 65 peer-reviewed articles selected from an initial retrieval of 320 sources from databases such as Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate. The inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured relevance to the topic of ICT challenges in social work education. The findings highlight a pressing need for revised policies and the introduction of new legislation to address the technological barriers that limit social work students' access to essential resources like Wi-Fi, digital infrastructure, and institutional support. These challenges are particularly acute in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, where limited technological infrastructure and financial constraints impede progress. Nonetheless, the development of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) guidelines, the introduction of affordable technologies, and the establishment of a robust national policy framework for ICT integration can significantly improve the quality of social work practicums, facilitating better alignment between theory and practice.

Keywords: Social Work Online Practicums, ICT In Developing Countries, Higher Learning Institutions In Africa, Social Work Field Of Practice, Challenges

1. Introduction

Social workers play an integral role in addressing diverse challenges faced by individuals and communities, ranging from social inequalities, substance abuse, child protection, and elder and disability care to issues of poverty. The South African Council for Social Work Service Professions (SACSSP) defines social work as "a practice-based profession and academic discipline that promotes social change, development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people" (SACSSP, 2023). Since its introduction to Africa in the 1960s (Umoren, 2016), social work education has required students to engage in both theoretical and practical training to qualify for professional practice.

Higher learning institutions in South Africa mandate that social work students undertake practical placements throughout their academic program, often starting from the first year. These placements are intended to integrate theoretical knowledge with real-world experience (Johnson, Bailey, & Padmore, 2012). Such placements enable students to apply learned concepts in welfare organizations and develop essential professional skills. However, the rapid increase in student enrollment in social work programs has led to significant challenges for welfare organizations, which struggle to provide adequate placement opportunities (Johnson et al., 2012). The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) requires institutions to meet practical placement criteria, but as Abdelmaguid (2016) suggests, issues such as student preparedness, curriculum structure, and fieldwork opportunities significantly impact social work education in South Africa and other developing nations.

These challenges are further exacerbated by limited technological infrastructure, particularly in developing regions of Africa, which constrains the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in facilitating practical training. During the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions forced social work students to complete their practical work online. This shift raised ethical concerns and revealed technological limitations in delivering remote services (Banks et al., 2020). While the cost-effectiveness of online services was recognized, the technological infrastructure required to support such services was insufficient in many areas (Banks et al., 2020). Goldingay and Boddy (2017) also highlighted concerns about privacy breaches when

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students used online platforms for their practicum, further complicating the implementation of ICT in social work education.

In Kenya, efforts to enhance ICT capabilities through initiatives like Vision 2030 underscore the ongoing challenges African nations face in adopting digital solutions (Tarus, Gichoya, & Muumbo, 2015). Moreover, the Department of Social Development's (DSD) failure to provide adequate funding to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has compounded the issue. In South Africa, many NGOs have had to close due to funding shortages, limiting the availability of placement opportunities for social work students (Steyn & Mafata, 2024). These closures not only affect student placements but also hinder the ability of welfare organizations to support practical learning. Furthermore, the large rural population in South Africa, which exceeded 19 million in 2023, presents additional challenges, as many rural areas lack reliable internet infrastructure necessary for online practicums (The Rural Population of South Africa, 2020-2028).

Digital inequality is also a major barrier to the success of online practicums. Rural communities, in particular, face difficulties in accessing digital technologies and infrastructure. Aruleba and Jere (2022) noted that digital access is expanding at an uneven pace in rural areas, exacerbating the challenges that students in these regions face in completing online learning tasks. Moreover, a lack of digital literacy further compounds the problem, making it difficult for students to adapt to the new ICT-based requirements in social work education. This issue is not confined to South Africa but is prevalent across many developing nations.

Although the adoption of technology in social work education is frequently discussed, little is known about its practical implementation in rural African communities. Taylor (2017) suggested that some social workers are reluctant to adopt technology, viewing face-to-face interactions as fundamental to their profession. This resistance, coupled with the logistical challenges of implementing online practicums in welfare organizations that lack digital infrastructure, presents a significant barrier to higher learning institutions attempting to modernize their training methods.

The ongoing shift towards online education globally, driven in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, has forced many higher learning institutions to adopt virtual teaching methods. However, as Goldingay and Boddy (2016) observed, African nations still face significant obstacles in integrating these methods into social work practicums. The slow pace of technological development, compounded by inadequate infrastructure, affordability issues, and limited access to technology in rural and tribal areas, has left many African students struggling to meet the demands of online learning (Barakabitze et al., 2019). Valvi (2022) further highlighted that students from rural communities in South Africa face high data costs and unreliable connectivity, making it difficult for them to engage in online practical work. Moreover, Taylor (2017) argued that many social work students in South Africa lack the digital skills needed to effectively participate in ICT-based practicums, further hindering their ability to succeed in these programs.

In response to these challenges, this study explores the role of ICT in social work practicums, particularly in developing nations like South Africa. It seeks to assess the broader context of ICT use across the African continent and examine the policies and strategies implemented by higher learning institutions to address these obstacles. This analysis is crucial for understanding how technology can be leveraged to improve social work education while mitigating the barriers that hinder its adoption.

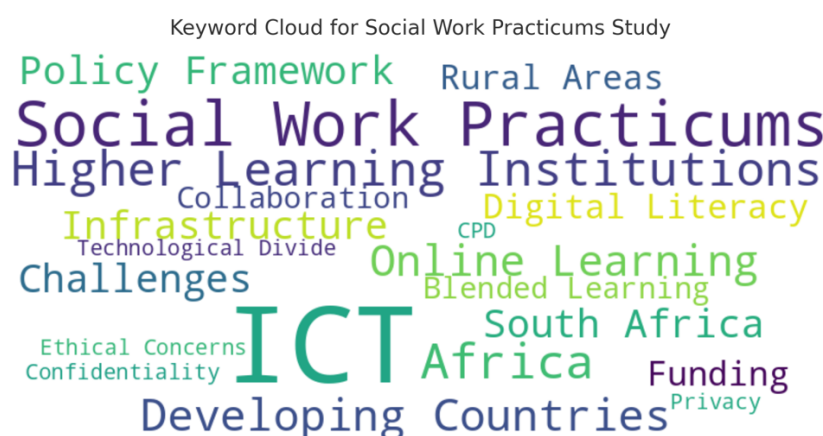


Figure 1: Visual Representation of Key Challenges and Themes

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Developing Infrastructural Effect on Social Work Practicums at Higher Learning Institutions in Africa

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is being increasingly used by social work practitioners globally, particularly in developed countries. In some developing countries, like South Africa, various ICT tools—such as telephones, cellphones, emails, and text messages—are utilized for counseling sessions. However, it can

be challenging for many developing countries to fully integrate ICT due to being in the early stages of technological development (Oyinlola, 2020). ICT opens up new opportunities for improving the delivery of welfare services, and its use in social work practice offers numerous advantages (Cwikel & Friedmann, 2020). According to Pelaez, Garcia, and Aguilar-Tablada Masso (2018), e-social work has emerged as a new frontier in the field, with several non-profit organizations employing ICT to provide social services. This approach has proven to save both time and resources. Mattson (2018) further asserts that ICT is essential in social work practice as it empowers clients, enhances therapeutic interaction, improves accessibility, reduces clients' vulnerability, and provides them with a flexible and convenient mode for counseling sessions. "In social work, the trend of using ICT is steadily increasing" (Chan & Holosko, 2016, p.89).

ICT has significantly transformed communication and information exchange for social workers, allowing them to become more accessible and to engage with clients more easily, thereby fostering positive relationships (Zhu & Anderson, 2021). Through ICT, social workers can reach underserved communities and connect with populations that have limited mobility. This expands the options for service delivery, allowing clients to feel more comfortable attending counseling sessions from their homes (Pascoc, 2023).

2.2. Practice Learning for Social Work Students

Practicum placements are critical for social work students as they prepare them for the demands of the workplace. All social work students must complete practical work as part of their education because they deal with the welfare of individuals and communities, and practical experience is crucial for their readiness for professional practice. South African universities are required to comply with the mandate of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), which stipulates that social work students must complete practical work during their studies. According to Landi, Corradini, and Limongelli (2023), students who participate in practical placements gain valuable knowledge, experience, and skills that are essential for their professional development. Practical work links theory to practice, promotes self-awareness, fosters self-criticism, and ultimately enhances students' learning in real-world settings (Kourgiantakis, Sewell, & Bogo, 2019). Domakin (2015) also emphasizes the significance of practicum placements, stating that "the central role of the placement in social work education is universally acknowledged and is a key feature of professional training in many countries" (p.1).

Social work students benefit greatly from exposure to practical work, which teaches them the practical application of the lessons learned in the classroom. This form of experiential learning is crucial for students to understand the practical realities of their field (Kourgiantakis et al., 2020). Practical placements allow students to learn from qualified social workers who supervise them, reducing the risk of errors in their future practice and preparing them for the challenges they will face as professionals (Tham & Lynch, 2014). This hands-on experience is essential for the development of professional skills and the overall competence of social work students.

2.3. Strategies for Enhancing ICT Use in Higher Learning Institutions in Developing African Countries

Numerous challenges face higher learning institutions across the African continent, particularly regarding the use of ICT in education. However, several strategies can be implemented to improve ICT integration in these regions. Padayachee (2017) points out that South Africa has not made significant progress in utilizing ICT in higher learning institutions, which is concerning given the critical role ICT plays in bridging the gap between theory and practice. For instance, many social work students in South Africa still encounter problems with technology during their practicums. According to Tchamy, Erreygers, and Cassimon (2019), strategies that focus on reducing the gap between rich and poor students can help address disparities in ICT access and use. Wealthier individuals often have greater access to and more extensive use of ICT, while students from less privileged backgrounds face significant challenges.

To enhance the quality of social work practicums, it is crucial to improve ICT use in African higher learning institutions. Training on soft skills for both students and lecturers before they begin their studies should be prioritized, as this will help ensure a better understanding of ICT and facilitate teaching and learning (Macquail & Salleh, 2021). Higher learning institutions and the Department of Social Development in South Africa should prioritize ICT training for all social work students, particularly in their first year of study.

2.4. South Africa's Social Work Fields of Practice

There are various fields of practice within the social work profession in South Africa. Social work students are required to complete their practicum in organizations that align with their individual interests and areas of expertise. Common placement settings include government departments, such as the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, and the Department of Education, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Child Welfare South Africa, the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DEAFSA), and old-age homes (Mathibela & Shirindi, 2013). Kirst-Ashman (2013) categorizes social work practice areas into several groups: services for children and families, services for older adults, services for persons with disabilities, health care services, mental health services, substance abuse services, school-based services, and services within the criminal justice system.

All of these formal and non-governmental organizations play a crucial role by allowing students to work alongside experienced social workers, enabling them to share knowledge and skills. This exposure is essential for

preparing social work students for the realities of the profession before they receive their qualifications, ensuring they are equipped to provide high-quality services once they become professionals.

2.5. Conceptual frameworks

2.5.1. Constructivism Theory

Constructivism theory and Kolb's Experiential Learning Model will be adopted in this study, as they are deemed appropriate. Constructivism theory emphasizes that learning occurs when students apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations, engaging in an active process of making sense of their experiences. The purpose of constructivism is to encourage students to take a practical approach to learning and to share their work (Akpan, Igwe, Blessing, Mpamah & Okoro, 2020). As part of their social work practicum, students are required to apply the theory they have studied to real-world situations in different welfare organizations. According to Brau (2020), constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes active reflection as the best way to learn. This study highlights the importance of social work students actively participating in their practical work to accelerate their professional development. "Constructivism equates learning with meaning that is created via experience" (Miller, 2019:2). The South African Council for Social Service Professions mandates that social work students complete practical work before employment, as without experience, they will not be equipped to handle real-life client issues in a practicing setting.

The basic tenet of constructivism is that students acquire knowledge and construct new information through practical experience (Yoders, 2014). In this study, social work students learn through practical experience in various ways, whether in face-to-face settings or through the use of ICT in the field of social work.

2.5.2. Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning

Under Kolb's theory of experiential learning, students demonstrate their professional competence by applying theory to practice (Roland, 2017). Kolb suggests that students will gain practical experience through their academic courses and cooperative education projects. Additionally, "students will be asked to complete an assignment that is designed to heighten their observation while on the job and to reflect upon these experiences" (Eames & Cates, 2011:45). In his study, Morris (2020) asserts that Kolb's theory emphasizes the need for experiential learning to fully understand the theory they have learned. He further notes that in professions like social work, students must complete practical training before becoming certified social workers. Social workers, for example, help people from all walks of life through individual, group, family, and community work. Therefore, they must practice and prepare before employment, which improves the quality of the work they will provide to service users and ensures that they adhere to social work practice requirements and follow the ethical standards set by the SACSSP. This theory serves as a reminder of the value of experiential learning in their field (Morris, 2020).

In addition, Kolb (2015) argues that many educational institutions provide learning activities like fieldwork. As a result, several higher learning institutions in South Africa provide social work students with hands-on experience or practical work. These programs are required and overseen by the SACSSP, and higher learning institutions must comply with these regulations to maintain their accreditation. "Students' practical work is regarded as an educational technique" (Kolb, 2015: xviii).

3. Material and Methods

This systematic review was designed following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, ensuring a comprehensive and structured approach to synthesizing existing literature. A systematic review is defined as "a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the studies included in the review" (Swartz, 2011, p.1). This approach was employed to address the research question, focusing on the use of ICT in social work practicums within developing countries' higher learning institutions. By using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, the researcher identified and synthesized findings from relevant studies (Selcuk, 2019). The primary aim of adhering to the PRISMA guidelines was to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability throughout the review process (Swartz, 2011). In this study, the researcher followed the updated PRISMA guidelines to ensure accuracy in identifying research gaps and challenges, which will aid in informing future strategies for overcoming these challenges in social work practicums (Page et al., 2021).

3.1. Planning Phase

A comprehensive search of international academic literature was conducted across four major electronic databases: ResearchGate, Scopus, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected based on their robust academic reputations and the vast availability of peer-reviewed studies they offer. The search was completed on 23 July 2024, ensuring that the most recent and relevant studies were included in the review.

The search strategy involved the use of specific key phrases and search terms relevant to the research topic, including:

- Higher learning institutions in Africa
- Challenges facing higher learning institutions in Africa

- Use of technology in higher learning institutions
- Development, introduction, and usage of technology in developing countries
- Online social work practicums
- Evolution of social work in developing countries
- Online learning in African developing countries
- Challenges faced by social work students in developing countries
- Social work students' practical work

These terms were systematically applied to each of the databases, generating a broad array of literature to evaluate.

3.2. Scholarly Document Selection Phase

The document selection phase was critical for narrowing down the literature to those studies that provided the most pertinent insights. The process consisted of three key steps: the initial database search, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, and selecting studies relevant to the research objectives. The researcher retrieved 1,700 studies through the specified search terms from the databases, which included journal articles, book chapters, and reports from seminars and workshops related to social work.

Following a rigorous validation process, the number of studies was narrowed to 320 peer-reviewed publications. This phase involved screening for duplicate articles, which reduced the total number to 65 relevant studies for further analysis.

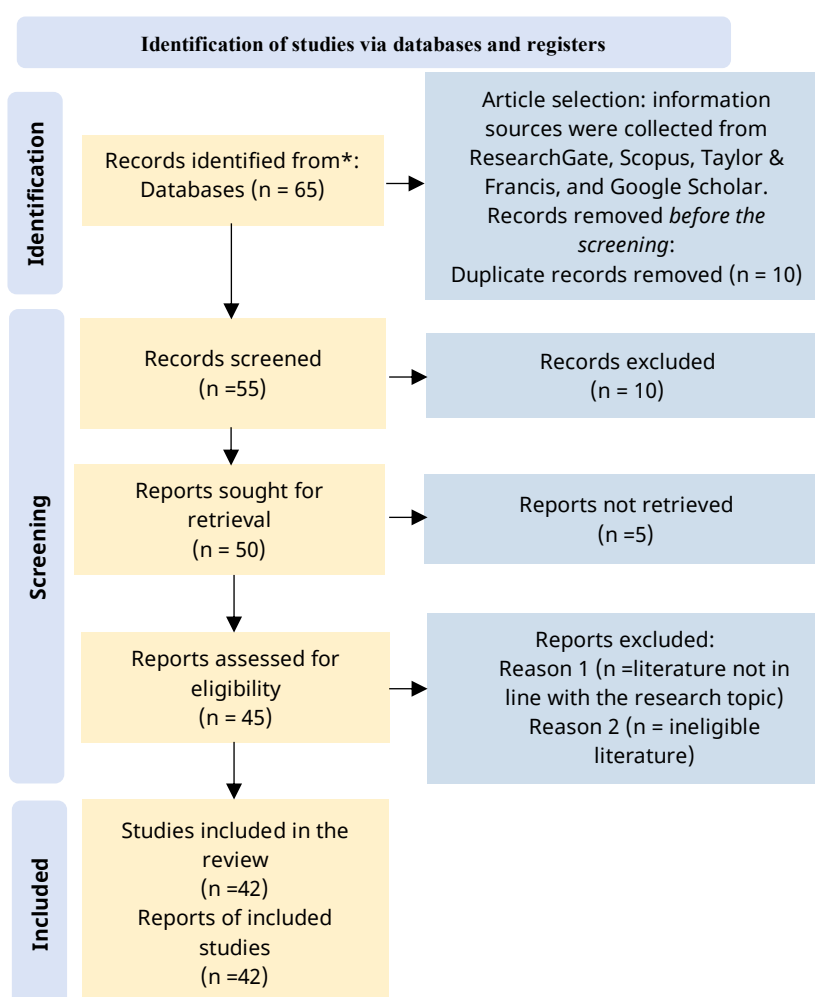


Figure 2: A systematic review PRISMA flow chart of the search and screening process

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and focus of the selected journal articles, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the document selection phase. The inclusion criteria required that studies directly address the challenges faced by higher learning institutions in developing countries when implementing online social work practicums. Additionally, the articles selected for review needed to be published between 2013 and 2024 to reflect recent technological advancements in online learning. Only studies written in English and those that offered global perspectives on the research variables—such as social work education, practical work, and the integration of technology—were considered. Conversely, articles were excluded if they did not address the challenges faced by social work students during practical work or were published before 2013, as these older studies might not

adequately reflect the current state of online learning technologies. Moreover, publications that were not written in English or did not cover the core variables related to the research focus were omitted from the review to ensure alignment with the study's objectives.

3.4. Selecting Relevant Studies

The researcher employed non-participatory methods, as this review was based entirely on the analysis of existing literature rather than new empirical data collection. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the researcher identified 65 articles. Ten duplicates were excluded, leaving a total of 55 records for further analysis. Of these, 50 articles were successfully retrieved for full-text review, while 5 articles could not be accessed. After assessing these studies for eligibility, 45 articles were included in the final review, with 42 meeting all the inclusion criteria.

3.5. Systematic Literature Review

This systematic review provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by higher learning institutions in developing countries, particularly in relation to the integration of online practicums for social work students. The methodical search and analysis of the literature revealed several key barriers to effective implementation. These include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to digital resources, financial constraints, and the specific challenges social work students encounter when engaging in online practical training. By synthesizing these findings, the review offers critical insights that can inform the development of policies, educational strategies, and future research aimed at enhancing the integration of online learning in social work programs across developing regions.

The current study includes forty-two peer-reviewed academic publications from different databases. The table below shows the entire search process that the researcher conducted.

Table 1: Synopsis of the journal articles that were used in the study.

Author(s)/ year and country of publication	Scholarly document	Methods	Theoretical framework(s)
Oyinlola, (2020); South Africa	Journal article	Content analysis	N/A
Cwikel & Friedmann, (2020); Israel	Journal article	Statistical procedure, questionnaire	Crisis intervention
Pelaez, Garcia & Aguilar-Tablada	Journal article	Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, case studies, meta-analysis	N/A
Masso (2018); United Kingdom	Dissertation	Qualitative, In-depth interviews, Semi-structured interviews	Applying feminist theory, routine activity theory
Mattson (2018); Arizon			N/A
Chan & Holosko, (2016); United States	Journal article	Content analysis	Innovation
Zhu & Anderson, (2021); Norway	Journal article	Semi-Structured Interviews, focus group interviews, participatory observation, Data management systems	
Pascoe, (2023); United Kingdom	Journal article	Semi-structured interviews, focus group	N/A
Landi, Corradini, & Limongelli, (2023); United Kingdom	Journal article	Quantitative, questionnaire, closed-questions, surveys, data analysis	N/A
Kourgiantakis, Sewell & Bogo, (2019); Canada	Journal article	Qualitative, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis	N/A
Domakin (2015); United Kingdom	Journal article	Qualitative, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus group	N/A
Kourgiantakis, Sewell, Hu, Logan & Bogo (2020); Canada	Journal article	Content analysis	Kolb's experiential learning theory, holistic competence, adult learning theories
Ferguson, (2018); United Kingdom	Journal article	Qualitative, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews	N/A
Tham & Lynch, (2014); United Kingdom	Journal article	Qualitative, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews	N/A
Kirst-Ashman; (2013)	Book	Content analysis, critical thinking perspectives	Empowerment approach
Padayachee (2017); South Africa	Journal article	Qualitative, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, contextual tool, experiential tool, reflective dialogue tool	N/A
Tchamyou, Erreygers & Cassimon (2019); Belgium	Journal article	Content analysis	Intensive margin theory, liquidity constraints theory
Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabalen & Gaddis (2016);	Journal article	Content analysis	N/A

Source: By the Author

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several significant challenges faced by social work students in developing countries, particularly in Africa, during their online practicums. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education has proven to be a valuable tool for expanding educational access and reducing logistical barriers for students. However, the lack of infrastructural development in many African countries continues to impede the successful implementation of online practicums for social work students.

A key challenge highlighted in this study is the disparity in technological infrastructure between developed and developing countries. According to Tchamyou, Erreygers, and Cassimon (2019), the digital divide is more pronounced in regions where access to reliable internet and digital devices is limited. This digital inequality exacerbates the difficulties faced by students in rural areas, where network connectivity is often unreliable or completely absent (Aruleba & Jere, 2022). Consequently, social work students in these regions struggle to participate in online practicums, which hinders their educational progression and professional preparedness.

Furthermore, the lack of sufficient ICT training for both students and educators poses a significant barrier to the effective use of digital platforms for social work education. As Macqual and Salleh (2021) argue, without adequate training in digital literacy, students may struggle to engage with online learning tools, which limits the potential benefits of digital education. This aligns with findings from Padayachee (2017), who emphasizes that South Africa and other developing nations have not made substantial progress in integrating ICT into higher education curricula, particularly in fields such as social work, where practical experience is essential.

Additionally, the ethical concerns surrounding online practicums, particularly in relation to client confidentiality and the security of sensitive information, are critical issues that require attention. As noted by Banks et al. (2020), the move towards digital service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the risks associated with online platforms in professions where confidentiality is paramount. For social work students, these ethical concerns are particularly relevant, as they are often required to interact directly with clients during their practicums. Ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to handle these ethical dilemmas in a digital context is essential for maintaining the integrity of the social work profession (Goldingay & Boddy, 2017).

Moreover, the findings suggest that online practicums, while beneficial in some respects, may not adequately prepare students for the realities of face-to-face social work practice. Ferguson (2018) contends that social work is inherently a relational profession that relies on direct human interaction. While digital tools can enhance learning and provide students with valuable experience, they cannot fully replicate the complexities of in-person social work practice. This underscores the need for a blended approach that combines online and in-person practicums to ensure that students develop both the technical and interpersonal skills necessary for their future careers.

In response to these challenges, it is crucial that policymakers and educational institutions take proactive steps to address the barriers to online practicums in developing countries. As proposed by Valvi (2022), the development of national ICT policies that specifically address the needs of higher education is essential for fostering a more inclusive digital environment. In South Africa, for example, the development of targeted policies that support the integration of ICT into social work education could significantly enhance the quality of online practicums and ensure that students receive the practical training they need to succeed in the field.

The study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between higher learning institutions, welfare organizations, and ICT developers to ensure that online practicums are both effective and ethical. By working together, these stakeholders can develop solutions that address the infrastructural and ethical challenges of online practicums, while also ensuring that students in developing countries have access to the same quality of education as their peers in more developed regions.

5. Limitations of the Study

This research has limitations as it focuses solely on the challenges faced by social work students in higher learning institutions in developing countries, specifically in Africa, and does not consider other higher learning institutions in developed countries. The scope of the study is confined to higher learning institutions in Africa that conduct online practicums with their social work students. Furthermore, although the researchers utilized varied search terms in an effort to capture all relevant publications, only 42 peer-reviewed journal articles met the inclusion criteria. It is possible that other pertinent publications that were not available in the selected databases were overlooked. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights and raises awareness about the challenges faced by social work students during their practicum in higher education institutions in developing countries. Future research is encouraged to explore practical solutions that foster collaboration between higher learning institutions, policy developers, ICT developers, and welfare organizations to address these challenges.

6. Conclusions and Future Directions of the Study

This study examined the difficulties encountered by social work students completing their online practicums in higher learning institutions in developing countries, with a specific focus on Africa. The study highlights the benefits of online learning platforms, which allow students to learn from any location at any time, thereby reducing travel costs. As technology continues to advance globally and influence education, higher learning institutions face increasing pressure to communicate virtually with their students, including facilitating online practicums for social

work students. Some social welfare organizations lack the capacity and space to accommodate the growing number of students enrolling in social work programs, making online practicums a practical solution for accommodating these students.

However, while many of the studies cited emphasize the advantages of online learning, there is little consideration for the specific challenges faced by higher learning institutions in less technologically developed African countries. This study suggests that existing policies and regulations, such as the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) guidelines and teaching policies in these countries, should be revised to address ethical concerns. Such revisions would allow social work students to complete their practicums online without undue difficulty, while also ensuring the privacy and ethical treatment of service users, particularly when students engage directly with clients during their practicums. Policymakers and educational experts should consider the challenges faced by higher learning institutions when conducting online social work practicums and develop practical solutions to overcome them.

As a result, the following recommendations are proposed:

- South Africa currently lacks a national policy framework addressing the role of ICT in higher education. It is recommended that a policy specifically addressing the use of ICT in higher learning institutions be developed.
- African countries, particularly South Africa, should focus on developing new technologies to support online practicums.
- The South African Council for Social Service Professions' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy for social workers and social auxiliary workers should be updated to include ICT as a component of social work CPD points.

Additionally, the Department of Basic Education's RSA white paper on e-learning does not explicitly specify the types of technology that should be integrated into the curriculum. This policy needs to be revised to ensure that higher learning institutions in South Africa can implement technologies that effectively support students, particularly when they are using ICT for their practical work.

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