QUALITY AS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITIES

By

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This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the PhD in

Development Studies

In the

Centre for Development Support, Economic and Management Sciences Faculty

at the

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Date of submission: December 2016

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Acronyms

AfriQAN- African Quality Association Network

AAU- Association of African universities

AU- Africa University

ANR- Agriculture and Natural Resources

BU- Baobab University

BUSE- Bindura University of Science Education

Capabilities Approach- CA

CU- Catholic University

CUT- Chinoyi University of Technology

FANR- Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources

FHSS- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

FST- Faculty of Science and Technology

FSS- Faculty of Social Sciences

HE- higher education

HEI's- Higher education institutions

HEQAC- Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee

HIT- Harare Institute of Technology

ICT- Information and Communications Technology

INQAAHE- International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

LSU- Lupane State University

MBK- Minimum Body of Knowledge

MSU- Midlands State University

MU- Msasa University

NR- Natural Resources

NUST- National University of Science and Technology

PVC- Pro-Vice Chancellor

QA- quality assurance

QAA- quality assurance agency

QE- quality enhancement

RCU- Reformed Church University

STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

SU- Solusi University

T & L- Teaching and learning

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

UZ- University of Zimbabwe

VC- vice chancellor

WRL- work related learning

ZANU PF- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZEGU- Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University

Zim Asset- Zimbabwe Agenda for sustainable socio-economic transformation

ZIMCHE- Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education
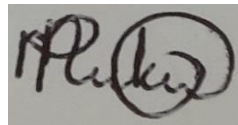
ZOU- Zimbabwe Open University

Declaration

I, Patience Mukwambo declare the following:

1. The Doctoral Degree research thesis that I herewith submit for the Doctoral Degree qualification: Philosophiae Doctor in Development Studies at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not, in part or in its entirety, submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education or another faculty at this university.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The study contributes to work in conceptualising quality in higher education teaching and learning. Most studies focusing on quality have been from a human capital standpoint, with little examination of quality from a human development perspective, and even less focusing on the Zimbabwean context. This analytical focus on human development through the capabilities approach therefore diverges from the current emphasis on human capital. The thesis examines factors influencing the definition and conceptualisation of quality of teaching and learning in a developing country context, highlighting gaps that a human development perspective can add. Assuming that their presence are indicative of quality, I use two ideal-theoretical human development indicators namely, critical being and the capability for work. These I argue, are aspirational capabilities in the Zimbabwean context and important in higher education because of their fostering of public-good graduates concerned with human wellbeing beyond the instrumental value of education. Data for this study was collected in three phases through policy document review, observations and in-depth interviews with purposively sampled participants. Phase one comprised document review and three interviews with participants from Zimbabwe's higher education quality assurance body, Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Phase two involved telephone interviews with quality assurance representatives from eight universities. Phase three was an in-depth examination of two case studies through interviews with the university representative, two deans, four lecturers and two focus group discussions with students from each "best case" department as identified by the university representative. Data was analysed thematically. Findings from the study highlight the complex interactions of contextual factors and national policy which inform and affect practice. Overall, and understandably considering the socio-political and economic climate, Zimbabwean higher education is largely influenced by human capital concerns, although there are instances of concern with human development. There is also a disjuncture between quality as policy and quality as practice with macro and meso policy makers conceptualising quality as an evaluative tool and lecturers largely interpreting it as the teaching and learning process. The results facilitate a discussion on the potential of a stronger human development influence on ideas of quality in different higher education contexts. While critical being stood as an indicator for quality, due to the prevailing socio-political economy in Zimbabwe, there was a need to revise the capability for work. Providing a global Southern interpretation of quality, the thesis argues that the conceptualisation and operationalization of quality needs to be broadened to foster human development in order to fully appreciate the role of higher education in development.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie dra by tot die konseptualisering van kwaliteit in hoër onderwys onderrig en leer. Meeste studies wat op kwaliteit fokus is van 'n menslike kapitaal perspektief, met weinige ondersoek van kwaliteit vanaf 'n menslike ontwikkelingsperspektief – en selfs minder wat fokus op die Zimbabwiese konteks. Hierdie analitiese fokus op menslike ontwikkeling deur die vermoënsbenadering wyk dus af van die huidige klem op menslike kapitaal. Die tesis ondersoek faktore wat die definisie en konseptualisering van die kwaliteit van onderrig en leer in 'n ontwikkelende land konteks beïnvloed en beklemtoon die leemtes waar 'n menslike ontwikkelingsperspektief kan bydra. Deur aan te neem dat hul aanwesigheid gelykstaande is aan kwaliteit, gebruik ek twee ideaal-teoretiese menslike ontwikkelingsindikators, naamlik kritiese wese en die vermoë vir werk. Ek voer aan dat hierdie twee vermoëns aspirerende vermoëns in die Zimbabwiese konteks, asook in hoër onderwys moet wees as gevolg van hul bevordering van gegradueerdes wie menslike welstand belangrik ag benewens die instrumentele waarde van opvoeding. Data vir hierdie studie is ingesamel in drie fases deur beleid hersiening, observasies en in-diepte onderhoude met doelgerigte steekproefselektering. Fase een het bestaan uit hersiening van dokumente en drie onderhoude met deelnemers van Zimbabwe se hoër onderwys kwaliteitsversekeringsliggaam, die Zimbabwiese Raad vir Hoër Onderwys. Fase twee het bestaan uit telefoniese onderhoude met kwaliteitsversekeringsverteenwoordigers van agt universiteite. Fase drie het 'n in-diepte ondersoek van twee universiteite as gevallestudies behels deur onderhoude met 'n universiteitsverteenwoordiger, twee dekane en vier dosente, asook fokus groepe met studente van twee 'beste geval' departemente van elk van die universiteite uit te voer. Data is volgens tema geanaliseer. Die bevindinge skep lig op die komplekse interaksies tussen konversie faktore en beleide wat die praktyk inlig en beïnvloed. Oor die algemeen, en verstaanbaar in lig van die sosio-politiese en ekonomiese klimaat, word Zimbabwiese hoër onderwys grootliks deur menslike kapitaal besorgdhede beïnvloed, alhoewel daar sekere gevalle van besorgdheid oor menslike ontwikkeling voorkom. Daar is ook 'n skeiding tussen kwaliteit as beleid en kwaliteit as praktyk, met makro- en mesovlak beleidmakers wat kwaliteit konseptualiseer as 'n evalueringsmeganisme en dosente wat kwaliteit interpreteer deur die onderrig en leer proses. Die resultate fasiliteer 'n gesprek oor die potensiaal van 'n sterker menslike ontwikkelingsinvloed op idees van kwaliteit in verskillende hoër onderwys kontekste. Terwyl

kritiese wese as 'n indikator vir kwaliteit bevestig is, was dit nodig om die vermoë vir werk te hersien as gevolg van die heersende sosio-politiese ekonomie in Zimbabwe. Deur 'n globale Suid interpretasie van kwaliteit voer hierdie tesis aan dat die konseptualisering en operasionalisering van kwaliteit verbreed moet word om 'n menslike ontwikkelingsperspektief in ag te neem en sodoende ag te gee aan die rol van hoër onderwys in ontwikkeling.

Chapter one

Introduction, background and context

1.0 Introduction

Determining what constitutes quality, especially of higher education (HE) is a contentious endeavour and means different things to different people in different contexts. There are diverse understandings and varying expectations of HE among stakeholders who include employers, government, academics, students and their families. Notions of quality are intricately linked to the role universities play in the social, economic and political development of individuals and societies. Walker's (2002: 44) statement that there are "competing discourses [that] differ fundamentally regarding the nature and purpose of higher education" offers a starting point in my understanding of what constitutes quality and how it should be operationalised. Apple's (2004) regard for education as a political project underlines the argument that it is not value free; one first has to identify what quality education looks like; that is, what are students supposed to learn and for what purpose? This is then followed by a mapping out of how the identified knowledge and values can be communicated to students.

Generally, the values identified by scholars, quality assurance agency(ies) (QAA) and other stakeholders as quality are constituted differently. On one hand quality is measured by knowledge creation, resources and outcomes such as graduate employability and versatility. These are quantitative indicators aimed at human capital creation and ensuring technical and efficient use of resources thus favourably positioning universities on the global market. On the other hand, in addition to knowledge creation, quality can be understood in terms of non-measurable qualitative values such as wellbeing, participation, critical thinking and sustainability with the outcome being human development. The second way of conceptualising quality is more inclusive with a larger informational basis and human capital being the means rather than the end of development. Determining what constitutes quality is therefore based on what one considers to be the purpose of HE and the values that students ought to learn. The

current emphasis on human capital development situates universities as key players in knowledge creation and skills development which is a narrowly functional perspective. I argue that conceptualising quality as human development means acknowledging HEI's ethical role as social institutions which ought to develop societies beyond economic development. This assigns a normative value to HE which then becomes an ethical project aimed at fostering economic, social and political development by foregrounding knowledge creation for the benefit of humanity. It emphasises values such as critical thinking, democracy, diversity and wellbeing.

It is through the teaching and learning (T & L) process that knowledge and values considered important are nurtured with the aim of realising valued outcomes. This brings T & L to the fore when discussing quality. While inputs such as resources and their efficient use are important prerequisites for providing quality learning, these are not synonymous with quality. A human capital approach assumes that providing quality inputs will result in quality outputs. Rather, the process through which these inputs are converted into valued outcomes is the centrepiece of quality. Referred to as the "black box" of HE where inputs such as pupils, standards and resources are put in and outputs such as competent and knowledgeable students are expected (Black and Wiliam, 1998), T & L is mostly side-lined when conceptualising quality because of its qualitative nature and difficulty in measurement. However, rather than being a deterrent, this ought to be the reason for its inclusion because it largely determines the kind of graduates produced. Based on the assumption that "the ethical duty of universities is to question truth claims, to seek explanations, to find good understandings, and not to propound one or another doctrine without question" (Frost, University World News, 2016), such learning has to be through pedagogies which involve students in knowledge creation.

As a result of the centrality of the learning process in nurturing well-rounded citizens, this thesis examines how quality T & L is conceptualised and operationalised in Zimbabwean HE and offers a human development perspective of how this process might look. This chapter provides an overview of the Zimbabwean context and traces the development of the country's HE to enable an understanding of the factors influencing the conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality, especially of T & L. Overall, the thesis argues for a human development informed view of quality rather than one emphasising human capital. Instead of emphasising a skills and employability based notion of quality, I argue for values fostering human development in addition to skills and employability.

1.1 Aim of the study and research questions

The study aims to evaluate the quality of T & L in Zimbabwean universities through the lens of human development and the capabilities approach (CA), situated within international debates on quality.

From the literature, I developed the following questions to guide my study:

1. How do conceptualisations of quality in teaching and learning influence policy and practice in universities?
2. How does the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) conceptualise and enforce teaching quality in various universities and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?
3. How do individual universities and two particular case studies understand and operationalise teaching quality and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?
4. How can human development contribute to conceptualising and operationalising quality in teaching and learning in higher education?

A qualitative research design informed data collection at macro, meso and micro levels to answer the research questions. The data collection methods used were document review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD's) and observations. The use of different data collection methods with various stakeholders such as representatives from the national QAA, ZIMCHE, university policymakers, deans, lecturers and students from two case study universities was an attempt to improve the study's validity and rigour. The research questions enabled an examination of perceptions and practices of quality in Zimbabwean HE which facilitated an assessment of the factors influencing its conceptualisation and operationalization. This informed the thesis' argument for a conception of quality based on human development as opposed to the more dominant human capital approach. Using the CA which is a normative framework to evaluate human development and wellbeing, I proposed two ideal-theoretical indicators as a proxy for quality, namely Barnett's (1997) critical being and Bonvin's (2012) capability for work. While these ideal-theoretical indicators were pre-determined, they provided a starting point and substantive basis to choose capabilities relevant to quality and were allowed to "speak back" in dialogue with the empirical findings.

1.2 The establishment and expansion of university education in Zimbabwe

This section highlights the changes following the transition from the colonial to post-independence period and their impact on the quality of HE. While the country's socio-economic and political development may not be directly related to the quality of T & L, their effect on HE impacts on its quality. Examining the development of HE in Zimbabwe will establish the context within which quality assurance (QA) is practised, enabling an assessment of the conditions constraining or improving quality.

The first university in Rhodesia (colonial Zimbabwe) was established in 1955. This was the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which was under the management and accreditation of the University of London. Its link with the University of London was advantageous in attracting high calibre staff, "the awarding of degree certificates of high academic quality equal to those of British universities" and access to British technical assistance and funding (Dande and Mujere, 2015: 11- 12). Unlike South African universities which required the lesser matriculation entry level, the university college's entry qualifications were Advanced level. This resulted in the university college awarding "the top most internationally recognised first degrees in Southern Africa" (Ibid). Opening with only 54 students, the university college initially comprised the faculties of Arts and Science and also offered one year programmes for a certificate in education. A Medical School affiliated to the University of Birmingham was opened in 1963 (University of Zimbabwe, 2006). Because of its association with the University of London, the university college had its curriculum and qualifications modelled on British standards. The presumed high quality of the University of London education fostered the assumption that the University College also provided quality education, even after the University of London stopped accrediting its degrees.

Following Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965[1], Britain reduced its level of cooperation with the colony including the University College of Rhodesia. It ultimately severed all ties to the College in 1970, effectively cutting funding to the institution. The Rhodesian government granted the College full university status on 1 January 1971, renaming it the University of Rhodesia, governed by a Council and a Senate. By then, the institution

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[1] Under white minority rule, colonial Zimbabwe unilaterally declared independence from British rule thereby bringing the university college under its control.

comprised the faculties of Arts, Science and Social Studies and the Faculty of Engineering being added in 1974 (University of Zimbabwe, 2006).

At independence in 1980, the University of Rhodesia became the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and its enrolment increased to 2 240 students (University of Zimbabwe, 2006). Since its establishment, the institution had predominantly enrolled white students whilst most black students accessed HE abroad or in other African countries such as South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria. The UZ remained the only university in Zimbabwe until 1991 when a second university was established. Under the policy of "Growth with equity" (1981), the new Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government increased access to and equity in social services such as education and health. The expansion of basic and secondary education through the building of new schools, government subsidies and training of new teachers consequently increased demand for access to HE, with which the UZ, as the only university, failed to cope, despite expansion in both enrolment and the degrees offered. Zindi (1998: 33) observes that, "the large numbers of secondary school graduates became the tail that began to wag the dog of university enrolment". At this point, issues of quality were peripheral as granting fair access to previously marginalised Africans was considered more important by the government.

The new independence government was very involved in the running of the university. The passing of the 1982 University of Zimbabwe Act and its subsequent amendments effectively increased the state's direct control of HE, causing "disquiet among many academics" (Cheater, 1991: 190). The Act became the model for the running of the UZ and other universities established thereafter. This Act resulted in the evolution of the Zimbabwe public university system from a state supervised to a state controlled one:

> Unlike a state-controlled university, which operates like a government department with regard to policy, appointments, remuneration and other matters, a state-supervised university is a relatively autonomous institution in which only general matters of policy are directed by government (Mlambo, 2005: 124).

The University of Zimbabwe Act, among other things, made the president, Robert Mugabe, the chancellor of all state universities and gave him power to appoint Vice Chancellors (VCs) in consultation with university councils and successive Ministers of Higher Education. The VC's became the "chief academic, administrative and disciplinary officer[s] of the Universit[ies]" while Pro-Vice Chancellors (PVC's) were appointed by university councils with the Minister's

approval. The UZ council, for example, comprises 44 members (the chancellor, the VC, the PVC's, 16 ministerial appointees, 10 ministerial appointees from various state organisations, three appointees by the VC, nine academics from the university, one academic appointed by the council and the president of the student union (The University of Zimbabwe Act, 2002). These stipulations secured political control of the university councils.

The 1990 amendment to the University of Zimbabwe Act and the exclusion of the university community from this process resulted in student and lecturer protests at the UZ. The VC, Walter Kamba, resigned citing, "academic and political intolerance, demise of legitimate debate and a threat to academic freedom and autonomy" (Cheater, 1991: 203). This amendment accorded the VC the authority to suspend, expel and even bar from campus any member(s) of staff and students, as well as dissolve the Student Union (Daimon, 2015: 121). Through this, the state secured control "over who it admits, what and how it teaches and examines them, and the standards of attainment to be applied" (Cheater, 1991: 193). The Act stifled dissenting voices of university students' and academics, some of whom were politically active. While quality was not explicitly stated, the Act implicitly defined the nature of the curriculum as well as the level of stakeholder (students and academics) participation in deciding what constitutes quality education.

Plans for a second university were initially discussed in 1982 by the UZ's Vice Chancellor's Committee of Inquiry into students' high failure rates and overcrowding in 1980 and 1981. The Committee was concerned that the pressure exerted on a single institution compromised the quality of the graduates. However, it was not until 1989 that the government appointed the Williams Commission to identify ways of addressing the country's need for university expansion. Based on the manpower requirements for economic growth and to cater for the increasing number of qualified school leavers, the Commission recommended the establishment of private universities and a second public university with a focus on science and technology (S & T) (Zindi, 1998: 34). The Williams Report (1989: 29) noted:

> Our first main concern is that the necessary expansion should not be at the expense of quality, and that the new institutions and programmes which we suggest Zimbabwe should now establish should be of a high standard, but we also regard it as crucial to ensure that in a proper enthusiasm for creating new structures and institutions, the authorities do not overlook the current needs of existing institutions or neglect to strengthen and consolidate what is already in place.

Despite the Report's recommendation that a second university be established in 1993 after adequate resources had been pooled, government sped up the process and established it in 1991 "even before buildings could be put up for it" (Zindi, 1998: 34).

There were merits and demerits to initial university expansion. Expansion was expected to foster social development, improve access to previously marginalised groups and bring about a more educated society. Local universities would also save the country foreign currency paid in the form of tuition fees to foreign universities, limit brain drain, eliminate the use of expatriate labour and effectively harness human resources for the country's development. Also, the government feared that the pool of qualified aspiring university entrants who failed to get into the UZ might be a source of political unrest (Mlambo, 2005). The major hindrance to university expansion was limited finances and its implications for the quality of education. In addition, university officials feared that expansion would provide access to students with lower entry qualifications thus compromising standards. It was feared that this would result in higher failure and dropout rates, while creating heavier work-loads for academics (Ibid: 36- 46). Despite these reservations, university expansion continued through forging partnerships with private providers, establishing new institutions and upgrading existing colleges.

The second university, the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) was established in 1991 followed by two private church based institutions in 1992 and 1994 respectively. By 2012, 77 percent of HE students were enrolled in public institutions, and the remaining 23 percent in private universities (SARUA, 2012: 118). At the time of writing there are 15 universities and plans to establish more. Of these, nine are public and six are private institutions, five of which are church based (See Appendix 1: Table 1). Despite the increased access to HE in Zimbabwe, there is still an unmet need as 55 percent of the 2011 university applicants met the admissions criteria but were not accepted (SARUA, 2012). The increase in the HE participation rate from two percent in 1982 (tunisia.opendataforafrica.org), to six percent in 2011 is still negligible and is low compared to a 2012 average of 76 percent in developed countries (ICEF Monitor, 2015), and even South Africa's 20 percent (DHET, 2015).

Because of the emphasis on increasing access, issues of quality were initially not prioritised. At first, the expansion of HE saw the establishment of public universities similar to the UZ, whose quality of education was still unquestioned. However, university expansion combined with the political-economic crisis discussed below resulted in increased concerns over quality.

1.3 Zimbabwe's political-economic crisis and declining state funding of university education

This section examines how Zimbabwe's deteriorating political economy affected HE and impacted on the provision of quality education. While university education in both public and private universities was initially state funded and subsidised respectively, over time, cost-sharing measures were implemented in public institutions while funding was withdrawn from private ones. Reduced government funding affected both access to HE as well as the quality of the education provided as institutions became under-resourced and academics underpaid.

The Zimbabwean government's initial efforts to improve access to social services were costly and unsustainable. The resultant financial crisis forced government to adopt the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) neo-liberal economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) between 1990 and 1995. Among other conditions, the state had to reduce spending on parastatals or privatise them. This was the first step towards reduced state subsidies in HE since independence in 1980 (Mlambo, 1997). To relive pressure on public finance, the government had to increase the contributions by students and their families. As Table 2 illustrates, at independence public university education was equally funded by a balanced system of grants and loans. However, over time, the grant funds lessened and by 1998 comprised only 20 percent of the student's costs while the loan amount had increased to 80 percent. In most cases, these loans were never repaid and the government's burden increased as more students were admitted to a growing number of HEI's.

Table 1.1: Government funding of universities and colleges (1954- 1998)

Year	Grant %	Loan %	Student funding Z$	Admin grant Z$	No. of universities	No. of colleges	University students	College students
1954	100	0			1	2	68	100
1980	50	50			1	10	2 240	2 829
1990	25	75	12 M	135.7 M	2	15	9 273	27 488
1995	25	75	132 M	440.8 M	4	30	9 826	29 307
1998	20	80	316 M	2000.3 M	4	30	10 000	35 000

Source: Ministry of Higher education and Technology (Nziramasanga Report, 1999: 482)

There was also the privatisation of catering and accommodation services at the UZ in 1998 to allow the university "to focus on its core business of teaching and researching, and to leave non-core issues such as catering to private players" (Dande and Mujere, 2015: 24). These changes triggered demonstrations by students stating that, "education cannot be privatized in Zimbabwe, a third world country, where over 70 percent of the population live(s) below the poverty datum line" (Ibid: 128). The demonstrations resulted in several closures, for example of the UZ from June 1998 to February 1999. These closures negatively affected the quality of learning as new undergraduate admissions were delayed and enrolled students had crash-programmes to enable them to complete their studies timeously (Ibid).

Although ESAP ended in 1995, subsequent economic policies failed to resuscitate the declining economic situation. While inflation levels were initially low, they rose during the post 2000 period, reaching hyperinflation stages in 2007 and peaking at 79.6 billion percent month-over-month inflation rate in November 2008 (http://cato.org/zimbabwe). Consequently, Zimbabwe's national currency was demonetised in early 2009. The ZANU PF government's increasingly authoritarian nature[2] resulted in a political crisis that led to the withdrawal of European Union donors from several projects in universities. Zimbabwe's suspension in 2002 and its subsequent withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 2003 resulted in the loss of Commonwealth benefits to universities. Membership of the Commonwealth established links among universities through the Association of Commonwealth universities, facilitated student and academic mobility, the flow of ideas, as well as scholarships. This affected learning at HEI's as funds for research, resources and salaries increasingly became scarce.

Because of the prohibitive fees and worsening economic challenges, the government introduced a 100 percent state-backed loan system for both private and public university students between 2002 and 2006 (Munanga and Matindike, 2013). Again, most of these loans were never repaid because of inflation, unemployment and lack of political will to recover them. The system was subsequently abandoned, and the Cadetship Support Scheme (CSS)[3] introduced. The CSS was meant to improve poor students' access to HE and replace the skilled manpower lost to high emigration levels. Despite increases in enrolment, the scheme has

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[2] Human Rights Watch, Zimbabwe World Report 2010. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2010/country-chapters/zimbabwe

[3] Under the scheme, the government paid for most of the tuition cost while students paid the remainder and also met their own welfare costs. After graduating, the students were to be bonded for a period equivalent to the time they received cadetship funds. If working outside Zimbabwe, they had to remit a third of their salary for the same period.

largely benefitted middle class students, perpetuating academic and economic exclusion (Munanga and Matindike, 2013). However, the State's failure to follow up on loan repayments (Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Higher education, Science and Technology, 2010) resulted in its inability to continue funding the Scheme and by May 2011 the State owed 64 million US dollars in outstanding fees to various HEI's (Financial Gazette, 2013) resulting in cadetship students being denied access to lectures and graduation.

In universities, the economic crisis manifested through student, academic and non-academic staff strikes, closure of the public universities, resource shortages, administrative scandals, emigration of academics, institutions inability to attract experienced lecturers and staff and fiscal pressure, even while enrolment increased. This resulted in low per student expenditure and welfare, reduced quality of teaching, lack of in-service training for university staff and limited capacity for academic research (Kariwo, 2007; Council for Assisting Refugee Academics [CARA], 2010; Institute Of Migration [IOM], 2010; Southern African Regional Universities Association [SARUA], 2010; Burke, 2010 and Chigodora, 2013). Since the majority of Zimbabwe's HEI's were established after 2000, coinciding with the economic crisis, they faced serious viability challenges (SARUA, 2010). Academic flight from Zimbabwe is illustrated by staff shortages in the UZ departments of Animal Science, Metallurgy and Clinical Pharmacology which required 20, 13 and 11 lecturers respectively, but had none. Computer Science, Veterinary Sciences, Psychiatry, Geo-informatics and Mining Engineering required 13, 13, 16, 10 and eight lecturers respectively, but had only one each (First Report of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education on the status of the UZ, 2010). University resources were increasingly strained as the crisis deepened. For example, at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) the computer to students' ratio was 1:50 while it was 1:25 at Midlands State University and the student to book ratio was 1:15 (Ibid).

The above developments perpetuated "the shift towards commodifying and commercialising public education …instead of public education as a social responsibility of the government" (Shizha, 2006: 66). As more universities were established under these difficult conditions, the quality of education was increasingly questioned. The next section focuses on government's attempts to address QA challenges through the creation of the ZIMCHE.

1.4 Higher education in Zimbabwe

As Table 1 (Appendix 1) shows, the 15 universities were established in different years placing them at different levels in terms of established traditions, student numbers and development. The universities' mandates were differentiated in order to avoid the duplication of qualifications. The mandates range from a specific focus on S & T (NUST, Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) and Harare Institute of Technology (HIT), the training of science teachers (Bindura University of Science and Education (BUSE), agriculture (Lupane State University (LSU) and culture and heritage studies (GZU). Others such as the UZ, MSU and the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) are comprehensive universities offering programmes across the disciplines. ZOU is the only open and distance learning institution. The six private universities provide a mixture of programmes in the Humanities, Social and Natural Sciences with the five church-run institutions also offering Theology. Most of the public universities such as NUST, ZOU, BUSE, CUT and GZU evolved from being university colleges of the UZ which oversaw the maintenance of quality standards. For its role, the UZ earned the name "the mother of most, if not all state universities in the country" (Dombo and Musindo, 2015: 238-250).

The major challenge for the universities is that of financial, infrastructural and human resources, resulting in several counteractive measures. To alleviate pressure on infrastructure, some universities have moved from the "traditional model of unitary structured public universities" (Dhliwayo, 2014: 322). They have introduced a dual mode of learning combining open distance learning programmes with the formal lecture mode, while others have established multi-campus systems[4]. For example, the Catholic University is based in Harare but has three additional campuses in the cities of Bulawayo, Chinhoyi and Mutare. Underfunding has resulted in cost-sharing measures such as the, "formation of university owned for-profit companies, co-ventures with proprietary non-university institutions, farming, petty trade on campus and admission of full fees paying students" (Nafukho, 2004: 22). Universities also implemented "concerted efforts to increase student enrolment by offering curricula across a range of disciplines in order to raise the funds necessary for cost-sharing" (SARUA, 2012: 36). This resulted in the dilution of universities' missions and the ZIMCHE urging institutions "to adhere to their initial mandates and not embark on frivolous programmes for the sake of making

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[4]A multi-campus university is an institution with three or more geographically spaced campuses, and the majority (60%) of their total student population is housed at the largest campus.

money" (Mbanje, 2015 Newsday). Because government regulates university fees, most public universities have increased income by enrolling full fee paying students in "parallel programmes" during the evenings, weekends and holidays and "block releases" and "visiting school programmes" run during weekends and school holidays. Targeting employed people, these programmes have limited government control and universities determine the costs, which are higher than those of conventional programmes. While all these endeavours have been financially beneficial to the institutions and some lecturers, no one has examined their impact on the quality of learning. Part of this will be discussed in chapter six.

With the growing number of HEI's came an emphasis on expanding S & T "to stimulate the generation of scientific and technological capabilities in all sectors of the economy, and thereby unleash the power of S & T for national development" (Shizha and Kariwo 2011: 9). However, these institutions have failed to stimulate development because of an adherence to Rostow's linear model of development[5] which has been ineffective in most developing countries (Ibid: 11). For Fredau-Kwarteng (2016), graduates' incapacity to resolve their countries developmental challenges is a result of the failure of the classic university model in addressing developing countries. In addition, Zimbabwe's shrinking formal economy and growing informal sector hampers universities from realising their potential in fostering economic development. Worsening unemployment,[6] especially of graduates, resulted in Labour exportation agreements with countries such as South Sudan, Botswana, and Namibia in June 2015. According to Godfrey Gandawa, the Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, graduate labour exportation will promote brain circulation and allow government to "recoup its investment in human capital" (http://allafrica.com/stories/201506220682.html). Gandawa also expressed government's intention to reduce enrolment in the humanities while increasing that of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to lessen unemployment. However, given high unemployment levels among both humanities and STEM graduates, cutting humanities enrolment will not alleviate the problem. Also, not all universities offer STEM programmes

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[5] The model assumes that all countries go through the five stages of development. There have been several criticisms to this linear system as many countries have, in various ways illustrated divergences to the model.
[6] Unemployment statistics range from 5- 95 percent depending on the definition of unemployment used. Sources such as the Zimbabwe's agency for national statistics, Zimstat and the International Labour Organisation cite lower unemployment figures based on the definition of "employment" adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 1982) which considers "all persons above a specific age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day… were in paid employment or self-employed". (http://laborsta.ilo.org/applv8/data/c2e.html). Those citing higher unemployment statistics do not consider those informally employed as employed.

and cutting enrolment in the humanities would prejudice these universities with regard to students and income. Overall, what matters is the quality of the teaching regardless of the subject under study.

At the time of writing, since July 2016, Zimbabweans have been demonstrating[7] against government corruption, late payment of civil servants' salaries, rising unemployment, and human rights violations. University and college graduates also constitute a distinct group among the demonstrators with the formation of the Zimbabwe Coalition for Unemployed Graduates (ZCFUG) and the #Thisgown campaign to protest against high graduate unemployment levels and poverty. In response, the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and technology development, Jonathan Moyo attributed graduate unemployment to graduates' lack of requisite skills needed by industry and commerce necessitating the need for curriculum review according to the country's economic expectations. He also emphasised the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects in the country's development (August 5, 2016, Local News, Bulawayo bureau). This is ironic given Zimbabwe's low level of industrial production and the closure of several companies[8]. The unprecedented involvement of graduates as a separate constituent of demonstrators illustrates their frustration with restrictive conditions limiting their employment despite their high qualifications.

Although seemingly unrelated to quality of T & L, accommodation, financing of HE, the socio-economic environment and general student welfare cannot be separated from T & L as they enable or constrain students to fully and freely participate in learning. While not explicitly stated, the idea of quality is invoked to ensure value for money as HEI's are increasingly accountable for public expenditure especially with growing participation levels and shrinking funding. There is a growing need to assure stakeholders that HEI's provide quality education. The focus on S & T has a dual purpose in relation to quality; while ensuring that HE is fit for the purpose of economic development by building the necessary human capital, it is also assuring value for money for the country, especially through labour exportation. It is within this context of political and economic challenges, public and private universities with different mandates, niche areas and learning modes that ZIMCHE was formulated to regulate quality.

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[7] Notable groups include #Thisflag movement and Tajamuka/Sesjikile ('we refuse and we have had enough').
[8] According to the Zimbabwe Independent newspaper, 4 610 companies were reportedly closed between 2011 and 2014 resulting in the loss of 55 443private sector jobs.

1.5 The development of Zimbabwe's quality assurance system

The formalisation of QA in Zimbabwean HE was not just a local initiative but was also due to following international and regional trends. Internationally, debates around quality began and gained momentum in countries such as the USA, Britain, Netherlands and France in the 1980's and 90's. In Africa, the first QAA was established in Kenya in 1985 and in Zimbabwe in 2006. Prior to this, in Zimbabwe, QA was one of the specifications included in the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Act passed in 1990 after the publication of the William's Report advising the cautious expansion of HE.

The 1990 NCHE Act empowered the Council to process applications for the establishment of private universities or university colleges, and make recommendations to the Minister of HE. The Minister would then advise the President. The NCHE also had to ensure the maintenance of "appropriate standards in regard to teaching and other deliverables of institutions of higher learning" and establishing similar student admission procedures for all universities (Nziramasanga Report, 1999: 474). Additionally, the Council was responsible for "standardising, recognition and equation of degrees and diplomas" and co-ordinating training at universities (Ibid: 474-5). The Chairperson of the Council was a presidential appointee and other Council members comprised university VC's, principals of university colleges and the chairman of the Research council of Zimbabwe as well as permanent secretaries selected by the HE Minister. Under the NCHE, both private and public universities would "determine, administer and carry out assessments of their programmes" and evaluate student performance through course work, projects and attachments for specific programmes. In teaching, quality was determined by peer, student and head of departments' assessment (Ibid: 505) and external examiners as well as second marking of examination scripts.

A notable Commission regarding HE was the 1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training or the Nziramasanga Commission. This highlighted shortcomings in the NCHE operations, paving the way for the establishment of ZIMCHE. The Nziramasanga Commission (1999: 1) was tasked to analyse:

> the relevance, quality and orientation of the education system given the rapidly changing socio-economic environment…and recommend strategies that relate the

education system to employment in the private and public sectors and that impart education for life and self-employment.

While it addressed basic and HE, this section focuses on the latter. The Nziramasanga Report (1999: 502) defined QA as "a worthwhile investment" and explained it as:

> the totality of actions and processes through which the quality of education is monitored, maintained and developed… The goals of education are to produce future citizens who are responsible, productive and conscious of their duties as citizens of the nation.

However, it did not specify the duties of citizens. The notion of citizenship is expanded in the mission of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. The Ministry is mandated to:

> provide an effective system for the production of patriotic and competent high level manpower through the provision and accreditation of higher and tertiary education programmes and institutions for sustainability and global competitiveness" (http://www.mhtestd.gov.zw/).

The focus on patriotic citizens and manpower emphasises the instrumental role of HE. In the Zimbabwean context, patriotic citizenship has strong political connotations and is narrowly understood as national identity and loyalty to the ruling ZANU PF. There are strong notions of othering of those with dissenting views. Much less emphasis has been placed on a multi-dimensional approach to social citizenship with "specific citizenship dimensions of deliberation, acknowledgment of heterogeneity, and agency goals and activities as core elements of being able to be and to do as citizens" (Walker and Loots, 2016: 48). Hence Namasasu (2013: 67) argues for schools to:

> correct their slanted emphasis on education which teaches citizens how to make a living not how to live…education that does not nurture students into socially and morally responsible citizens is fundamentally void, whatever the purported benefits are.

This would nurture students ethical responsibility for human development rather than a narrow and functionalist focus on economic development.

The Nziramasanga Commision detailled the NCHE's failure to execute its duties resulting in some graduates lacking the required skills and failing to get employment "commensurate with their disciplines and skills training", making them "irrelevant" to the Zimbabwean economy

(p. 512). The Commission proposed the introduction of practical learning, the alignment of HE programmes with national manpower needs and the involvement of industry as "potential employers who need to know the knowledge set and skills with which each graduate is equipped" (Ibid: 488). These standards would outline the knowledge and skills a graduate should acquire (Ibid: 498). Despite applauding government's efforts in improving access to HE, the Nziramasanga commission expressed concern over the duplication of programmes in the universities, portability of credits, the need to monitor the quality of education, graduate tracking and improved collaboration between universities. The Commission recommended the establishment of committees to carry out QA in universities, standards verification and the maintenance of a qualifications framework (Ibid: 496). Importantly, it noted that despite quality T & L and research being important yardsticks of a university's performance, the NCHE was not executing any of its duties. The NCHE's major challenge was under-funding. For instance, it was not allocated funding in the 2006 budget and was only given Z$50 million in the supplementary budget. Given the 2006 inflation rate of 1 281 percent (Pettinger, 2011. www.economicshelp.org), this amount was "inadequate if the Council [wa]s to effectively carry out its mandate" (Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Education, Sport and Culture, 2006: 6).

One prominent case that pushed quality to the fore was the closure of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) "after its degrees failed to meet the country's quality control standards" in 2004 (Gwabanayi, Sunday Mail, 9 0ctober 2011). For example, the Law degree was suspended after the Law Society of Zimbabwe and the Council for Legal Education refused to recognise it and agitated for the programme's suspension (Ibid). The students registered for this degree were transferred to the UZ Faculty of Law to restart the degree. The UZ Law faculty was very competitive and most students who had not qualified had enrolled at GZU. The enrolment of students from a "sub-standard law school" at the UZ resulted in the questioning of their ability and the kind of lawyers they would make. It also increased the number of first year UZ Law students to 400, a number far exceeding the faculty resources (Magaisa, 2004: www.theindependent.co.zw.). This incident underscored the need for more stringent measures to ensure quality in HEI's.

For the purpose of QA the NCHE "was revamped to play a more active role in the monitoring of quality" (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011: 125). The NCHE Act was replaced by the ZIMCHE Act in 2006 which established ZIMCHE as a statutory body to oversee issues on quality in HE

(GoZ, 2006). However, due to Zimbabwe's socio-economic environment, ZIMCHE only became operational in 2009. A closer look at the ZIMCHE Act, structures and policies reveals the adoption of several recommendations made by the Nziramasanga Report. ZIMCHE's objective is "to contribute towards the sustenance of environments conducive to learning thereby enhancing the quality of human capital produced in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher learning" (Garwe, 2014: 6). ZIMCHE's mandate is to:

> promote and co-ordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and to act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research institutions of higher education (ZIMCHE Act, 2006).

Figure 1.1 below shows the ZIMCHE structure. While all the branches work together to assure quality, this study focuses on the work of the directorates of Registration and Accreditation as well as Academic and institutional Audit and the Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (HEQAC). Quality in universities is assured through accreditation and audits carried out by these two directorates which report to the HEQAC. The HEQAC then gives recommendations to the ZIMCHE Council. The directorate of Registration and Accreditation approves the registration of new universities as well as programme and institutional endorsement while the directorate of Academic and Institutional Audit is responsible for institutional, staff and programme reviews.

ZIMCHE carries out similar activities in both private and public institutions. While the organisation determines QA standards, their implementation is regarded as the individual university responsibility. In carrying out its duties, ZIMCHE follows the legal confines of the ZIMCHE Act. According to the Act, QA is:

> a system whereby the courses, programmes and degrees offered by institutions are evaluated on a regular and objective basis, and to recommend standards for-
> (i)   the establishment, standardisation and accreditation of institutions of higher education including standards of the physical plant and equipment; and (ii) the preparation and amendment of university charters and statutes; and (iii) the development of curricula; and (iv) the standards of libraries; and (v) the safety standards of laboratories and workshops; and (vi) student transfer between programmes and institutions of higher education.

Figure 1.1: ZIMCHE structure
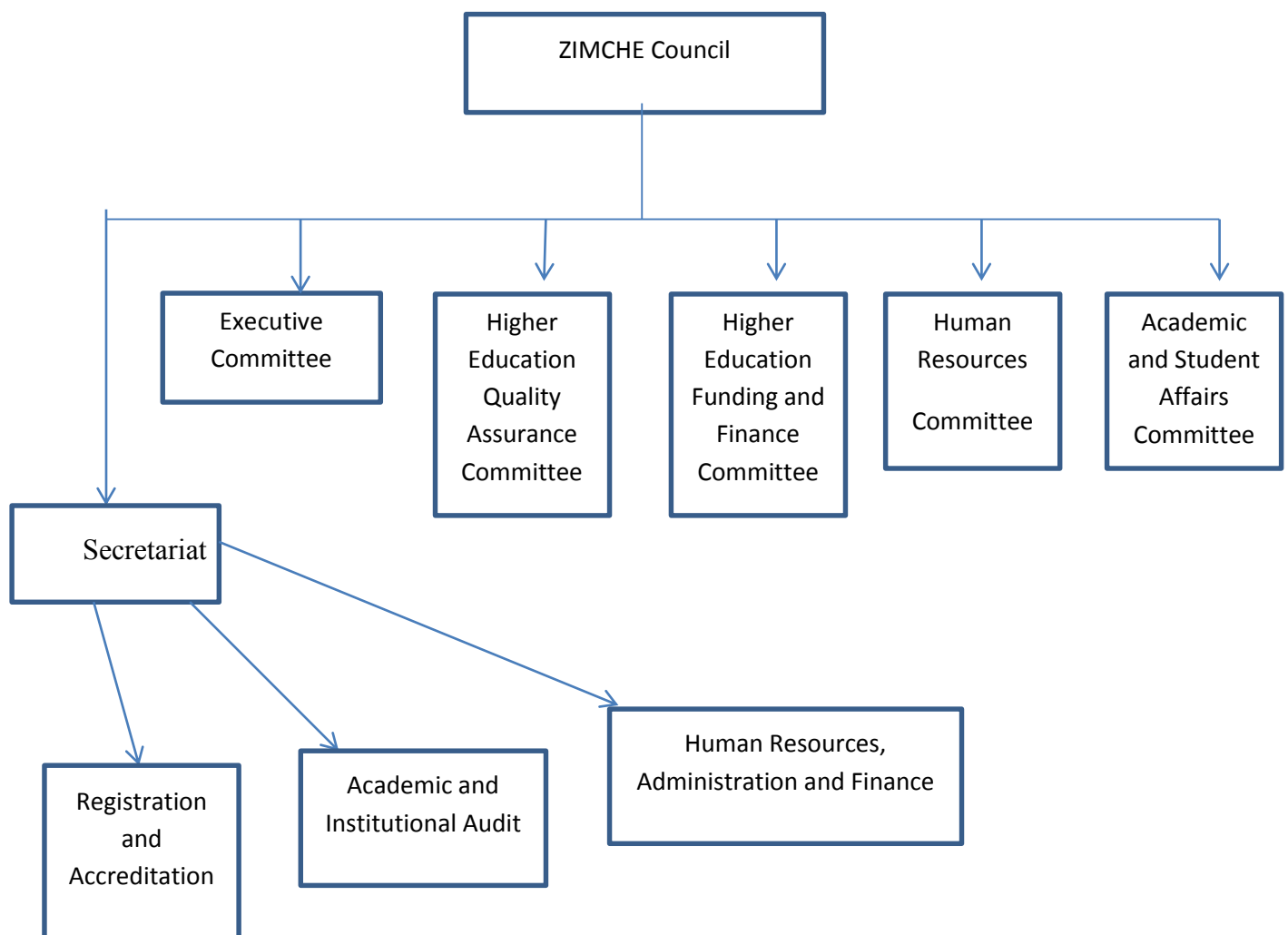
ZIMCHE's accreditation role involves both institutional and programme certification with the former as a prerequisite of the latter. Institutional accreditation ensures that universities meet "certain basic standards of structures, management and operation" (Assessment instrument for programme accreditation [ACCR 1B]). Such criteria include; institutional governance posts and procedures, physical structures, academic and non-academic staffing, and student admission progression and welfare. Programme accreditation assesses the inputs, processes and outputs of a programme. The ZIMCHE Act also stipulates that HEI's are expected to establish

internal QA processes and carry out internal evaluations prior to the external audits. Audits are meant to:

> promote public confidence that quality provision and standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced. Academic and institutional audits are, therefore, a process of guaranteeing the quality of programmes and the standards of awards (Academic and institutional audits instrument no. 2: Institutional information A1A1 2).

Similar to audits elsewhere, promoting public confidence in the HE system is central to QA. The audits mainly collect information on the institutions' student enrolment patterns and trends, human resource base, infrastructure and the facilities and available equipment.

In terms of valued outputs, the ZIMCHE Act emphasises good student retention and throughput rates. These are aimed at enhancing student employability "to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields where necessary" (p. 16) to meet the country's labour needs. The Act further stipulates that a programme's effectiveness should be evaluated through "user surveys which gather and analyse information from different stakeholders…student satisfaction surveys, graduate tracking surveys, employer satisfaction surveys and impact studies". There is relatively little on T & L in the ZIMCHE Act. For instance, ZIMCHE's criterion for programme accreditation states that HEI's should ensure that:

> the teaching and learning strategy is appropriate for the institutional type (as reflected in its mission), modes of delivery and student composition; contains mechanisms to ensure the appropriateness of teaching and learning methods and makes provision for staff to upgrade their teaching methods. The strategy sets targets, plans for implementation and mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate impact and effect improvement (p. 5-6).

Apart from these broad outlines, the specific T & L strategies to be employed are left to the universities' interpretation. This likely illustrates a limited understanding of the T & L process at university level and an acknowledgement of the challenges in its measurement.

Perceiving the ZIMCHE Act as government's way of controlling universities, Mwonzora, a lawyer and a UZ law lecturer, describes it as "draconian". He argues that it would result in education "run by political appointees with the aim of winning hearts and minds for

Mugabe….while ideally higher education must be run by independent academics and experts"
(Manyukwe, 6 July, 2008, University World News). Despite the establishment of national QA
agencies world-wide, there are varying levels of government control of which Zimbabwe
exhibits a high level. ZIMCHE is managed by a Council for Higher Education Board, whose
members are ministerial appointees, making it more malleable in fulfilling the interests of
government. The combination of the ZIMCHE Act and the University of Zimbabwe Act
empowers the minister to intervene in the administration of universities. While ZIMCHE
emphasises the creation of an environment conducive to learning, political interference might
hinder it. A conducive environment does not only constitute resources but also creates systems
that expand capabilities, promoting voice, participation, democracy and critical thinking.

Zimbabwe's historical context discussed above explains the development of the country's HE
and how perspectives on quality are framed. The initial emphasis on increasing access
eventually gave way to a focus on quality. According to the ZIMCHE Act, the processes of
accreditation and audits ensure the provision of quality. Quality is understood in instrumental
terms foregrounding graduate employability and the country's economic development as
outcomes. In support of these outcomes, quality HE is imbued with narrowly constructed ideas
of citizenship. While this background provides a starting point in understanding how the
prevailing idea of quality evolved in Zimbabwe, an in-depth analysis is required to uncover
how the quality of T & L is conceptualised and operationalised and how this shapes the nature
of graduates produced. This enables an evaluation of how a human development informed
understanding of quality can possibly contribute to HE development for wellbeing and social
justice.

1.6 My background and personal experiences

My own personal experiences of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality at a
Zimbabwean university where I was a lecture from 2008 to 2011 influenced my decision to
conduct this study. After ZIMCHE became operational in 2009, the expectation for lecturers to
ensure quality T & L through student assessment, peer review and second marking of exams
was reinforced and evidence of these practices was required. Although in most departments,
these activities were practiced prior to ZIMCHE's requirements, there was no considerable
improvement after 2009. In most instances, lecturers, including myself were not aware of the

importance of these activities neither were the technicalities explained. Consequently, quality practices were haphazard and perfunctorily carried out, if at all. In addition, although an annual workshop to improve lecturers' pedagogical skills was conducted at the university, it was not compulsory and the uptake was low. As an early career academic such institutional support, though limited, was important and more beneficial in improving how I taught than the processes prescribed by ZIMCHE.

All this aroused my curiosity and raised questions about how quality is conceptualised and operationalised, who decides and how this affects students learning. It was this desire to understand how the system works and to what end, that I though examining conceptions of quality from policy level to classroom practices would provide some insights in understanding quality, not just in Zimbabwe but also internationally. My positionality as a researcher is further explained in chapter four.

1.7 thesis outline

I now provide an overview of the nine chapters constituting the thesis.

Chapter One: Introduction, context and background to the study

The first chapter introduces the study and highlights the thesis' major argument. It also explains Zimbabwe's context and background, tracing developments in HE and the development of QA. The chapter provides a historical perspective of events in HE that directly and indirectly relate to quality and informing current conceptions.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Although reference to literature is made throughout the thesis, chapter two provides an overview of relevant literature. Literature on how quality is conceptualised and the implications on its operationalisation in HEI's is traced from the international and regional levels to a focus on Zimbabwe. It also highlights the need to emphasise T & L as part of understanding quality. Building onto the argument introduced in chapter one, the literature review underscores shortcomings in conceptualising quality in terms of human capital and paves the way for an alternative understanding quality in chapter three.

Chapter Three: Conceptualising quality from a human development perspective

While acknowledging the various ways that quality can be conceptualised, this chapter theorises quality from a human development perspective and the normative role that universities ought to play in societies. The chapter also justifies the use of the CA as a theoretical framework advancing human development. Identifying the valued outcomes of HE, chapter three then traces the process through which I select critical being and the capability for work as two ideal-theoretical indicators of quality T & L. Although I consider these as indicators of quality, the research also leaves room for the study participants to identify what they consider to be quality.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Chapter four traces the rationale for and the research process used in data collection to answer the four research questions. The research design, sampling of cases and participant recruitment is discussed followed by the data analysis procedures. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations made and a conclusion.

Chapter Five: Quality as policy and quality as practice: ZIMCHE and universities perceptions

The first of three empirical chapters, chapter five presents the voices of policymakers at macro and meso levels on issues relating to conceptions of quality and their operationalisation. An analysis of the findings reveals differences in conceptualising quality at national and institutional policy levels but a similar emphasis on human capital development.

Chapter Six: Micro perspectives on the quality of teaching and learning: Case Study 1, Baobab University

Drawing on the perspectives of deans, lectures and students, this chapter discusses how quality in T & L is understood and operationalised at a public university. The chapter examines the institutional QA system in place and its efficacy in improving quality. This includes assessing the deans' role as middle managers and how they implement the systems in the two departments under study. At department level, I examine the lecturers' and students' perceptions on the QA

system and T & L. The chapter also provides an assessment of the relevance of my two indicators.

Chapter Seven: Micro perspectives on the quality of teaching and learning: Case Study 2, Msasa University

Based on the viewpoints of deans, lectures and students this chapter examines how quality in T & L is understood and operationalised at a private university. Highlighting the disjuncture between policy and practice, the chapter reveals a combination of human capital and human development informed operationalisation of quality. Evaluating the QA system in place provides an understanding of how deans and lecturers perceive and implement the system and the challenges they face. The chapter also assesses the students' opinions, what they value as quality and the relevance of my two indicators in the Zimbabwean context.

Chapter Eight: Quality: A human development perspective

This chapter draws on the perspectives of all study participants for an analysis of the meaning of quality as human development. Starting with a discussion of quality as human capital and its limitations, the chapter moves on to examine T & L from a human development standpoint and the values fostered thereof. Drawing from the participants views, I evaluate the usefulness of critical being and the capability for work as indicators and decide on a narrower understanding of the two, given Zimbabwe's context. However, I still argue that the two are indicators to aspire for.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis by threading together the theoretical ideas and empirical findings thereby making a case for a human development informed conception of quality. It gives a summary of how the research questions were answered and the study's theoretical contribution. A discussion of the study's limitations and potential research are also given as well as recommendations based on the study findings.

1.8 Conclusion

While chapter one introduces the study, it mostly focuses on the Zimbabwean context which shapes possibilities for and perceptions of quality. Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political environment has influenced developments in HE informing how quality is conceptualised and operationalised. For example, while ZIMCHE's emphasis on resources is consonant with human capital tenets of QA, it is also a reflection of fears about the deteriorating quality resulting from HE expansion amidst economic challenges which impacted on the provision of resources such as computers, books and qualified lecturers. Whilst acknowledging the importance of resources in availing quality education, the thesis intends to consider alternative ways of conceptualising quality. By examining perspectives on what is considered important from macro (policy), meso (university administration) and micro level (deans, lecturers and students), the study will highlight areas where a human development informed perspective of quality can potentially contribute to students gaining a wider capability set, beyond skills and knowledge.

Chapter two: Literature review

2.0 Introduction

The chapter comprises four sections. The first section examines the international discourse on quality and how ideas evolved in developed countries. This includes issues such as debates over the definition of quality, academic perceptions on quality, QA and QE as well as matters indirectly influencing quality such as HE funding and internationalisation. Section two focuses specifically on T & L in the international context while section three examines the evolution of QA in Africa and its weaknesses. This is followed by the conclusion in section four.

The concept of quality is not new in HE and is regarded as part of an academics responsibilities (Morley, 2003; and Harvey and Askling, 2003). Over time, quality has been assured in universities through the use of both internal and external processes including external accreditation through professional bodies (Brennan and Shah, 2000). However, major changes occurred in HE in the 20th century, challenging the self-evident nature of quality and bringing it to the fore as a contentious issue. These changes include massification, increased diversity in terms of students and programmes offered, decreasing resources, increased accountability and the challenge of producing graduates for the global economy (Kahsay, 2012). The regulation of HE began to shift, from the 1990's, towards systematized QA systems resulting in many countries adopting various monitoring systems (Westerheijden, Stensaker and Rosa, 2007). With these developments, new debates over quality emerged, rooted in concern about the extent to which quality is neither a neutral nor value-free concept (Anderson, 2007: 163). The available literature on quality illustrates the tension between QA as a bureaucratic and administrative task and quality enhancement (QE). There are four basic methods associated with QA, namely, audit, assessment, accreditation and external examination with the first three being the most popular and countries adopting one or more of these methods.

While there is extensive literature on quality in HE, especially from developed countries like Britain, Australia and the United States of America, there is comparatively much less work on quality in HE in the global South, and even less so in Zimbabwe, the subject of my study. There, discourse on QA is still in its infancy. In most developing countries, as several authors

have indicated, there is usually the adoption of already established systems, resulting in compatibility problems.

2.1 International debates on quality in higher education

Several reasons are given for the establishment of QA systems, including the greater demand for accountability by public and private institutions because of massification (Gibbons, 1998), to monitor accountability from a value for money perspective, internationalisation of qualifications, increased mobility of staff and students, matching programmes to labour and employment needs, rise of private education and indirect steering of higher education by governments (Van der Griesel et al., 2002; Maharasoa et al., 2002 and Zulu et al, 2004). This section provides an overview of some of the major international debates on quality which range from negative academic perceptions, QA and QE, funding and internationalisation.

Of the four main approaches to QA, namely; audit, assessment, accreditation and external examination, accreditation and audits are the most common. Despite variations in systems, Dill, (2007) and Stensaker and Harvey (2011) identify the most common QA model as being a government initiated semi-independent agency to monitor HEI's through a combination of external review, performance measurement and public reporting. In most instances, the external agency either conducts institutional audits (UK and Australia) or institutional accreditation (USA and Netherlands) while internal quality is assured through intra-institutional processes (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994 and Quality Assurance Agency, 2005). There is debate between the efficacies of these systems. Some scholars (Barnett, 1994; Askling, 1997 and Wiclund et al, 2003) argue that of the two, internal QA is more beneficial. External QA is regarded as being "more accountability oriented, summative and judgemental" providing only a snapshot of quality as compared to the former which is more formative and likely to result in quality improvement (Kahsay, 2007: 39). It is such internal and external systems that are adopted in developing countries. My thesis examines how the Zimbabwean external and internal systems are reconciled and the extent to which they incorporate the views of all stakeholders and to what end. It attempts to advance a more nuanced understanding of how the QA systems work and whether it promotes a human development informed notion of quality.

Defining quality

Defining the concept of quality is "notoriously elusive" (Kahsay, 2012; Gibson, 1986; Neave, 1986; Scott, 1994) "slippery" (Pfeffer and Coot, 1991), "relative" (Westerheijden, 1990; Vroeijenstijn, 1992; Middlehurst, 1992; Harvey and Green, 1993; Baird 1994) and "dynamic" (Boyle and Bwden, 1997). Quality has also been viewed as "multi-dimensional" (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002) and full of "contestation and complexity" (O'Sulivan, 2006; Barrett et al, 2006; Tikly and Barrett, 2007; Alexander, 2008; Tikly, 2011). Vidovich and Currie (1998: 196) argue that quality in HE refers to "accountability to stakeholders", rather than "as excellence, which has a more traditional presence in universities". Conversely, Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualise quality as exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money, transformational. Despite Srikanthan and Dalrymple's (2003) view that quality as fitness for purpose best addresses the needs of all stakeholders, the third definition is the most common and has been adopted by various HEI's worldwide. However, as Westerheijden, Stensaker and Rosa (2007: 3) argue, these are "empirically empty terms" that can mean anything depending on the given purpose. They note that a lack of an understanding of what constitutes quality in HE has resulted in HEI's implementing QA without understanding its purpose. Other scholars subscribing to this view are Brown et al (2007) and Massaro (2010). Massaro (2010: 12) comments that QA is "a measure of accountability which can only succeed if it is acknowledged to measure what is important to society in a manner that it can understand". This raises the problems of a lack of agreement on what quality means, how it is measured and assessed.

In their review of the QA systems in the USA, Europe the UK and Australia, Van der Westhuizen and Fourie (2002) highlight historical differences within these systems and their implementation. The difference include the meaning given to quality and the assumptions that underlie their QA policies thereby causing variations in assessment practices and results. Despite these differences, Van der Westhuizen and Fourie also note similarities. The role of QA has included improving existing practices, meeting demands for public accountability, compliance with government aims for rationalisation, and optimising the use of targeted resources. QA systems include a combination of self-evaluation processes, external peer evaluation, performance indicators, statistical benchmarking and standardisation of practices. Performance and accountability as measured by performance indicators create national competition to achieve high rankings and include student employability, university league

tables and publications in certain journals (Abbas, Ashwin and McLean, 2012). There is also an emphasis on university branding and claims to world-class standards attracting "the best' academics (Bertelson, 2003; Brown and Lauder, 2010). The similar emphasis on aspects such as accountability, rationalisation the optimum use of resources and branding are indicative of a human capital conception of quality. In human capital terms, quality is defined by measurable variables while side-lining subjective aspects. Because the dominance of this understanding of quality in the literature, it will be discussed throughout this chapter. However, alternative to this framework is a human development focused approach, which I discuss in chapter three.

In understanding the purpose and role of quality, one needs to disaggregate the motives of various stakeholders (Burrows and Harvey, 1992; Burrows, Harvey and Green, 1992; Maassen, 1996; Harvey et al, 2010). Hence Harvey and Green (1993: 22) note:

> Quality is relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it is involved. It means different things to different people; indeed the same person may adopt different conceptualisations at different moments.

Blackmur (2007), thus refers to it as "qualities". This informs Tam's (2001) question, whose quality are we looking at? This is an important question given the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in HE which include students, parents, employers, government and academics, all of whose expectations vary. As Kahsay (2012: 32) states, "In other words, the various arguments on what constitutes quality are rooted in the values and assumptions of the different authors (and stakeholders) about the nature, purpose and fundamental processes of higher education". Any conceptualisation of quality within HE should thus take into account who is defining it, for what purpose as well as their expectation of HE.

Given these different conceptions of quality, I locate my understanding within a social justice approach where quality is defined in terms of human capabilities and emphasises aspects such as 'participation', 'redistribution', and 'recognition' (Barrett et al, 2006; Nussbaum, 2006; Tikly and Barrett, 2009 and Sayed and Ahmed, 2013). Sayed and Ahmed argue that the broadened conceptualisations "locate quality as a multi-dimensional construct with complimentary dimensions" which also suggests "contradictions and complexity with the possibility that progress in some areas can set in motion processes that can undermine quality in other areas" (Sayed and Ahmed, 2011: 115). They suggest that processes to be implemented

should be based on the identified goal of HE. As this is the focus of my study, I will discuss this conception of quality in greater detail in chapter three.

Academics perceptions on quality assurance instruments

Mhlanga (2004) argues against the assumption of homogeneity that is implied in the understanding of "internal" QA. He identifies tension between management and academic staff emanating from the way in which institutional quality policies are developed, the extent of academic ownership of these policies and the reporting lines. The literature on academic's perceptions of QA systems in the UK, USA and Australia is generally negative (Bleiklie, 1998; Morley, 2003; Bertelson, 2003; Gynnild, 2007; Filippakou and Tapper, 2008; Furlong and Cartmel, 2009 and Sayed and Ahmed, 2013). Bertelson (2003: 144), argues:

> Whilst acknowledging that a university is a large and unwieldy institution which needs to be managed and that shrinking budgets require cuts in expenditure, one might reasonably expect that in an organisation peopled by intellectuals a virtual revolution in institutional philosophy would be preceded by vigorous debate around competing paradigms for change, and that academics would play an important role in establishing educational priorities and deciding the strategies needed to achieve them.

Because of a lack of involvement and agreement with academics on what constitutes quality, authors such as Ball (2010) refer to "performativity" in how academics undertake their duties and Bleiklie (1998) talks about "managerialism" in relation to QA. In illustrating how educational reforms are marginalising teachers in the UK, Ball (2010: 218) argues that "new roles and subjectivities are produced as teachers are reworked as producers/providers, educational entrepreneurs and managers and are subject to regular appraisal and review and performance comparisons". Similarly, Cheng (2009) explores academics negative attitudes towards audit-related quality mechanisms because of perceived bureaucracy, its time costs and belief that it is a symbol of distrust in the professionalism of academics. Anderson's (2006) Australian study reveals academics animosity towards student evaluation and the performance appraisal process due to perceptions of surveillance despite their support of the idea of upholding quality in HE. Anderson revealed problems concerning:

> the distribution and exercise of power, differences in defining and understanding the notion of quality, concerns about the effectiveness of quality assurance processes,

doubts about the reliance on quantification often associated with quality assurance mechanisms and the time spent complying with quality requirements (p. 162).

Despite alienation by internal systems, academics are central to the running of the institutions as well as attracting capital and students (Brown and Lauder, 2010). A top-down approach to quality is one of the challenges of a human capital informed notion of quality. This is unlike quality informed by a human development framework where participation of stakeholders such as academics would be key.

In examining antagonism resulting from QA, Morley (2003: 164) focuses on how power relations influence the conceptualisation of quality in HE. She reveals that there are multiple interpretations of quality and QA is "a socially constructed domain of power", with the most influential person determining its conceptualisation. For Brennan and Shah (2000) the introduction of QA systems illustrates the shifting balance of power between universities and system levels. They identify four values underlying different forms of QA. First is the academic which examines conceptions of quality based on subject affiliation and varies across HEI. Second, is the managerial informed by institutional focus on assessment and assumes that good management produces quality. Third, is the pedagogic aspect which is associated with staff training and development and emphasises teaching skills and classroom practices and delivery. The last is focused on employment and is informed by graduate attributes, learning outcomes and is targeted at employer satisfaction. Building onto Brennan and Shah's values, Luckett (2006) identifies another four quality values. First, collegial rationality which suggest that university lecturers must be in control and quality assurance should involve peer assessment and student feedback. Second is managerial rationality based on the belief that good management results in success and advocates for working structures to be installed to monitor academic work. Third is facilitative rationality which advocates for external authorities playing a facilitative role in determining institutional QA. Last is bureaucratic rationality involving a government appointed QA agency. In order to ensure quality enhancement, Luckett advocates for a balance between the four. Most of the eight values above have a human capital rationale, emphasising managerialism, rationality, employability which are likely to promote QA rather than QE. Brennan and Shah's pedagogic aspect and Luckett's collegial rationality are more likely to result in QE given their focus on T & L.

Quality assurance and quality enhancement

A prominent debate concerns QA and QE. QA is understood as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence with more emphasis on assuring the stakeholders rather than improving quality. Conversely, scholars such as Vroeijenstijn (1995), Wilger (1997) and the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) (2005) regard QA as a systematic process through which the quality of the educational process is maintained according to external set standards and improved upon. Unlike QA, QE is regarded as part of an internal process meant to improve learning opportunities despite contextual institutional constraints. Mårtensson et al (2014) and Gosling and D'Andrea (2005) state that despite the presence of QE in the UK, it is less prominent than QA because of an assumption that it would occur through QA. Ultimately, the need to identify gaps and overlaps in QE and evaluate the quality of T & L resulted in the formation in 2003 of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee. However, Filippakou and Tapper (2008: 98) argue that while QE can potentially broaden the quality agenda, QA is more popular and has firm structures in place. They suggest that the two are:

> differing interpretations of the quality agenda that complement one another, that both are needed to gain a more complete picture of policy development. At the same time to use the two approaches in conjunction with each other in order to interpret the policy making process gives each of them a greater reality.

In reference to the Nordic countries, Danø and Stensaker (2007) agree with implementing a balanced combination of both QA and QE.

Higher education funding

Another aspect of HE indirectly related to quality is the funding of different types of universities. In Britain, Morley (2001) and Furlong and Cartmel (2009) illustrate the stratification of universities according to the period of establishment, class and accessibility. There is less government interference in established universities such as Cambridge and Oxford which are regarded as "quality" universities in comparison to post 1992 universities (Ashwin, Abbas and McLean, 2012). There are differences in the institutions' mission statements, advertising, target market and curriculum (Furlong and Cartmel, 2009). The post 1992

universities are seen as less competitive compared with the "Russell Group" of elite universities. To some extent, the funding of the post 1992 universities is performance based which may not necessarily encourage the full development of the quality of academic programmes and students. for example, in Australia, Anderson (2006) found that the periodic audits of universities' quality self-assessments by the Australian Universities Quality Agency resulted in institutions providing documentation showing their commitment to QA to ensure continued federal government funding rather than an actual focus on improving quality.

Internationalisation of higher education

Internationally, another dominant theme indirectly related to quality is the internationalisation of HE. Despite the perceived advantage of transnational education services as a more economical means of accessing a good quality 'foreign brand' education, several scholars argue to the contrary. Opposing the impact of educational restructuring in Asia, Deem, Mok and Lucas (2008) argue against "Western new managerial-oriented doctrines and neo-liberalist ideologies and practices" (p. 92). For them, "internationalisation" should not be synonymous with American or Anglo-Saxon standards and practices. They therefore call for a contextual analysis before implementing ideas wholesale. Using the example of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in which branch campuses of the University of West Indies (UWI) were established, Gift et al (2006) accentuate the need for a regional accreditation system to monitor the QA programmes of foreign providers, ensure the equivalence of programmes, facilitate the easy movement of students and academic staff, credit transferability and preserve intellectual property rights. Gift et al identify three potential problems in relation to quality and transnational HE. First, the foreign providers may not share the same values and priorities since they are driven by a profit motive. Secondly, while there is also the potential for the improvement of quality as a result of competition, it can also decline if providers offer low quality "canned" degrees. Thirdly, the education provided may only be accessed by a privileged few who can afford it. In addition to these three challenges, Walker (1999) and Stella and Gnanam (2004) identify culturally determined operational practices, partner eligibility, legitimacy of providers, commercial and educational conflict, roles, responsibilities and accountability, quality of promotional information and university autonomy. Mhlanga (2008) cites an incident where the former South African Education Minister declined Norway's

request to open up South Africa's HE system to foreign providers in accordance with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), because of the fear that quality education promoting transformation may be sacrificed for profit. In the global South, there is comparatively little literature on the possible problems arising from internationalisation yet some universities are promoting it as an indicator of quality.

Because of the problems associated with internationalisation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe have made transnational HE a priority area. In its "Guidelines for Quality provision in cross- border higher education" (2005), UNESCO collaborated with the OECD to protect stakeholders "from low- quality provision and disreputable providers as well as to encourage the development of quality cross- border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs" (www.unesco.org). The guidelines were set to assist countries without QAA's, and those with national frameworks that do not take transnational HE into account. UNESCO also coordinates QA at international level. Its guidelines are directed towards national governments, student bodies, QA and accreditation agencies, academic recognition and professional bodies. In favour of regulating foreign providers, Gift et al (2006) support UNESCO as an organisation that "emphasizes the importance of providing assistance to developing countries to strengthen national educational systems, rather than imposing 'foreign models'" (p. 128). However, Blackmur's (2007) assessment of UNESCO- OECD guidelines differs from the scholars reviewed above. He argues that national governments are not helpless victims, they have the authority to reject certain qualifications and discourage employers from considering them.

The above discussion focused on general issues directly and indirectly relating to quality in HE and attempts to monitor and sometimes improve it. It is these established QA systems that are in some instances borrowed by countries in the global South as models of quality. Because my study is specifically on the quality of T & L, the discussion now turns to how it is conceptualised and operationalised.

2.2 Quality of teaching and learning

This section examines literature that connects the general issues discussed above directly to the quality of T & L. Several reasons have been given for bringing the quality of T & L to the fore in HE. Among them are massification, increasing diversity of the student profile and the call for evidence of teaching quality from students, parents, employers and governments. Additionally, the internationalisation of HE, technological changes, increasing global pressure and the need to produce a versatile skilled workforce have also been identified as being responsible for driving the quality agenda (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012). Roseveare argue that HEI's need to respond to the changes in the type of knowledge produced and the market requirements therefore, "Both the complexity and uncertainty of society and the economy will require institutions to continuously adapt while upholding quality standards" (p. 9). Given these changes, academics have to use innovative pedagogical methodologies to achieve student learning outcomes as the goal of quality teaching. While Newton, (2000); Harvey and Stensaker, (2008) and Mårtensson et al (2014) note how QA as it is practised separates the associated formal rules and routines and the daily practices in T & L, they note the need for QA policies to be made in conjunction with university practices and cultures. One of the possible reason for the exclusion of T & L is because "few quantitative standards can be set and measured" (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012: 12). However, the lack of easily measurable variables should rather encourage its inclusion.

Most of the literature on T & L quality highlights challenges related to its measurement stemming from its vague conceptualisation. Informing an evaluation of the quality of T & L are the questions what should quality T & L look like and who determines what quality entails? Some of Anderson's (2007: 167) participants noted that their conceptualisations of quality were incompatible with the quality mechanisms in place. For example, a Health sciences lecturer explained that one of the 'outputs' determined by the QA system is the completion rate but, "Are we really that interested in how well they are performing or what their learning experience has been like?" A reader in Botany argued that one of the measures of teaching quality was the pass rate and he emphasized the possibility of grade inflation in such measures, saying, "So if you pass 95 per cent of the class then you're obviously [seen to be] teaching better than if you only pass 30 per cent of the class". He goes on to point out that, while a reasonably high failure rate used to show thorough assessment, currently, "there's the notion that you teach so

everyone will pass…" Also, a Geography lecturer commented that, "the emphasis is on reporting to some external body that's going to do some kind of quality audit, but it's not about how do we actually improve our teaching". These examples illustrate the problems associated with an emphasis on inputs and outputs while neglecting the learning process.

Giving the example of the 2007 UK Teaching Quality Information, Brown et al (2007) identify the potential pitfalls in some of the strategies meant to enhance accountability to employers and students. The Teaching Quality Information involves the publication of statistical data on student entry qualifications, the number of students continuing their studies, graduate information, possible employment opportunities and overall student satisfaction with the subject. Brown et al argue that while there is need for students to be informed, they highlight the limitations of these statistics in explaining the quality of T & L, the absence of a generally agreed definition of quality.

There is much literature on student assessments and their impact on QE in countries such as Britian, Australia and USA. For instance, the Quality Assurance Agency (2004) and Love and Scoble (2006) identify the need for a 'dialogue' between students and their lecturers to promote QE. They discuss several techniques used to get feedback on teaching; self-monitoring, audiotape/videotape, student questionnaires, students' coursework and exam results and peer observation. In relation to self-assessment, Gynnild (2007: 265) argues that a characteristic feature is the extensive concentration on teaching with only minor attention paid to the learning component. From her study, there was no effort to explain the interrelation between T & L and neither "teaching" nor "learning" is subject to definition, and there is no explicit standard or criteria on the basis of which "quality" can be deemed.

While student feedback ostensibly assists in improving T & L, there is a literature on lecturers' negative perceptions (Ballantyne et al, 2000; Morley, 2003; Douglas and Douglas, 2006; Anderson, 2007). Though student evaluations are the most commonly used mechanism to measure teaching quality, Bedgood and Pollard (1999); Johnson (2000); Morley (2003) and Anderson (2007), Ballantyne et al, (2000: 225) argue that student evaluations should be used "for formative and diagnostic rather than for summative purposes" because they have the potential to attract personal penalty. While not against measures to improve quality, lecturers note that the system is open to manipulation by either the students or other staff members. Students can use assessments as retribution for bad grades (Anderson, 2007). This is linked to

Morley's (2003: 132) argument on the effects of positioning students as customers resulting in constant assessments to assure value for money and a focus on "service level agreements" rather than on curriculum content and intellectual challenge.

The emphasis on statistical data and repositioning students as customers are mostly a result of the influences of a human capital approach which emphasises the instrumental value of HE. Harvey (2002) explains how the dominance of quality management as a tool for control rather than for improvement purposes ignores the educational process and student learning. Quality teaching should employ pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students (Hénard and Roseveare, 2012). It includes effective curriculum design and course content, a variety of learning, soliciting and using feedback, effective assessment of learning outcomes, well-adapted learning environments and student support services. This makes quality teaching a multi-level undertaking, occurring on three interdependent levels; institutional, programme and individual level. The institutional level requires enabling policies and internal QA mechanisms, while at programme level it entails measuring and enhancing the policy design, content and delivery. The individual level encompasses lecturer support services and the use of student centred focuses. Giving examples of universities from Finland, Brazil, Australia, Canada, South Africa and Japan, Hénard and Roseveare identify interventions in areas such as raising awareness of quality teaching, developing excellent teachers, engaging students, building organisation for change, teaching leadership and aligning institutional policies to foster quality teaching. Hénard (2012) conceptualises teaching as a flexible institutional framework combining teacher autonomy and a collaborative relationship between students and staff.

However, given the exclusion of academics in determining quality, this conception of teaching is not likely to prevail and notions of quality remains vague and unshared internally. For Hénard (2012) an acceptable QA can be established by first identifying the kind of education and skills that graduates require. This informs a working definition of quality and enables an identification of the role played by lecturers' and any support they may require. This is followed by the establishment of a legitimately recognised and inclusive organisation to design instruments to achieve quality and train graduates who can contribute to economic and social development.

Given that my case study is Zimbabwe, I now turn to examine literature on quality in Africa before focusing on Zimbabwe.

2.3 Debates on quality in higher education in Africa

Comparatively, there is less literature specifically on quality in Africa than from the global North and more so on T & L. With few exceptions, African literature mostly concentrates on common problems that indirectly impact on the provision of quality education, and by extension, T & L. These problems include brain drain, graduate employability, students' preference for foreign universities, poor infrastructure, inflexible programmes that are not responsive to market demands; student unrest which sometimes leads to long closures; and the political appointments of HE leadership (Odhiambo (2011). Research focusing on T & L in African universities is presented in a *Studies in Higher Education* special issue on early career development among academics in Africa. The research was conducted in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda and South Africa and was aimed at uncovering how early career academics learn how to teach at universities and the institutional support they receive. While the study illustrated an increasing realization in African universities of the importance of initiating early career academics into the academic profession, the existence of such systems nationally and institutionally is erratic. Such studies underline the need for the enhancement of early career academics' teaching proficiency given the growing number and diversity of university students. However, the study focuses on early career academics excluding more experienced academics who also need continuous support and improvement in line with the changing needs of HE. Despite this, the research pioneers work on African HE and academics' teaching ability, an area little explored in attempt to improve quality.

While the first accreditation agency was established in Africa in 1985, QA is a comparatively recent phenomenon in most African countries and is in some instances regarded as a panacea to the continent's HE problems. Several reasons are put forth to explain the increasing focus on HE and quality. These include economic reasons; (Lim, 1999; Van der Westhuizen and Fourie, 2002; Bloom et al, 2006; Materu, 2007 and Odhiambo, 2011). Materu (2007: 7) argues that, "countries wishing to move towards the knowledge economy are challenged to undertake reforms to raise the quality of education and training through changes in content and

pedagogy". Other reasons were to regulate the growing number of private HEI's (Mahomedbhai, 2008; Mhlanga, 2008 and Kahsay 2012); the desire to improve quality, international competitiveness, protecting the public from fraud, promote HE accountability (Hayward, 2006) and that it is fashionable (Lim, 1999). Overall, the major reasons are related to improving economic competitiveness and graduate employability.

Higher education funding

A major challenge facing HE is that of funding. Oketch et al (2013) traces how many national universities in the global South have ended up in a deprived state. HEI's were established in the immediate post-independent period as part of nation building initiatives with external aid and justified by the adherence to the principles of human capital theory. According to human capital theory, education increases worker productivity which in turn increases both individual and social returns. However, because of WB research claiming that individual returns were higher than social returns in low income countries and that primary education yielded more returns than tertiary education (Psacharopoulos et al, 1986 and Psacharopoulos, 1994), there was a drop in donor funding. Oketch et al also notes reduced funding resulting from HE being regarded as a preserve for the elite and contributing to increasing socio-economic inequalities. Another contributory factor to the decline in funding was the economic and political challenges faced by several countries resulting in cuts in government spending. To some extent, this exacerbated the problem of expansion and quality in HE. Despite attempts made to improve HE funding, HEI's remain generally under-capitalised putting them at a disadvantage.

The North and South global divide is an important factor as these regional disparities have implications in terms of human development. Accordingly, the Global Universities Network for Innovation (GUNI: 2008: 6) cautions that one must take note of "the disparity in the resourcing and autonomy of HEI's in the North and the South". The network identifies differences in capacity (information, infrastructure and human resources) which are worsened by 'brain drain' from the South to the North and assumptions by the North that Southern HEI's should adopt Northern practices but without addressing the asymmetrical power relations and different contexts. In line with the proponents of modernisation theory, the Northern HEI's believe that for the South to develop, it should adopt identical policies to those in the North. However, the disproportionate nature of resourcing between the North and South renders this

untenable. Research by the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) (2010: 2) revealed:

> The daunting nature of the challenges faced by many public universities in the region to simply survive and maintain existing standards, never mind massively increasing student access and the volume and quality of research outputs, which their governments and people rightly expect. Perhaps, top of the challenges that such universities in 'survival mode' face are the very real problems of brain drain; inadequate infrastructure; the rapid ageing and decay of many existing facilities and, in some cases, the lack of access to some of even the most basic tools needed to conduct high-level teaching and learning in this; the age of the 'Knowledge Society'.

The quotation reveals challenges in African HE on several fronts. The competitive nature of the global economy enhances the skewed nature of the availability of human resources as skilled personnel migrate from poorly equipped HEI's, usually in the South, to well-resourced institutions usually in the North or the few 'developed' Southern countries. Consequently, the under resourced HEI's constantly invest capital in training workers for the benefit of the already developed HEI's which further enhances these university's marketability.

Adoption of "best cases"

Illustrating similarities with the international literature, Hayward (2006) notes that despite support for QE, there are differences in conceptualising quality and its measurement. Hence the tendency to rely on easily measurable variables such as library books, computers per student, percentage of faculty members with PhDs, while avoiding indicators involving qualitative judgments for fear of subjectivity and bias, or measures that require individual assessment or long-term data collection. Hayward notes that African accreditation and audits have focused more on outcomes assessment and performance measures. However, while Hayward regards collaboration with foreign QA agencies an advantage, it has been regarded as a limitation by some. Using Botswana University as an example, Hopkins (2004) illustrates the variations in "operational milieu" that external QAA's operate in. Hopkins argues against the reliance of HEI's developing their national QAA's based on experiences of developed countries and international bodies such as the INQAAHE for models and practices. INQAAHE has approximately two hundred and fifty member agencies (El-Khawas, 2013) and offers platforms for international sharing of ideas and experiences to help agencies improve their

practices. El-Khawas, 2013: 190) states that the adoption of these systems may "wittingly or unwittingly, ensnare" QAA's in a "developmental context in a neo-colonial relationship". He proposes an analytical framework to enable developing countries assess the relevance of the established systems, benchmarks and examples that will promote quality in their own contexts. Despite benefits to be derived from the establishment of regional QAA's such as student and academic mobility and credit transfers, Mhlanga (2008) argues against standardised practices, policies and systems that overlook relevant contextual factors. The focus on homogeneity ignores differences between and among signatory countries. Giving examples of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, Mhlanga (2008: iii) explains that:

> A direct consequence of this [disregarding contextual peculiarities] was the development of policies and mechanisms that are more concerned with standardisation of procedures than with enhancement of academic practice. Such quality assurance systems have not resulted in the self-improvement of institutions.

Similarly, Obanya (1999) and Ntarangwi (2003: 311) observe that Kenyan university education has not been able to adapt "its content and pedagogy to the social economic and cultural realities of its people and has not been capable of developing local solutions to local problems" therefore its education system is focused on schooling instead of learning. This study will, in part, address such issues in the Zimbabwean context.

Quality assurance collaboration

Hopkins (2004) points out that one of the few sustainable efforts in addressing regional quality issues is through the Association of African universities (AAU). Although formed in 1967, matters concerning quality only became prominent after 2000. Believing HE to be a driver of economic growth, the AAU's mission is to improve quality and strengthen its contribution to African development by fostering collaboration among its member institutions. According to the AAU, QA is the "planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, teaching, administration and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced" (www.aau.org). One of the programmes developed by the AAU is the Quality Association Support Programme for African Higher Education through which the African Quality Association Network (AfriQAN) was established in 2009. Through these organisations, the AAU assists HEI's and national agencies establish

QA systems with the aim of establishing a regional network for coordination of cross-border protocols and specialized capacity building in QA. Some of the member countries are Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique. However, there does not seem to be much literature on how the AAU carries out its mandate, and successes and challenges it has faced.

Massification/ expansion of higher education

From the literature, issues concerning massification are very pertinent to African HE given the economic challenges experienced by most countries. Mahomedbhai (2008) differentiates between "massification" as it is known in the developed countries and "expansion" as it is used in the African context. The differentiation results from the numbers involved. While in the former it refers to a gross HE enrolment ratio of approximately 50 per cent, in the latter it is characterised by a rapid increase in student enrolment sustained over some years even though the enrolment ratio is low. The average annual increase in student enrolment from 1999 to 2005 ranged between 12 and 60 per cent, yet the gross enrolment ratio rarely exceeded five per cent, among the lowest in the world (Nega, 2007 and Mahomedbhai, 2008: vi). In Africa, expansion is a result of increased primary and secondary school enrolment leading to high numbers seeking access to HE and the perceived role of HE in promoting development. HE expansion polices have increased enrolment, raising student numbers in existing universities and the establishment of new HEI's. For example, in Kenya in 1984 there was only one university but by 2011 there were seven public and eighteen private universities, the highest number of HEI's and students in any Central and East Africa country (Odhiambo, 2011). Despite the increase in the number of HEI's, expansion in most established institutions has not been accompanied by an increase in financial, physical and human resources "which has had a direct impact on the physical infrastructure, the quality of teaching and learning, research, quality of life of the students" (Odhiambo, 2011: vii).

While increased access to HE is laudable, it also gives rise to another set of problems especially for under-resourced institutions. The lack of a concomitant increase in the resources to match increasing enrolment levels gives rise to fears of deteriorating quality. In examining the effects of university expansion, Mahomedbhai (2008) identifies problems such as increasing teaching loads, less time for academics to conduct research, high student-teacher ratios and inadequate continuous assessment of students as being detrimental to the quality of education provided.

While some QAA's only accredit or audit private universities, in countries such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Mauritius (Materu, 2007) and Zimbabwe they oversee QA in both public and private universities. However, in the case of public universities, there is no correlation between QA results and funding allocations (Mahomedbhai, 2008). In his study, of QA in universities in six countries, Mahomedbhai discovered that institutions were at different stages of developing QA processes, some having functional systems and others still establishing them.

Linked to massification are challenges associated with funding. Most public institutions rely on government funding which has been continuously decreasing with time thus compromising quality standards. Consequently, public universities have begun implementing various survival strategies to generate income. This includes the introduction of "parallel" degree programmes where full fee-paying students are enrolled in addition to conventional students whose fees are subsidised by the government (Odhiambo, 2011). Odhiambo (2011: 306) argues that in Kenyan HE, these "self- sponsored" or "private sponsored" learners constitute the majority of students in public HEI's, for example, in 2008 they were 32 010 out of a total of 44 914 students at the University of Nairobi and comprised half of the Moi University students. However, these programmes have been associated with problems such as "dumbing down" as a result of accepting students with low qualifications, thereby compromising quality standards. A government report, The Koech Report (Republic of Kenya, 1999), also admitted to a lack of "equity, quality control and quality assurance" in the parallel programmes.

While in the international literature, there is little in terms of the debate concerning the funding of QAA's and their related processes, in Africa, the cost of the accreditation and audit process is a critical factor affecting success. Hayward's (2006: 27) study of six case countries; Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, Tanzania and Mauritius revealed that in all but one country, financing the QA system was a challenge for the QAA and/or the tertiary institutions. In some European countries and in the USA, peer review is assumed to be an honorary activity which is part of an academics' duties while in some African countries it is an additional duty to be paid for. While this need for payment has elicited in some criticism, it is necessitated by low salaries. In some instances, the efficient functioning of the review processes is dependent on

the ability to pay qualified people. Peer reviewers were paid approximately $100 per day and not more than a total of $500 for a site visit in 2005 (Ibid).

Government involvement in higher education

Another prominent discussion indirectly relating to the quality of HE is government involvement in the running of universities. Although El-Khawas (2013) notes that government's commitment to QA is country and context specific and the need for QAA's to build trust among stakeholders including government, Odhiambo (2011) highlights the politicisation of most decisions concerning HE and leadership. In Kenya, he identifies issues such as suppression, arrests and detention without trial and the death of academics and student leaders during the reigns of President Kenyatta and Moi. Consequently, Sifuna (1998) argues for academic freedom and university autonomy and their reliance on political freedom and democracy. Government involvement in the running of HEI's is seen in its appointments of university councils, vice chancellors and in some instances, the national president is the chancellor of public universities. Because in most Southern African universities, institutional QA policies and practices develop within the broad frameworks laid down by the state or national QAA, Mhlanga (2008: 52) argues:

> there is strict control of the size, shape and structure of the higher education system by governments, with accreditation of institutions and their specific academic programmes playing a very significant role in controlling not only the institutions but also the professional autonomy of academic staff in those institutions.

While some measure of government control also exists in institutions in the global North, the extent of control differs, with some African governments exercising relatively more control over QA.

South Africa's conceptions of quality

In Africa, as in other regions, quality is understood as fitness for purpose with variations in the purposes that HE is fit for. On the continent, I single out South Africa in its understanding of

quality because of its emphasis on transformation. Given the country's history of apartheid[9], South African QA policy explicitly relates transformation to HE development. Luckett (2007) notes how external QA has been proposed as a state apparatus for achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness, equity and responsiveness in HE to achieve the 'transformation agenda'. In particular, QA is seen as a means of ensuring high quality T & L opportunities for all students which contributes to the state's provision of equal educational opportunities for all, given the skewed history of access to HE. Because of the inclusion of the transformation agenda, Lange (2012) observes that the Higher Education Quality Committee's HEQC role becomes more complicated because it already has to ensure the improvement and accountability purposes of QA, which already exist in tension. Therefore, in South Africa, quality includes "fitness for purpose, value for money, and individual and social transformation, within an overarching fitness of purpose framework" (Mhlanga, 2008: 55).

Analysing the idea of transformation in the South African context, Singh (2012: 16), argues that it has been construed in two different ways. The first being the repositioning of HE to cater for economic goals and the second being to signify a drive to align HE with democracy and the social justice agenda. She argues that in spite of the global pressure to conform to particular economic principles, it is important to consider significant differences in the "social, political and moral demands made on the notion of transformation as invoked in the contexts where far-reaching changes in higher education are occurring". For her, social development should be the priority of a nation. She looks at reforms implemented in line with the White Paper on HE and argues that there is a disjuncture between efficiency and social transformation imperatives which result in the narrowing of the notion of transformation. For instance, she questions the provision of quality education in the context of student being expected to pay fees, increasing enrolment and high staff-student ratios and the exclusion of marginalised groups including women and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Hence Pretorius (2003), argues that even though QA in South Africa has been conceived as a means of furthering the state's 'transformation agenda' for HE, different, and sometimes conflicting, approaches to QA exist in the HE community.

The HEQC has sought to integrate quality in South African HE within a broader continental and international context by establishing links with the AAU, the INQAAHE, the UNESCO

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[9] This was a political and social system of racial segregation under white minority rule between 1948 and 1994.

Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Recognition of Qualifications, and others; and using these links to put on the agenda the nature and role of QA in developing countries. Despite acknowledging various successes in HE reform, Singh (2012: 11) advocates for the public good role of HE to be broadened to incorporate context specific aspects. These would address issues such as race, class and poverty in South Africa instead of only considering academic freedom and autonomy or the development of self-reflexive capacities which, while important, "might well be seen as an indulgence of the middle class or of intellectuals and academics whose life and career prospects are reasonably secure" at the expense of the marginalised majority. However, Sayed and Ahmed's (2013: 118) critic of the South African 2014 Action Plan overview is that, "South Africa like other countries, in trying to balance the global-local dialectic, seems to uncritically accept some of the global policy pathways". This seems to be an on- going criticism of quality conceptions in Africa as they are reportedly disregarding their local contexts and adopting QA systems from elsewhere.

While the success of South Africa's transformation agenda is debatable, especially given the current wave of HE student protests[10], the country raises interesting possibilities in relation to quality in HE. It provides an example of the integration of QA systems developed elsewhere and its local context. The explicit policy requirement for transformation recognises the need for HE to develop graduates who can participate in the economy as well in the social and political spheres. It is such a normative approach to quality and HE that I am advocating for, especially in developing countries such as Zimbabwe bedevilled by economic and socio-political challenges. Such a notion of quality at national policy level has the potential to re-direct HE development away from an over-emphasis on the instrumental value of HE.

Table 2.1 shows a summary of general debates in literature discussed above, that directly and indirectly affect perceptions and practices of quality.

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[10] Reflecting broader socio-economic challenges, these movements started in March 2015 and include #Rhodes must fall, #Fees must fall and #Open Stellenbosch aimed at "decolonising the university", changing the universities language policy and advocating for free education. The 2016 #Fees must fall is notable for its demand for "free, decolonised, quality higher education".

Table 2.1: Factors affecting perceptions and practices of quality

Direct	Indirect
Definitions of quality	HE funding
Academic perceptions of QA instruments	Internationalisation
QA and QE	Massification/ expansion
Quality T & L	Government involvement in HE
Adoption of "best case"	
QA collaborations	

2.4 Literature on quality assurance in Zimbabwe

There is a relatively scattered literature on the quality of Zimbabwean HE as the idea is still in its nascent stages. Most literature focuses on challenges facing HE which then impacts on quality. Formal QA was established in 2006 driven by fears of deteriorating quality as a result of HE expansion amidst economic challenges as noted in chapter one. The establishment of QA in Zimbabwe has been traced in the previous chapter and this chapter will examine the available literature in relation to developments already explained. According to Hopkins' (2004) classifications, the QA systems of countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Oman fit into the "embryonic" stage. This stage is characterised by a limited range of HE institutions, government playing a hegemonic role, a growing private sector and a relatively new national QAA. However, there are no rigid divisions between the three stages (mature, evolving and embryonic) and countries can exhibit the characteristics of two different stages. The major difference cited between the "evolving" and "embryonic" stages is the state's influence. In the latter, the government plays a key role in the provision of HE and the QAA would be a government agency and in most cases, the countries are small and under-resourced. Zimbabwe fits the profile of a country in the embryonic stage with fifteen universities, nine of which are public institutions and ZIMCHE is a government initiative as explained in chapter one. As in other African universities, HE is underfunded and government support dwindling.

The available literature specifically on QA in Zimbabwe is by Garwe, on the establishment and operations of ZIMCHE (Garwe, 2014), the causes and consequences of increasing fraudulent degrees in Zimbabwe (Garwe, 2015) and the status of doctoral education in Zimbabwe (Garwe, 2015). As a member of ZIMCHE (deputy chief executive officer), Garwe writes from an organisational perspective and as yet, there is no literature documenting ZIMCHE's interaction with HEI's and an assessment of its QA practices. This is one of the gaps that my thesis will address. Samkange and Zano (2013) examines the quality of Open and distance learning. Focusing on T & L, they understand quality as "how well learning opportunities provided to students are helping them to attain their desired qualifications, by ensuring that "appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided". Samkange and Zano's findings largely reveal student satisfaction with T & L in terms of lecturers' communication skills, knowledge of the subject area, feedback through tests and assignments and sensitivity to learner needs. The challenges highlighted included limited use of modern technology, inadequate modules as well some challenges in teaching. While Open and distance learning is a component of university learning, my study focuses more on the traditional face to face teaching in conventional universities.

Most of the Zimbabwean literature examines the effects of resource shortages on HE and perceptions of the curricula and by extension, quality. For instance, Mapako et al (2012) examine student and lecturers' perspectives on the mass education system. While improving access to HE and providing requisite qualified labour, the participants cited problems such as inadequate resources, high workloads for lecturers, limited accommodation and learning. Because of high student-lecturer ratios, "students become passive learners" (p. 33) and "half-baked students" are produced. Majoni (2014) also highlights challenges to learning resulting from underfunding, low academic morale, shortage of skilled personnel, poor academic leadership and management processes, inadequate processes to monitor quality and lack of knowledge on QA. However, Majoni's study does not provide much in terms of the explanations underlying these challenges.

According to Kurasha and Chabaya (2013), the Zimbabwean HE curriculum is largely influenced by external factors such as student demands, societal expectations, industry and commerce, globalisation, partnerships by institutions, the need for professionalism in business,

academic research to revamp the economy, competition among institutions and government expectations. The dominant influence in shaping the curriculum is evidently economic and there is very little in terms of human development. Kurasha and Chabaya argue that the curriculum's quality is dependent on "the extent to which it meets individual attributes, the requirements of the national economy, the needs of society and the future challenges and aspirations of the nation" (p.56). This study's major recommendation is that curriculum development should be based mainly on the trends of globalization. However, this thesis argues to the contrary and advocates for human development as a goal.

To augment funding in HE, most universities have adopted various strategies to increase student enrolment, for example, the introduction of parallel and block release programmes and the adoption of multi-campus systems. In passing, Chigora (2010) expresses fears that increased student enrolment may compromise quality as lecturers elect to focus on fund raising projects rather than student learning. So far, there is no literature on the effects of parallel and block release programmes on the quality of the education provided. In addition, there is a growing emphasis on a multi-campus university system in Zimbabwe and though laudable in increasing access to HE, it can also affect quality. However, using one HEI as a case study, Dhliwayo (2014) highlights benefits such as decentralisation which avails space and resources. This is unlike Kenya, where Kigotho (University World News, 2015) highlights the limitations of multi-campus universities and under-resourced periphery campuses providing poor quality education.

Apart from Samkange and Zano (2013), there is no specific literature on T & L in Zimbabwean HE and this thesis intends to address this dearth. The available literature shows that HE in Zimbabwe is influenced by a variety of factors which impact on the provision of quality education. The economic and political challenges experienced in Africa and specifically Zimbabwe have resulted in setbacks and problems in HE. The dearth of literature on the quality of T & L illustrates that to some extent, concerns with quality in HE are still focused on basic issues like funding, provision of the necessary infrastructure and qualified personnel, while the learning process is side-lined, even though it is what largely determines the success of the education received by learners and their economic and social contribution to society.

2.5 Conclusion

From the literature, some of the problems associated with QA are related to its conceptualisation which then informs the processes put in place. The emphasis on accountability to stakeholders such as students, employers and the government, combined with the need to competitively attract students results in QA rather than QE. QA focuses on practices such as accreditation and audits which rely on easily measurable variables such as availability of resources, qualified lecturers and graduate outputs without examining T & L. From the literature, quality is highly contested and is context specific resulting in the need for the inclusion of the various HE stakeholders so as to practice it for everyone's optimal benefit. There is comparatively little literature on the various dimensions of quality especially T & L in Africa, specifically in Zimbabwe. Most emphasis is on the challenges such as resource constraints, internationalisation and the adoption of "best practices". Therefore, this study seeks to examine factors informing the conceptualisation of T & L in Zimbabwe and its application within the context of the broader global QA debate. A review of the literature illustrates that HE quality is largely informed by the human capital framework and this study seeks to offer an alternative way of conceptualising quality, employing the human development approach as will be illustrated in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Conceptualising quality from a human development perspective

3.0 Introduction

As the previous chapter shows, there is considerable research and debate surrounding the definition and conceptualisation of quality in HE. This study builds on and contributes to this research by conceptualising quality from a human development perspective. The analytical focus on human development diverges from the dominant emphasis on human capital and positions HE as having both instrumental and intrinsic value. From a human development standpoint, the notion of quality is inextricably linked to HE's role in the social, economic and political development of individuals and societies. According to the 1990 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP: 1) Report, human development:

> is much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth, which is only a means- if a very important one- of enlarging people's choices ….Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities- the range of things that people can do or be in life.

This definition shows the multifaceted nature of human development and its people centred approach. It is within this notion of human development that I locate my understanding of quality and the role of HEI's.

The chapter has four sections. The first section examines the differences between a human capital and a human development conceptualisation of quality. These two are not polar opposites but their dissimilarities inform conceptions of quality that value different ends. The human capital approach values human economic productivity while human development focuses on human freedom and wellbeing. The latter is broader and includes aspects of the human capital approach. Because the study conceptualises quality as human development, I then analyse the relationship between human development and education, particularly HE. This

is followed in section two by a brief explanation of the CA and the major tenets central to the study, namely: wellbeing, capability, functionings, agency, conversion factors and adaptive preferences. The third section discusses my conceptualisation of quality and outlines the process through which I identify two ideal-theoretical indicators, namely critical being and the capability for work as proxies for quality. Section three ends with a detailed examination of the two indicators, followed by the conclusion in section four.

3.1 Conceptualising quality: Human capital and human development

The ideological perspective informing notions of quality determines its conceptualisation, operationalization and valued outcomes. Given the sometimes divergent views and expectations of the various stakeholders involved in HE, the ideological underpinnings of quality are bound to vary, and at times converge. Conceptions of quality in HE can be underpinned by frameworks such as the human capital approach and alternatives including the human rights approach and human development informed social justice approaches. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the dominant and more popular human capital approach and the alternative that I believe human development offers. While other approaches are also important:

> a social justice approach can provide a fuller rationale for a policy focus on education quality than that provided by a human capital approach with its emphasis on economic growth or by the existing human rights approach with its emphasis on the role of the state in guaranteeing basic rights (Tikly and Barrett, 2011: 4).

By focusing on valued context specific educational outcomes, a social justice approach provides a good starting point for understanding quality. I will first discuss the human capital approach then the alternative provided by the CA.

3.1.1 Human capital approach

The human capital is cited by Fitzsimons (1999) as the most influential economic theory of Western education, setting the framework of government policies since the early 1960's and

increasingly being regarded as a fundamental determinant of economic performance. Previously only applied to business, human capital has gradually become widely used in HE which is now regarded as a billion dollar "industry", growing because of internationalisation, franchised provision and online learning (Knight, 2003). In the human capital approach, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is an important development indicator which underscores economic growth. In line with this emphasis on economic growth, people are regarded as economic beings who should contribute to national growth. According to this approach, the major rationale for investing in education is because it increases worker productivity which in turn enhances both individual and social returns, contributing to economic growth (Naidoo, 2003 and Walker, 2011, 2013). The social returns and intrinsic value of education are spin-offs, secondary to its instrumental and private value. This approach is informed by rational choice theory which assumes that humans act in their own economic best interests thus leading to market based approaches (Tikly and Barrett, 2013).

In HE, human capital theory has influenced perceptions of knowledge and perpetuated the idea of the knowledge economy. Researchers who have written extensively about the development of the knowledge economy and its impact on HE include, but are not limited to Bertelson (1998); Burbules and Torres (2000); Morley (2001, 2003); Flores-Crespo (2001, 2008); Ball (2010); Brown and Lauder (2010); Santos (2010) and Gidley et al, (2010). As result of human capital's economic emphasis Naidoo (2003: 250) observes:

> the perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun to eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a 'public good'. Relatedly, the belief that universities require a relative independence from political and corporate influence to function optimally … has been eroded.

While universities were once regarded as "a site of reason and therefore a public good, this idea has been eroded over the years by various forces" (Ibid). According to Barnett (2003: 12) the forces include external factors such as "quality, managerialism and entrepreneurism…which have been imposed on or assimilated into higher education discourse and practice". Bertelson (1998: 142) thus observes that when HEI's "uncritically adopt the crude mechanisms of market supply-and-demand they yield their own right to define the nature and goals of higher education and surrender their institutions to the laws of the market economy". This illustrates how the university's autonomy has been compromised, thus

exposing HE to the vagaries of the market economy. Because of the growing hold of the idea of the knowledge economy, the relationship between HEI's and society has increasingly emphasised economic benefits to individuals and the nation state. Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash (2014) note that human capital constructs education as being instrumental, a means to an end. They argue that an individual's ability is assessed in terms of their economic production, consequently, the claim is that people rationally invest in more education as a way of improving their personal economic returns.

Backing this instrumentalist agenda and reductionist view of HE are several multilateral institutions, for instance, the OECD, the World Trade Organisation, the WB and IMF. The "reductionism" is a result of the "narrow vision of the activities, products and objectives of the University and a narrow vision of what is a knowledge society" (Boni and Gasper (2012:453). In pursuit of this reductionist view of HE, Boni and Gasper (2012) highlight that education is important in terms of economic competitiveness and efficiency and:

> the intended product of this kind of a university is a specialised and knowledgeable individual prepared to play an economic role in society; the goal of the university is the preparation of a skilled labour force trained to support commercial economic activity; and relevant research is cutting-edge investigation that provides a sectoral or national competitive advantage. In sum, higher education is conceived as an instrument for economic objectives and exportable product (Ibid).

This restricts HE's potential to address broader social and political issues relating to human development such as poverty eradication, democracy and sustainability. Furlong and Cartmel (2009) conclude that there is conflict between universities' business strategies and their role in civil society. Hence some of the criticisms of the human capital approach include its foregrounding of managerial and economic considerations to overcome educational challenges and its inability to situate education as a social system (Lauglo, 1996; Klees, 2002; Torres, 2003). Consequently Hill (2003: 115) argues that, "education as a social institution has been subordinated to international market goals...Within universities; the language of education has been very widely replaced by the language of the market".

The idea of HE as a market player means that university values and activities have been reoriented and "knowledge and instruction have been identified as an instrument, a 'good' to be manufactured, packaged, bought and sold" (Bertelson, 2003: 131). The idea of goods being

"packaged, bought and sold" creates the image of something procedural and clinical, implying that academics and students have no say in their learning process. As one of Balls' (2010: 216) respondent comments, "It's as though children are mere nuts and bolts on some distant production line". Similarly, Buckler (2015: 22) explains that, at "macro level", the human capital framework situates "teachers (and pupils) as standardized, predictable components of education systems and fail to acknowledge the views, values and agency of teachers working within these systems". This positions HE as producing value free workers suitable for the requirements of the market. The idea of HE as a business is buttressed by its inclusion as one of the services listed on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)[11]. Consequently, T & L has also been redirected to serve narrower occupational goals and fundable research being useful in commercial applications (Bertelson, 1998 and Boni and Gasper, 2012). Therefore, education:

> has been redefined as primarily a means of skilling more and more young workers, and of providing professional and in-service courses in life-long (re)learning; rather than about expanding the minds and developing the capacities of citizens (Leonard, 2000: 182).

These trends in information and knowledge creation while not necessarily hegemonic on the ground, nonetheless do mean that universities are meant by policymakers to "fuel the driving forces of the transformation towards a global knowledge society" (Van Damme, 2002: 4). It is within this context of knowledge creation and dissemination that HEI's become particularly important. In most instances, HEI's are compliant with the needs of the knowledge economy. For example, while Mamphela Ramphele was the vice chancellor of the University of Cape Town she stated:

> We are moving into what has been described as 'the global knowledge society'. Intellectual capital will become the currency by which nations trade. The development of a critical mass of intellectual capital will be the key to success. It is the responsibility of our education system to ensure we develop this 'critical mass'. (Quoted in Sunday Times, 24 May, 1998: 3)

This neoliberal and utilitarian agenda is also apparent in the 13th General Conference of the AAU request for African universities to be "responsive to labour market demands and provide

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[11] The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is a World Trade Organisation Treaty aimed at expanding the multilateral trading system to the service sector and is in favour of trade liberalisation.

the necessary competencies and skills to their students to make them employable" (AAU, 2013: 3). While I am not negating the importance of employability and economic growth measures, not least in developing countries and for students from poor socio-economic backgrounds, I am arguing against its over-emphasis and exclusion of other aspects of development. The difficulty is when the instrumental excludes other benefits of HE.

Within this human capital discourse, notions of quality foreground performance, accountability and the use of performance indicators that create competition to achieve high rankings. As highlighted in chapter two, the performance indicators include inputs such as teachers' qualifications, student/teacher ratios and other resources as well as outputs in the form of employability/productivity of graduates and academic publications (Lanzi, 2007), university rankings, league tables and publications in certain journals, all of which direct attention away from the process of learning (Abbas, Ashwin and McLean, 2012). For Maassen (2012: 4), quality education in human capital terms produces students with "appropriate skills that are transferable across sectors, countries and cultures". Quality is therefore defined by easily measurable variables while processes that cannot be measured are excluded. The emphasis on performance indicators is related to the marketing strategies employed in HE which use words such as "excellent", "unique", "quality" and "international" similar to the branding and advertisements by businesses such as banks or fast food outlets (Bertelson, 1998).

In addition to these indicators are also contextual issues important in understanding quality, especially in developing countries. The understanding and operationalising of QA has become standardised based on models from developed countries which do not consider local, national, regional and institutional variations. For example, Tadesse's (2016: 31) study illustrates challenges in applying "externally imposed definitions and structures" in Ethiopia where "a lecturer at an under-resourced Ethiopian university is expected to behave in the same way as a colleague at a wealthy Australian institution". Similarly, Tikly and Barret (2011) and Buckler (2015) identify challenges in employing a human capital conceptualisation of quality in low income countries. Writing specifically on HE, quality and human development, Buckler (2015) notes how, in human capital terms, improving quality means increased investment in educational inputs such as personnel and technological environments, which do not exist in most Sub-Saharan African countries. It is therefore assumed that poor quality outcomes are a result of inadequate resources and this perpetuates a resource oriented agenda. For Buckler,

such solutions "perpetuate the human capital inspired assumption that resources improve quality, not people" (p. 25).

The dominance of market forces in HE has re-oriented the direction of development initiatives which impact on the nature of graduates as well as expectations of HEI's. Public-good university education is "easily neglected in the rush for income and prestige" (UNESCO, 2009: 21). The limitations of conceptualising quality in economic terms have paved the way for the use of alternatives foregrounding human development such as the social justice approach. Writing from a social justice perspective, a number of scholars have come up with their own derivatives of quality for which the ultimate goal is human development. These include, the Implementing Educational Quality in Low Income-Countries (EduQual)'s approach, Singh's notion of transformation (2001), McLean's critical pedagogy (2006) and the CA (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). While acknowledging that public good values are not written onto a blank contextual and historical slate it is important to integrate economic development with broader socio-political development and not give primacy over either one. As highlighted by Boni and Walker (2013), the 21st century University faces complex challenges which necessitate the need for a more expansive imaginary promoting human development in conceptualising HE.

3.1.2 Human Development and Education

Unlike a singular focus on economic development, emphasising human development places human flourishing at the centre of development because "income is not the sum total of people's lives" (Alkire, 2010: 23). Despite illustrating instances where higher income does not equal enhanced capabilities, Sen (1999: 90) also notes the importance of economic growth in promoting human development. He states:

> income is such an important means to capabilities. And since enhanced capabilities in leading a life would tend, typically, to expand a person's ability to be more productive and earn higher income, we would expect a connection going from capability improvement to greater earning power and not only the other way around.

Although not always the case, in some instances, economic growth avails the necessary resources for human development, making it instrumental in achieving human development

rather than it being the intended outcome. This is mostly the case in developing countries with low levels of economic development. While Sen identifies the importance of giving "the markets their due" he also underscores the importance of "other economic, social and political freedoms in enhancing and enriching" people's lives (1999: 9). Such a view considers development as an interconnected process of expanding substantive freedoms (Sen, 1999). Highlighting the need to go beyond the idea of human capital, Sen advocates for the human development approach which utilises principles such as poverty reduction, sustainability, voice and participation as an additional and inclusive framework and people, not economic growth as the ends of development. Education, specifically HE is therefore related to human development through its process of expanding the choices people have.

Several researchers, including Nussbaum (2000); Walker (2006); Flores-Crespo (2007) and Boni and Gasper (2012) have indicated that there is a substantiated link between education and human development. Education has both instrumental and intrinsic value. It is instrumental in providing improved access to better career opportunities, earnings and life prospects and has intrinsic value because it increases the possibility of appreciating and engaging in a wide range of activities that are fulfilling for their own sake, for example, the enjoyment of art, critical thinking and civic participation. While the attainment of education in general enhances a person's capabilities, making "the horizon of vision wider" (Sen, 1999b: 199) HE further amplifies available options. Consequently, institutions such as universities are important to human development in their potential to foster capabilities. However, as Flores-Crespo (2007) observes, education does not automatically promote development; favourable conditions should exist. For instance, if there are limited employment opportunities, development, either economic or human will be difficult to achieve despite access to education.

Despite this normative role assigned to HE, the relationship between universities and society is not simple. Historically, universities had "the monopolistic role of creating values, and producing and disseminating knowledge" (Morley, 2001: vii), were largely autonomous and generally had a strong public good role. However, the role of HEI's today "is immense, complex and vital" (Taylor, 2008: xxiv) because of the shifting perspectives of knowledge, repositioning HE as an industry rather than social institution. It is at the backdrop of such perceptions that O'Shea (1999: 23) argues that education has to be personally, socially and culturally enabling and education policies "must be judged in terms of *enrichment of the human*

life and not simply through job market earnings or productivities". I therefore argue that HE has an ethical obligation to society to inculcate values that enhance individual and collective wellbeing and freedom beyond skills-based competencies. Rather than ethics referring to the spiritual, I borrow Frost's (University World News, 2016) understanding of the ethical values important in the pursuit of knowledge. For Frost, ethical means that universities have "to question truth claims, to seek explanations, to find good understandings, and not to propound one or another doctrine without question". Instead of universities conforming to the expected role of producing the requisite human capital, they should take a normative stance and promote broader human development.

Specific to HE, human development and quality, Tikly and Barret (2011, 2013); Boni and Gasper (2012) and Buckler (2015) examine the importance of conceptualising quality differently. Using central human development values such as wellbeing, participation and empowerment, equity and diversity as well as sustainability, Boni and Gasper (2012) propose a list of areas that human development can inform university activities in research, teaching as well as social engagement and governance. For them, these human development values are central in understanding the quality of HE because they provide "a broad vision of the university and its potentials and responsibilities" (Boni and Gasper, 2012: 467). Their study provides a theoretical understanding of quality as human development and underscores the importance of "multidimensionality, diversity, participation and local contexts" in conceptualising quality, on which this study builds.

Based on the understanding of HE's role in promoting human development, I conceptualise quality learning as being transformational. Good quality education should, through T & L enhance or empower students (Harvey and Knight, 1996; Harvey, 2006), improving their and their societies wellbeing. Despite the difficulty in defining the kind of change (Cheng, 2014), I suggest that conceptualising quality as human development imbues it with normative values thus providing a direction for change. The concept of quality as transformation is related to notions of transformative learning (Cheng, 2014). Transformative learning conceives of T & L in the Aristotelian sense: as a form "of doing action – action aimed at achieving some worthwhile end" (Waghid, 2005). This form of teaching enables students to find their voice and create opportunities to question existing knowledge and construct new meanings (Ibid). For Mezirow (2003), it typifies the idea of transformative learning illustrated by Habermas's (l984) differentiation between instrumental and communicative learning. The former "is about

controlling and manipulating the environment, with emphasis on improving prediction and performance". The latter is based on "understanding what someone means when they communicate with you. This understanding includes becoming aware of the assumptions, intentions and qualifications of the person communicating" (Mezirow, 2003: 59). Transformative learning resonates with the ideas of Foucault (1988) and Freire's (1978) critical pedagogy as illustrated by Giroux (1988); Apple (2004); Walker (2006) and McLean (2006). McLean (2006: 3) summarises thus:

> Current policy interventions construct university education as a technical-rational pursuit and overemphasize its economic purposes. Higher education teaching and learning should rather be constructed as intellectually challenging and for emancipatory as well as economic purposes.

Human development is a broad framework operationalised in terms of the expansion of people's capabilities, I will therefore use the CA to specifically assess the quality of T & L in Zimbabwean HE. Alkire (2010) explains the CA as "provid[ing] the most visible philosophical foundation for the concept of human development" (Alkire, 2010: 14). Human development is concerned with expanding peoples range of capabilities and functionings through removing obstacles, and thus the CA focuses on people's freedom to be or do what they have reason to value and to choose accordingly.

3.2 The capabilities approach

Developed by welfare economist, Amartya Sen and subsequently by Martha Nussbaum, the CA is useful in illustrating how things are, how they ought to be, and offers suggestions on how to accomplish such. Despite not being a theory, the approach provides a normative framework and concepts which are useful in conceptualising, measuring and evaluating phenomena such as poverty, wellbeing and inequality, as well as the institutions and policies that affect them (Crocker and Robeyns, 2009: 61). The CA is important for evaluating wellbeing in ways other than economic measurement. It is central to conceptualising quality HE with an overall vision of human development. Crocker and Robeyns (2009: 65) note that the CA:

proposes a broad, rich, and multidimensional view of human wellbeing and pays much attention to the links between material, mental, and social well-being, or to the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of human life.

This openness makes the CA an attractive framework to use in my study. As Ball (1993: 10) indicates, "what we need in policy analysis is a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories" and the CA, being a broad normative framework, provides the means for this complicated analysis of quality policy and its application. In this study, I use the CA to evaluate whether the conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality at macro, meso and micro level encourages quality T & L which enhances the wellbeing of graduates and society. Such a question typifies complex challenges to which the CA can be applied.

Explained briefly below are key concepts in the CA used to interpret the empirical evidence in my study.

Capabilities: These are the available options a person can freely choose from. Sen (1992: 42) explained capabilities as

> Represent[ing] the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another…to choose from possible livings.

For example, the capability for education means the availability of well-resourced schools that people can easily access without any restrictions such as affordability, gender and race. Thus, social arrangements should accord people the freedom to choose valued functionings. In this way, "Human capability formation is human development" (Boni and Walker, 2013: 3). Expanding the options one has to choose from is regarded as development in the sense that one has a wider range of possibilities from which to select valued beings and doings.

Functionings: For Sen (1999: 75) functionings are "the various things a person may value doing or being". A capability is a potential functioning while a functioning is something that has already been achieved. Walker (2006: 128) explain a functioning as:

the practical realization of one's chosen way of life. It might include quite basic functionings such as being well-nourished, having shelter and access to clean water and being physically safe, or more complex functionings like being well educated, having paid professional work, being respected, taking part in discussions with your peers, being scientifically literate, and so on.

For a capability to become a functioning, there should be a real freedom to choose what one values.

Human wellbeing: This is the end of development (UNDP, 1990) and constitutes more than individuals' economic positions or their economic contribution. Sen (1992: 39) explains:

> in terms of the quality (the 'well-ness' as it were) of the person's being. Living may be seen as consisting of a set of interrelated 'functionings' consisting of beings and doings. A person's achievement in this respect can be seen as the vector of his or her functionings. The relevant functionings can vary from such elementary things as being adequately nourished, being in good health, avoiding escapable morbidity and premature mortality, etc, to more complex achievements such as being happy, having self-respect, taking part in the life of the community...

Wellbeing is further divided into wellbeing achievement and wellbeing freedom. The former is explained by Robeyns (2005: 102) as the standard of living ("personal well-being related to one's own life") plus the "outcomes resulting from sympathies" for example the feeling one gets after helping someone less off than themselves. This is a feeling of wellbeing that has been attained. The latter is a combination of a person's current state and achievements as well as the freedom to achieve other valued ends. This is evaluated through their capability set (Crocker and Robeyns, 2009). My study focuses on both forms of wellbeing; wellbeing achievement through what students have attained through HE such as knowledge and the ability to participate as well as wellbeing freedom in the form of the opportunities available for them to attain other valued ends such as decent work.

While human development has several values, I focus on wellbeing because it is expansive and according to Deneulin and Shahani (2009) and Nussbaum (2011) "includes broad aspects of human life—each non-reducible to others. These include health, independence, religious freedom, material resources, dignity, food, happiness" (Wood and Deprez, 2012: 477). In this regard, HE "widen(s) opportunities 'to be and to do' for our students both in the spirit of individual enhancement and its impact on and influence of social enhancement" (Ibid.). The

CA therefore enables an assessment of "each student's development more in terms of what he or she values and less in terms of what we have valued or what we want them to value" (Ibid: 476) in terms of their individual and social wellbeing.

Agency: Sen (1999: 11) advocates that people be "active participant[s] in change, rather than … passive and docile recipient[s] of instructions or of dispensed assistance". Similarly, Alkire (2010: 25) notes that there are variations in spaces for agency and "human development empowers people to advance the common good, enabling then to have a voice and to participate in the processes that affect their lives". There is also personal and social agency which works in different forms and contexts. While personal agency is concerned with an individual bringing about change that s/he values, social agency means acting for the good of society in accordance with the aim of social justice which entails fairness and mutual obligation in society, and may even compromise one's wellbeing. Sen (1985) further differentiates between agency freedom and agency achievement. The former refers to the freedom an individual has convert opportunities into valued outcomes while the latter constitutes the realised objectives that a person values.

Participation and voice: The idea of participation is strongly related to the notion of agency. Participation refers to voluntary involvement in bringing about valued ends without elements of coercion or imposition which may implicitly exist because of power relations (Sen, 1999). Several authors including Sen (1999); Boni and Gasper (2012) and Bonvin (2012) identify participation as key to the enhancement of capabilities. Bonvin (2012: 12) argues for the need for stakeholders to "co- author" in all stages of collective decision-making and public policy-making and not "to be reduced to the status of passive beneficiaries". However, he goes on to note that while the wishes of all participants might not reflect in the outcome, it is important that they are considered in the process. Participation and voice are therefore central components of my two ideal-theoretical indicators; critical being and the capability for work which are dependent on individuals making themselves heard. These are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Conversion factors: These are factors that facilitate or hinder the conversion of resources into capabilities and or functionings. Sen (1999) grouped them into personal, social and

environmental conversion factors. Personal conversion factors relate to the individual, for example, physical condition, gender or talents. Social conversion factors relate to the societal conditions such as public policies, cultural practices and social relations such as race. Environmental conversion factors refer to the physical or built environment under consideration, for example, mountains, climatic conditions, infrastructure and communication systems. All these conditions are ideally meant to work together to facilitate individual and collective well-being. Where capabilities are not being achieved we look to conversion factors and social arrangements.

*Adaptive preferences***:** This refers to the way in which people accept the way that their choices are shaped by various constraining factors. These constraints become "accepted, internalised perhaps, even to the point that we fail to notice them, and so limit the preferences that we then express or the choices which we then make" (Bridges, 2006: 18). For Sen (1999: 63) adaptive preferences are when:

> Deprived people tend to come to terms with their deprivation because of the sheer necessity of survival, and they may, as a result, lack the courage to demand any radical change, and may even adjust their desires and expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible.

Bridges (2006) identifies five possible explanations for adaptive preferences. These are social and economic distribution of opportunities and political prohibition, ignorance and or failure of rationality, socially embedded expectations and individuals' own perceptions and construction of oneself.

In discussing the application of the CA, Alkire (2010: 22) indicates that work relating to education and capabilities brings Sen's ideas "into dialogue with styles of pedagogy and has deepened and clarified distinctions between policies to advance human capital and policies to advance education for human development". It is the latter that this study focuses on. Because of the study's focus on T & L, I borrow conceptions of quality from scholars such as Boni and Gasper (2012), Tikly and Barrett (2011, 2013) and Buckler (2015) who have written specifically on HE, quality and human development. According to Tikly and Barrett (2013: 14), quality education can be understood in terms of "the opportunities to develop the greater capability set that is afforded to different individuals and groups through the processes of teaching and learning. Similar to my study, the insights offered by the CA in Buckler's (2015:

43) examination of teachers' professional capabilities will contribute towards a "re-conceptualization of education quality" by challenging what is valued in the name of quality education and the extent to which it can be pursued and achieved. Buckler's research supports Unterhalter's (2007:75) argument that the CA:

> urges that when making evaluations in education we should look not just at inputs like teachers, hours in class, or learning materials or outputs, earning from a particular level of education – be these earnings, that is a form of resources – or preference satisfaction – doing what is best for the family as assumed in human capital theory. Evaluations should look at the condition of being educated, the negative and positive freedoms that sustain this condition and the ways in which being educated supports what each and every person has reason to value.

Such an assessment would impact on how quality is understood and evaluated, with quality education mobilising resources for future work and life opportunities. Within this context, Buckler (2015: 44) argues that ideas of quality should facilitate thinking differently about the "role, process and content" of education beyond "standardized testing and the pursuit of human capital or rights…. [including education's role in understanding] what it means to be a good citizen and lead a valuable life" (p. 44). Building onto this perspective that emphasises "the importance of context and through providing a normative basis for thinking about quality in relation to development" (Tikly and Barret, 2011: 16) provides a useful starting point for re-conceptualising quality and how it can be evaluated in my study.

Lanzi (2007: 2-3) sums up the relationship between education and the CA:

> Overall education value is defined by the sum of *instrumental value* (teachers qualifications, test scores, certifications etc…), *intrinsic value* (achievements in agency, autonomy and well-being) and *positional value* (established social relations, access to positional goods etc…). This means to take into account, in describing, designing and implementing any process of human capital accumulation, its effects on implicit social norms (as labor market ones), social inequalities (by race, gender and so on) as well as individual freedoms and powers, all elements not fully represented by job-market positions or earnings. Hence, educational inputs are conceived as effective as long as they work for people and whether they are designed consistently with human needs, ends and aspirations. Finally, in the CA, education is thought of as a basic tool for fighting human poverties (monetary and not) giving individuals not simply job-oriented competencies and skills, but also *life-skills* and *life-options* in terms of being able to know, to do, to be and to live together in a social compact.

Lanzi's summation of the CA's conceptualisation of the value of education highlights the human development perspective which informs this study. Education is both a capability and a capability enhancer (Sen, 1999; Walker, 2006 and Nussbaum, 2011). It is also a substantive freedom and Sen (1999) argues that institutions such as HEI's should contribute to enhancing freedoms. It is in light of this understanding that I evaluate the role of Zimbabwean HE in enhancing the effective freedoms gained through education for the individual and, the effective freedoms gained through education for wider society. Similar to Tikly and Barret (2011: 9), I propose that education of good quality gives students "the capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being". In short, quality education is "the successful pursuit of valued capabilities" (Buckler, 2015: 37).

Given the foregoing conceptualisation of quality as human development and how the CA can provide an assessment of quality policy and practice, the discussion now turns to how I operationalised my idea of quality through the identification of two ideal-theoretical indicators I felt represented both intrinsic and instrumental values of HE.

3.3 A new conceptualisation of quality

Unlike Nussbaum's (2000) endorsement of a universal list of central capabilities, Sen (1999) argues for public deliberation in identifying valued context specific capabilities. Because of contextual variations I agree with Sen's reluctance to endorse a fixed and universal capabilities list. However, as shown earlier, given the broad reach of the CA and the breadth of perceptions on quality as explained in chapter two, I believe that specific indicators would be helpful in guiding my study.

From the foregoing discussion on literature on HE and human development including Barnett (1997); Sen (1999); Robeyns (2003); Walker (2006); Nussbaum (2006); Wilson-Strydom (2011); Boni and Gasper (2012); Bonvin (2012); Schendel (2013) and Buckler (2016); I identified common valued outcomes. These included, critical thinking, wellbeing, participation and empowerment, equity and diversity, sustainability, democratic citizenship, global citizenship, narrative imagination, confidence, empathy, critical self-examination, knowledge

and imagination, learning disposition, employability, capability for work, practical reason and agency. While not specific to T & L and not all consistent with each other, these capabilities form the general human development values associated with quality education. Because this thesis focuses on the quality of T & L, one of my indicators was informed by Boni and Gasper's (2012) matrix of human development values and University activities as well as Wood and Deprez's (2012) work on "Teaching for human wellbeing". Boni and Gasper's values related to T & L are presented in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Matrix of human development values and University activities (teaching)

University activities / HD Values	Teaching
Wellbeing (includes autonomy, critical thinking; reflexivity, emotions, feelings, spirituality, self-esteem, initiative, creativity, physical fitness etc.)	Critical thinking methodologies Reflexive practices Open curriculum (majors & minors system, allowing students to create their own knowledge fields etc)
Participation and empowerment (includes agency, social transformation)	Participation on the curriculum design of degrees and courses (faculties and students), course evaluations (students) Participatory learning methodologies Relate contents to reality
Equity (social justice) and diversity (learning between different cultures and identities)	Cultural and multicultural presence in the curriculum Moral education Part-time and virtual courses
Sustainability (global issues; holistic perspectives; long term perspectives; interdisciplinarity)	Global issues in the curriculum (ethics, sustainable development, peace studies). Interdisciplinary approaches in teaching. North/South networks and programs

Boni and Gasper (2012)

Despite the breadth and depth of Boni and Gasper's human development values illustrated above, my study's focus on wellbeing directed me to a specific examination of critical thinking and reflexive practices which I believe are included in Barnett's (1997) notion of critical being. Although not used as indicators, the other human development values such as participation and empowerment, equity and diversity as well as sustainability also feature in the study. For example, critical thinking and reflexivity are translated into critical action through participation. This is explained greater detail under critical being. I also borrowed from Wood and Deprez (2012) application of the CA to teaching and wellbeing where they questioned among other things, whether students;

- experience just and inclusive democratic practices in the classroom,
- Critically reflect on course learning in light of lived experiences and political/economic power relations,
- Develop critically reflective and dialogic habits of mind?
- Examine their own and others' adaptive preferences in light of alternatives?
- With regard to lives people actually can and do live, what opportunity does each student have to imagine new possibilities for his or her own life and identity as a result of course learning?
- With regard to education as foundational for agency and freedom, what opportunity does each student have to fully participate in the classroom?

Wood and Deprez (2012: 487- 488)

These were some of the questions I had to ask in order to assess the student's wellbeing. Combining Wood and Deprez's and Boni and Gasper's ideas of quality, T & L and wellbeing informed my idea to use Barnett's (1997) critical being as an indicator of quality, the tenets of which are explained below.

Because of the centrality of graduate employability as a HE outcome (Bratti et al, 2003; Knight and Yorke, 2003; Yorke and Mantz, 2006; Tomlinson, 2010; Walker and Fongwa, forthcoming), especially in a developing country context, I also wanted to assess how employment contributes to individual and social wellbeing. This was provided by Bonvin's capability for work which includes both the instrumental and intrinsic value of HE and wellbeing. In addition to employability, it also includes capabilities such as knowledge and

imagination as well as learning disposition. Instead of the narrowly constructed understanding of employability which focuses on readiness for work, I use it here as including the development of other attributes for personal development and contributions to society (UNESCO, 2012: 29). This entails an examination of how HE fosters students' individual well-being and their agency, enabling them to "reason about and make choices about the life they have reason to value. Such a life includes but is not reduced to economic opportunities and action" (Walker and Fongwa, forthcoming: 263).

While people differ in terms of the lives and achievements they value, I propose that critical being and the capability for work are meta-capabilities that are advanced by quality T & L and have the potential to foster human development. Intertwined with these are notions of agency, participation and voice. They are also capability generators in that they foster other capabilities such as lifelong learning, wellbeing, confidence and citizenship. The two theoretical indicators can both be assessed from a skills-based human capital and human development perspective as discussed below, although I argue for the latter.

Similar to Walker (2006) and Wilson-Strydom (2016), rather than limiting myself by relying on preconceived ideas of quality- a top-down approach, I combine a top-down and bottom-up approach. Because the generation of my ideal-theoretical indicators lacks public deliberation, I attempt to mitigate this challenge by including the participants' voices and perceptions through empirical research. Such a bottom-up approach enabled a comparison of my ideal conceptualisation of quality with those of the participants at macro, meso, and micro-levels so as to inform, modify and augment my theoretical conceptualisation and if necessary, provide plural perceptions of quality. To some extent, enabling the participation of the people involved, balanced power dynamics. It also provided a broader lens through which to reconceptualise quality of T & L. Despite the prescriptive potential of having pre-determined indicators, it provided a starting point and substantive basis to choose capabilities relevant to quality (Robeyns, 2003). Differentiating between Sen and Nussbaum's approaches, Claassen (2011), explains that if combined with empirical evidence, research grounded in Nussbaum's (2000: 505) philosophical approach which argues for universal capabilities would not just be "the mere result of isolated reflection thus making it more acceptable. Similarly, Walker (2006) argues for some form of participation and dialogue to enable HE stakeholders contribute in coming up with a non- definitive, relevant and general list.

I found Bonvin and Barnett's notions attractive as potential indicators for quality; the idea being if there was evidence of these, one could say there is quality as human development. While these are indicators, they are not meant to over-determine the data. As will be evident in the empirical chapters five, six and seven, the data is allowed to "speak back" in dialogue with the indicators.

3.3.1 Critical being

The question "What defines HE?" is a pertinent one when deciding what constitutes quality. Kariwo et al (2014) argue that HE is learning provided in post-secondary institutions for the purpose of developing inquisitive and open minds in the search of truth, that is, critical thinking. While HE is meant to nurture critical thinking, Nussbaum (2000) notes that this important capability is supposed to be developed at an early age through debating complicated, controversial, social and moral issues. However, defining what constitutes critical thinking is not simple.

For advocates of human capital, critical thinking is cited as an important graduate attribute (Hanushek and Woßmann, 2007; OECD, 2010 and Maassen, 2012) while in human development terms it is considered an important capability (Nussbaum, 1997 and 2006; Walker, 2008; Boni and Gasper, 2012). However, the difference between its conceptualisation as a skill and as a capability lies in the depth and values ascribed to it. The former narrowly perceive it as a skill based on logical thinking (Schendel, 2013) while the latter consider it to be more than an instrumental proficiency. For example, Nussbaum understands critical self-examination as meaning not accepting one's culture and traditions unquestioningly and to develop "the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact and accuracy of judgement." (2006: 388). Further, Walker's (2008) critical reasoning entails students having the ability to reflect on and re-examine their valued ends when the need arises, as well as developing the agency to bring about valued change. Walker further ascribes critical reasoning as having moral relevance unlike the critical thinking associated with skills based pedagogy. Although Nussbaum's idea of critical self-examination, one of her three central capabilities including global citizenship and narrative imagination (1997, 2006) offers a rich explanation of criticality, as does Walker's praxis I think

that these can be subsumed by Barnett's idea of critical being. Barnett (1997: 2) notes how critical thinking has been co-opted by the human capital agenda as one of the "competencies needed for economic regeneration" in order to improve the efficiency of stated outcomes. He therefore, advocates for a "thick" notion of critical being that is more than just critical thinking. His (1997) idea of critical being comprises critical thinking, critical self-reflection and critical action. This is a complex state of being in which each succeeding level offers a higher form of alternative possibilities of understanding, from critical thinking, critical thought to critique. An important aspect of critical being is that it cannot just be understood as a form of individual action or mental state but has to be situated in relation to the self and society thus linking it to ideas of agency, voice and participation. It is therefore criticality in the areas of knowledge, (critical reason), the self (critical self-reflection) and the world (critical action). The following concepts inform the notion:

- Critical thinking- merely a level of critical reason and one of the lower levels of critical reason.
- Critical reason- that form of criticality which is oriented towards formal knowledge.
- Critical self-reflection- that form of criticality which finds expression in being directed towards the self.
- Critical action- that form of criticality which finds expression in direct engagement with the world.
- Critical being- That state of human being in which is integrated the three forms of criticality

Barnett (1997: 179).

It is these ideas of critical being that this study will utilise to assess quality in T & L. Students with this capability are able to critically engage with knowledge, themselves and the world (Barnett, 1997: 1) and able to reimagine alternatives for continuous development and undertake critical but constructive action.

Table 3.1: Domains of critical being and their associated forms of criticality

	Domains	Forms of criticality
1	Knowledge	Critical reason
2	Self	Critical self-reflection
3	World	Critical action

Barnett (1997)

Through these classifications, Barnett explains the three irreducible purposes of critical being, namely, to critically evaluate academic knowledge, critically understand oneself and extend one's capacity to act in the wider world. Ideally, HE should be aware of all three forms and engender student transformation in these. Barnett's idea of critical being enables critical thought (criticism within discipline) and critique (criticism against the discipline).

Barnett (1997: 29) notes that, "To see critical thinking as a deployment of cognitive skills by individuals is to adopt a blinkered approach… critical thinking without a critical edge". For him, critical thinking limited to the domain of knowledge is simply a collection of skills which is value neutral and may maintain the status quo. Given that education is not value free, this makes a skills based notion of critical thinking fall short of its potential because universities are not "mere conveyors of accepted truths, but places where truth claims, propositions, theories, understandings, and explanations, for all kinds of things and events, are subject to critical scrutiny" (Frost, University World News, 2016). This makes HEI's ethically responsible for students being "participant[s] in a social institution committed to the search for knowledge" (Ibid.) not just for economic benefit but for collective use. While critical thought is discipline specific, critique is a form of criticism against the discipline itself, hence a form of meta-criticism.

Rather than asking "what is critical thinking?" Barnett advocates for asking "what is critical thinking for?" This directs HE towards exposing students to "alternative frameworks for gaining knowledge of the world and for acting in it" (p. 167). The three domains of critical thought have to be integrated by HE as shown below. The domains are intersecting and multi-dimensional rather than separate and hierarchical.

Figure 3.2: Critical being as the integration of the three forms of criticality
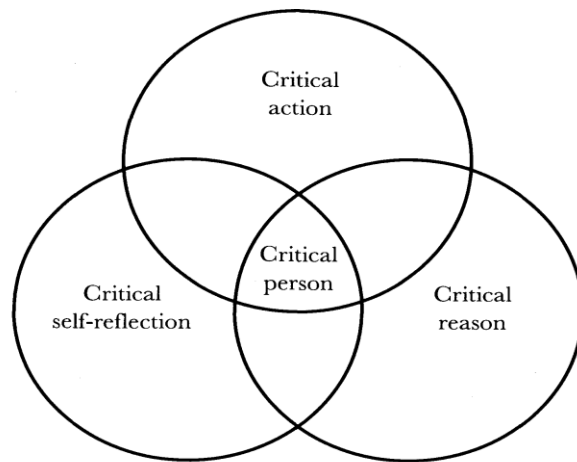
Barnett (1997)

Given the study's focus on wellbeing, I will evaluate the students' achieved wellbeing in relation to critical thinking, self-reflection and action as well as their "real freedom" to engage in critical actions. Intertwined with the idea of critical being is the notion of agency. Critical action requires individual courage in pursuing valued beings and doings. Combined with agency is the need for space to voice contributions. Barnett thus notes that critique needs relatively democratic structures to function, although these do not always exist. Hence the need for qualities such as bravery and persistence.

The role of education as a public good means that it is not valuable to the individual alone but for society in general. These benefits can only come to fruition if the educated individuals practice their agency as part of criticality in relation to the self and society. The assumption underlying this study is that, ideally, HE should produce graduates with enhanced capabilities who value education intrinsically and extrinsically and can contribute to the economy and society. Critical graduates "who are not subject to the world but able to act autonomously and purposively within it" (Barnett, 1997: 56).

3.3.2 Capability for work

Similar to critical being, both human capital and human development approaches acknowledge the significance of the instrumental value of HE in securing employment and economic growth.

However, for the human capital approach, HE's function is limited to engendering skills necessary for versatility in employment. Although the employment opportunities availed by HE are important in any context, more so in developing countries, this utilitarian focus should not be HEI's sole function. Sen (1999) acknowledges the mutuality between income and capabilities', noting that what matters is not GDP growth or increase in turnover, but the development of people's real freedom to choose the way of life they have reason to value. Based on this premise, Bonvin (2012: 11) argues that human well-being is to be assessed with "an enlarged 'informational basis' not reduced only to monetary assets or commodities, nor subjective utility or satisfaction". Therefore, while the CA foregrounds the intrinsic value of HE, it also recognises the important instrumental roles that it plays in economies and societies; the opportunities to gain knowledge and skills for decent work being central capabilities.

The capability for work is therefore "the real freedom to choose the job one has reason to value" (Bonvin, 2012: 13). What constitutes a "valuable" job has plural dimensions as different people value different aspects such as benefits, working conditions, wages and leisure time, illustrating that, there is no one size fits all understanding of a good job. Bonvin and Farvaque (2005: 6) explain the capability for work as:

> either a) capability not to work if one chooses to (via a valuable *exit* option, Hirschman 1990); or b) capability to participate effectively to the definition of the work content, organisation, conditions, modes of remuneration, etc. (i.e. the *voice* option).

The exit option is dependent on the availability of "valuable alternatives" such as another job or financial compensation through unemployment benefits. It is the basis upon which workers can be involved in improving existing working conditions. Workers actively improve their conditions through employing the capability for voice. This is explained as "the ability to express one's opinions and thoughts and to make them count in the course of public discussion" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005: 7). Similar to critical being, the capability for voice relies on personal characteristics such as confidence and agency and it "more deeply relies on the social and institutional environment and its ability to listen to the concerns voiced by the persons involved" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005: 16) rather than imposing its own ideas. This makes the capability for work a "freedom-based notion" (Ibid: 7) in which prevailing personal, social and political conditions enhance or constrain people's capabilities. This is related to Sen's (1999) process and opportunity freedoms which view freedom as both a means and an end to development. The process freedoms are those "processes that allow freedom of actions and

decisions" while the latter refers to the "opportunities that people have, given their personal and social circumstances" (Sen, 1999: 17). Both kinds of freedom are necessary for development to occur.

Bonvin and Farvaque (2005) argue that the capability for work consists of the agency and well-being perspectives. In the former, agency refers to "doing and being, whatever goals one has reason to pursue, be they or not connected to one's well-being that is, roughly speaking, one's standard of living". In the well-being perspective, "the person should be seen "as a beneficiary, whose interest and advantages have to be considered" (Sen, 1985b: 208). Understanding the capability for work from the wellbeing perspective assesses wellbeing in terms of material (income) and non-material (fulfilment, social belonging) aspects. These either limit personal agency to economic participation or widen it to include individual or collective involvement in political and social areas. When agency is limited to economic participation, the objective is material well-being with emphasis on a well-paying job whilst neglecting the social values of work. When there is an emphasis on the non-material aspects of work, the capability for work:

> is not identified as the mere possibility to get an adequate wage, it focuses on the agency dimension, that is the capability to participate in society. In terms of well-being, the non-material aspects of work are particularly emphasised and depicted as freedoms workers enjoy or wish to enjoy (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005: 8).

Thus the capability for work has plural values which include both the intrinsic and instrumental value of work. This emphasis on freedom to choose valued beings and doings in relation to work will enable me to assess students' **"**real freedom" to choose the work they have reason to value**.**

In this context, HE should create an enabling environment to expand learner capabilities and facilitate their choices, not impose "specific behaviours or functionings" (Bonvin, 2012: 12). These capabilities include critical being, confidence, voice, participation and competences in terms of skills and practical knowledge. In addition, the broader social and political environment must be conducive and support students' freedom of choice. Because individuals differ in what they have reason to value in terms of employment, for example, wages, benefits, health, safety, Bonvin adopts Sen's (1999) idea of conversion factors in explaining influences in categorizing quality employment. These include resources, personal and social conversion

factors. The first refers to income, benefits and the conditions which they are submitted, while the second refers to an individual's skills and competencies enhancing the company's competitiveness and social competencies such as ability to work as part of a team. The last refers to the quantity and accessibility of jobs for qualified people and job quality including the state of the labour market and existing regulations on unemployment benefits and discriminatory practices. The personal, social and environmental conversion factors either facilitate or hinder the conversion of available resources or capabilities into functionings. As illustrated below, an individual's achieved functionings are influenced by the means and freedom to achieve.

Figure 3.3: From entitlements and commodities to achieved functionings

Individual entitlement	Personal AND	Individual capability set		One vector of achieved functioning
Vector of commodities	Social AND Environmental Conversion factors	Vectors of functioning	Choice	
= Means to achieve		= Freedom to achieve		= Achievement
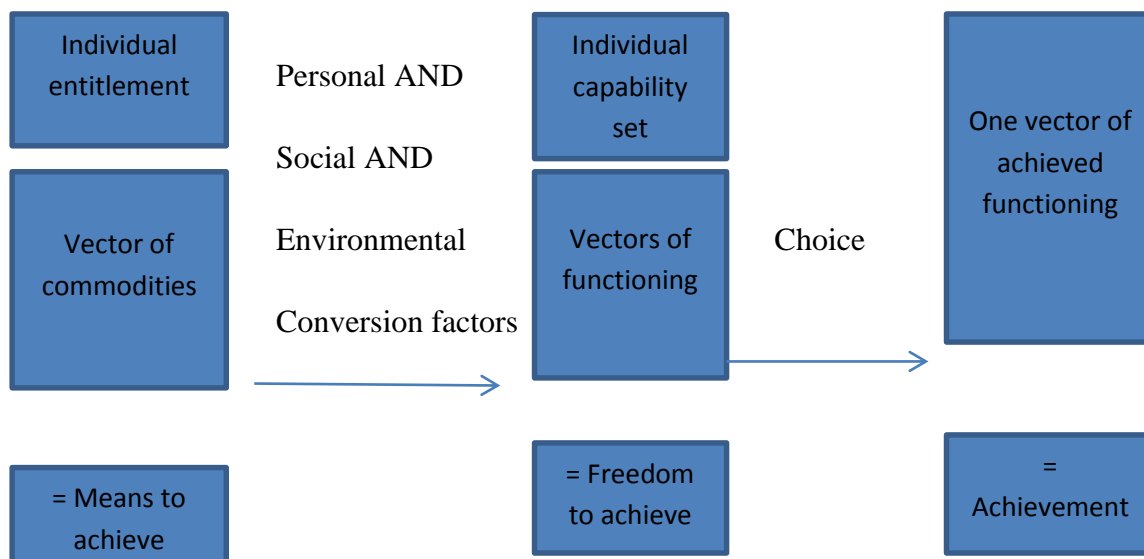
(Bonvin and Farvaque (2005)

The existence of constraints may result in adaptive preference (explained earlier) where, "the person declares herself satisfied with an obviously unsatisfactory situation, which is often the case if opportunities are very scarce" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005: 15).

According to the capability for work, "job quality requires taking into account a plurality of dimensions, as well as the ways these are intermingled" (Leßmann and Bonvin, 2011: 92). A

combination of these factors determine the attractiveness of a job. For example, an individual can choose a lower paying job because it enables her to have family time. This will be the individual's choice based on what she values. This means that instead of a narrow approach to employability which focuses on work readiness, we need to acknowledge the development of other attributes for personal development and contributions to society (UNESCO, 2012: 29). With this broad understanding of work, Yesufu (1973: 82) argues that universities "must not pursue knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of and amelioration of the conditions of life and work of the ordinary man and woman".

Agency and participation (voice) are recurrent themes in the capability generators mentioned above. Participation is an enabling condition and a sub-capability across both indicators while agency requires a platform of capability (wellbeing). Agency and participation will be discussed as they relate to the two indicators.

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter has traced the process through which I developed my conceptualisation of quality. From a general argument about quality as human capital and quality as human development the chapter ended with a focus on two ideal-theoretical indicators I use as proxies of quality. I argue that quality T & L should promote opportunities for the development of knowledge, skills and values which expand students' abilities to achieve individual and collective wellbeing. The study normatively argues for the expansion of the role of HEI's beyond their current focus on skills and employment to fostering human development values. Using critical being and the capability for work as proxies for quality, the thesis focuses on T & L because ideally, it is the process through which these capabilities are enhanced in learners. However it is important to note that these two theoretical indicators are not meant to be prescriptive and may mask the perceptions of the study participants in real world settings. In presenting the study findings, which are reported in chapters five, six and seven, the different views of the participants will also be given, with the possibility to re-think and re-interpret the two theoretical indicators in chapter eight. Given this conceptualisation of quality, the next chapter focuses on the methodology employed to collect relevant data.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This study aims, through the perceptions of selected stakeholders, to evaluate the quality of T & L in Zimbabwean HE through a human development and capabilities lens. Drawing from my theorisation of quality in the previous chapter, I will assess how quality T & L is operationalised to answer the following research questions:

1. How do conceptualisations of quality in T & L influence policy and practice in universities?
2. How does the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) conceptualise and enforce teaching quality in various universities and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?
3. How do the individual universities and two particular case studies understand and operationalise teaching quality and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?
4. How can human development contribute to conceptualising and operationalising quality in T & L in HE?

While the research draws from the perceptions of different participants in a bid to present variant viewpoints, an attempt is also made to generate in-depth information concerning the quality of T & L through the use of two specific case studies. The study's underlying assumption is that HE should produce graduates not just for the purposes of economic growth but also for ethical social development.

This chapter explains the process through which data was collected to answer the above research questions. The first section begins by explaining the research's paradigmatic foundation to locate the study's epistemological, ontological and methodological bases. Section two presents and justifies the use of the qualitative research approach employed. Ethical considerations, as well as the access procedures followed are examined in section three,

it also reports challenges faced. Section four examines how the particular cases were selected as well as the study participants. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection process and methods used, namely, document review, semi-structured interviews, FGD's and observation in section five. The following section explains the process of transcribing the data while section seven describes the data analysis process. My positionality as a researcher and how this may have impacted on the study is examined in section eight, followed by the chapter's conclusion in section nine.

4.1 Paradigmatic foundation

The term paradigm was proposed by Thomas Kuhn (1970) and research scholars have defined it as the differences in world views. Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 107) understand paradigms to be "basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions". For them:

1. The ontological question is concerned about what form and nature reality takes, and what can therefore be known about it;
2. The epistemological question is concerned about the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known; and,
3. The methodological question is concerned with how the researcher can go about finding out what he/she believes to be known.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that, paradigms are at times complementary and at times conflicting in their understanding of epistemology, axiology and ontology which informs the theoretical framework and methodology used in data collection (Ibid.). While there are various ways of classifying research paradigms, Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify four paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism or interpretivism. Positivism understands reality as objective and scientific, disregarding possible subjectivity from the researcher while post-positivism emphasises objective and scientific knowledge but also acknowledges the possible effects of biases. Critical theory emphasises reflective assessments and critique of society and culture. Interpretivism believes that it is impossible to have value-free, objective research because there are multiple realities and researchers draw on their values

and beliefs throughout the research process. My study employs the interpretivist paradigm and also draws on elements of critical theory.

An interpretivist perspective aims to "advance knowledge by both describing and interpreting the phenomena of the world in attempts to get shared meanings with others" (Bassey, 1999: 44). Interpretivists argue that reality is subjective and can only be understood in its natural day to day setting from the point of view of those who experience it. Hence Bassey (1990: 45) notes that in interpretivism, "the researcher seeks to understand and to portray the participant's perceptions and understanding of the participant's situation or event". This makes the interpretivist paradigm appropriate for my study because it enables the collection of qualitative data on T & L based on the macro, meso and micro perspectives of stakeholders such as national and university policymakers, deans, lecturers and students. Since the study aims to explore conceptions and practices of quality in promoting human development and wellbeing, this can best be done by examining the lived experiences of those involved.

I also draw on critical theory to guide my research design and data collection process. Although critical theorists are not a homogenous group, "there is a common dual commitment to critiquing current conditions and to propelling action towards future emancipation and social justice" (McLean, 2006: 8). Kincheloe and McLaren (2000: 281) define critical social theory to be

> concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system".

The wide range of dynamics covered by critical theory makes it applicable to many contexts and topics, including HE. One of the key aspects of critical theory is the "hermeneutic act of interpretation" which believes that qualitative research is about an individuals' interpretation and nothing is value free. While interpretivists argue that reality is subjective and attempt to understand the multiple realities of participants, critical theorists go further and critique these multiple realities, identifying areas of injustice and proposing alternative ways of looking at things. As chapter three indicated, education is not value free and I theorised the role of HE from the normative position of the CA. Similar to the CA which I use as my theoretical

framework and its critique of the human capital approach, critical theory is based on assumptions which include but are not limited to:

Critical enlightenment- critical theory examines competing power relations and recognises that privileged groups support the status quo which gives them their advantage.

A rejection of economic determinism- While acknowledging the importance of economic factors, critical theory rejects the belief that they are the sole determinant of the nature of human lives. This shares similarities with the CA's rejection of the over-emphasis on human capital, opting instead for human development which is more inclusive.

The critique of instrumental or technical rationality- technical rationality emphasises technique and procedures in an attempt to separate facts from value choices. Again, a human capital informed idea of quality emphasises easily measurable quantitative facts rather than subjective and qualitative processes which are part of human development.

(Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000: 281- 282)

From a critical theory perspective, education and what counts as knowledge typifies power relations and is bound by "a set of social relations that are legitimated by their depiction as natural and inevitable" (Ibid: 283). Specific to HE, critical theorists such as Freire (1972); Habbermas (1985); Giroux (1988); Apple (2004) and McLean (2006) have developed the idea of critical pedagogy which positions education as "a force for social change" rather than "the vehicle for reproducing existing social hierarchies" (McLean, 2006: 1). Through critical pedagogy, universities employ teachings which develop socially just students. It is this normative perspective of criticality that underpin the epistemological and ontological basis of my research. Combining interpretivism and elements of critical theory which shares similarities with the CA highlighted above, thus influences my choice of the research approach.

4.2 Research Approach

In order to explore the conceptualisation and practice of quality in university T & L from a human development perspective the research employed a qualitative research design for a number of reasons. As illustrated in chapter two, conceptions of quality are subjective and

varying. Such complexities can be more adequately understood by using a qualitative approach, as compared to a quantitative one emphasising the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables and not processes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Because the study is a value laden attempt "to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3), multiple perspectives have to be considered when trying to draw a picture of how quality is perceived in Zimbabwean HE.

Also, a qualitative research design enables an understanding of the case, the kind of inferences to be made from the data and the value placed on the data by different audiences (Simons, 2010). My study provides a critique of the human capital approach and its emphasis on quantifiable and objective data as proxies of quality. Because the study required descriptive data on perceptions on quality and how they are operationalised, normative values ascribed to HE (if any), and individual experiences of T & L from the students and lectures, a qualitative approach was more suitable. This approach provides an alternative to quantitative national evaluations resulting in positivistic assumptions and the predominance of an uncritical international transfer of educational policy and practice (Crossley and Watson, 2009). The aim of the study is not for comparison or generalisation purposes but to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study; in this way, I aim for depth rather than breadth. As Bassey (1990) argues, while statistics of a particular problem may reveal interesting trends, it is the stories behind these statistics that provide the explanation. I intend to explain the stories that inform conceptions and practices of quality in T & L; that is, "the why and how" of human interactions and experiences (Agee, 2009).

Because of the acknowledged effects of subjectivity that a qualitative design has, I employed a variety of methods in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the information gathered and the rigour of the analysis. Data was collected in three phases (macro, meso and micro) through a mixture of document review, observation, in-depth interviews and FGD's.

4.3 Ethical considerations and access

As part of the research process, I had to consider specific ethical principles to guide me. These included the research participants' protection by respecting their confidentiality and ensuring informed consent and voluntary participation prior to commencing the study (Denzin and

Lincoln, 2005 and Piper and Simons, 2005). The participants' and universities confidentiality was assured through the use of pseudonyms. Informed consent necessitates that participants have full knowledge of the research and be aware of potential effects of their participation in the study prior to agreeing to take part (Piper and Simons, 2005). Voluntary participation means that participants willingly take part in the research and can freely withdraw at any time. To this end, I sent an information letter and informed consent form to potential participants prior to the telephone and face to face interviews (See Appendix two). The information letter contained the study's background, research context, aims and possibility of the publication of the thesis as well as articles from the thesis. This might result in publicity, either negative or positive for the institutions and HE in Zimbabwe as a whole. Thus, despite all efforts to maintain confidentiality, I also had to explain that total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because technology and a knowledge of Zimbabwean HE can, to some extent, be used to identify respondents. For those involved at national policy level the condition of anonymity is also difficult to maintain as their participation in the study was in their official capacities as key personnel providing information that is mostly in the public domain. This makes them relatively easy to trace. Although Piper and Simons (2005) argue that when conducting research in the policy context, naming is an important way of acknowledging an individual's contribution to generating knowledge, given Zimbabwe's volatile political environment, naming individuals, even those in the public domain may not be a wise decision so I anonymised all participants.

In accordance with the University of the Free State requirements I applied for and was granted permission by the University's Ethical Committee to conduct research. The process of gaining access was slow and laborious. To start off phase one, I sought permission via email from the ZIMCHE director to interview a representative of the HEQAC, as well as heads or representatives of the Directorates of Registration and Accreditation, and Academic and Institutional Audits. My application had to go through several screening processes including the ZIMCHE Information and Public Relations office. It took several months of patient email correspondence and telephone follow-ups before the interviews could be arranged. The representatives of the Directorates of Registration and Accreditation, and Academic and Institutional Audits were easier to contact and interview than the representative of the HEQAC. After contact had been made, informed consent was sought from these three respondents and subsequently granted and the interviews conducted (See Appendix three for interview guide).

My research process illustrates Piper and Simons (2005) acknowledged difficulty in getting informed consent. In Zimbabwe, despite the lack of standardisation, HEI's have ethical clearance procedures to be followed before one can access research participants who work or study there. Consequently, as part of phase two, permission to conduct research was sought from all fifteen Zimbabwean universities to interview their QA representatives. To this end, I sent emails introducing myself, together with the information letter and informed consent form to the universities. Because four out of the 15 HEI's have independent QA offices, I applied directly to them and to the remaining 11 universities I applied to the registrar. From the four, three were approved by the QA offices while at the remaining one I had to re-apply to the pro-vice chancellor (PVC). Of the 15 universities, only four responded to my emails granting me permission to conduct the interviews. I sent follow-up emails and received two more positive responses. When subsequent emails did not yield responses I telephoned the universities and was informed by two institutions that their internet was non-functional. I had to email my documents to colleagues working at the institutions for submission to the university administration on my behalf and I was granted access. My telephone calls to two other HEI's located in one geographical region were unanswered and I was later informed that the areas telecommunication system was non-operational. From another telephone conversation I was informed that that the QA representative was on sabbatical leave and the remaining four universities claimed not to have received my emails. This prompted me travel to Harare, where three out of the four remaining universities are located to seek permission. Out of the three, two granted me access while the remaining declined without giving a reason. Since I had been granted access to 10 of the 15 universities, I decided to conduct research in only those. Information from websites and the internet is public information so consent was not sought to use this and I was able to begin document review while waiting for the universities' responses.

After receiving institutional consent I had to acquire informed consent from the university representatives. In seven out of ten cases, this was not difficult. However, in three instances making contact was difficult because the participants were also deans and or lecturers and thus constantly out of office. However, interviews were set up after some follow-up telephone calls and I was able to telephonically interview eight QA representatives (See Appendix four for interview schedule). To maintain the HEI's anonymity, I use the letters A- J as pseudonyms. For the two case studies, in chapters six and seven I opted for botanical pseudonyms of indigenous trees which I consider as being neutral. From being U-I and U-J in chapter five, the

case study universities become Baobab University and Msasa University from chapters' six to nine. This was to differentiate the two case studies from the other eight universities and make them easier to identify when reading. To enable the reader to track the two universities, from chapter five, I put the pseudonyms Baobab University and Msasa University in brackets each time I mention them. Since phase three entailed an in-depth assessment of two case study universities' QA systems, additional permission was required from the universities to interview both academics and students. At Baobab University the registrar approved the application and at Msasa University I had to resubmit my application to the deputy vice chancellor (DVC) who subsequently approved it. At both universities, the QA representatives preferred face to face rather than telephone interviews and gave me later appointment dates during the time I had set aside for fieldwork.

I set aside time for phase three field work during March and April 2015 given that the Zimbabwean HEI's semesters begin late January or mid-February. I began data collection at Baobab University and my appointment with the QA representative had to be rescheduled twice due to other unscheduled important meetings. The "best case" departments identified at Baobab University were Maths, Chemistry and Physics in the Natural Sciences and Development Studies and Psychology in the Social Sciences. After selecting the case study department as explained in section 4.4.2, I obtained informed consent from the deans, lecturers and students. The departmental chairpersons facilitated the meetings with the lecturers and students. At the beginning of April I began data collection at Msasa University by interviewing the institutions' QA representative. He identified the "best case" departments in the Social Sciences as the Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance as well as Sociology department and the Faculties of Health Sciences and Agriculture in the Natural Sciences. The university registrar furnished me with an introductory letter to the deans and departments, which made it easier for the departmental chairpersons to introduce me to lecturers and students. In both institutions, voluntary participation was emphasised at all times and anonymity granted as far as possible, especially for the academics and students. Since the study involved students above the age of eighteen, parental consent was not needed in addition to the students' consent. The interviews and FGD's were scheduled during times convenient to the participants so as to minimise disruption to T & L.

Given the multiple participants on various levels (ZIMCHE officials, university representatives, deans, lectures and students), power relations needed to be taken into

consideration and this requires "emotional intelligence" (Layder, 2013). For Layder, this is the researcher's ability to empathise, develop trust and rapport with the participants in addition to being critical and questioning the image portrayed by participants, their biases, judgements or values concerning the phenomenon under study and having the ability to identify inconsistencies in the information given. All these qualities were important in my study as the various stakeholders valued different aspects of quality and foregrounded their own agendas, a possibility that I had to discern as the interviewer. For example, some of the participants in their official capacities gave sanitised descriptions of their institutional QA system but off record offered their personal opinions and a more realistic portrayal of conditions. Recognising that this may impact on the validity of my findings, in part, this was mitigated by having multiple participants and the use of observations.

4.4 Case and participant recruitment selection

For the purposes of attaining an in-depth understanding of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of T & L in Zimbabwean HE I chose to undertake a case study approach.

4.4.1 Case study

Although a case study is a common way of conducting qualitative research, it is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the subject. While there are various ways of studying the subject, I selected a case study approach with my qualitative research design thus making it a qualitative case study. Robson (1993: 52) refers to a case study as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence". This enabled me to examine the conceptions and actual practices of T & L in the HEI's. I also selected the case study approach because of the possibility of triangulating methods (Robson, 1993) such as my use of observations, interviews, FGD's and document review, which enabled me to incorporate my impressions and perceptions of the phenomenon under study. A case study is also flexible and provides further explanation on proposed relationships or alternative views (Robson, 1993). In my case, this gave me room to propose a different conceptualisation of quality to the more common one informed by the human capital approach. Because I applied the CA, which is a

normative framework, my perceptions and views of quality will therefore feature prominently in the study.

As Stake (2005) observes, a case study focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events. In this study, I focused on the perceptions of those actors involved in determining and implementing quality standards in HE, such as ZIMCHE and university QA officials, the lecturers operationalising the policies and students as the recipients of the "quality" teaching in an attempt to obtain a holistic picture of quality as policy and quality as practice. Similarly, Ozga (1990: 67) notes the importance of "bring[ing] together structural, macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perceptions and experiences". Within this research process, it is important to remember, as Robson (1993) highlights, that 'the case is studied in its own right, not as a sample from a population' (p. 5). This is reiterated by Stark and Torrance (2005: 33) who argue that a case study "privileges in-depth enquiry over coverage: understanding 'the case' rather than generalizing to a population at large". Although the deeper analyses of quality within institutions might not be contextually relevant in other universities, the inclusion of several institutions makes the data relevant to all stakeholders involved in quality in the HE system in Zimbabwe.

Stake (2005) identifies three kinds of case studies, namely; intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and collective case study. An intrinsic case study is undertaken because of a researcher's interest in a case without it representing a particular problem or facilitating an understanding of a phenomenon or theory building. The second case study is examined to illustrate a particular problem or to redraw a generalisation. The case plays a "supportive role" and assists in understanding the researcher's external interest. The last type of case study refers to the study of multiple cases in order to investigate a phenomenon. "It is instrumental study extended to several cases" and selected on the belief that understanding them will facilitate a better understanding or theorizing about a larger collection of cases (Stake, 2005: 437). According to his characterisations; I will use a combination of the last two; instrumental case study and a collective case study.

My collective case study is Zimbabwe with information gathered from ZIMCHE and HEI's with the aim of understanding the conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality in T & L. Hence, Zimbabwe's fifteen universities were potential cases within the collective case, to be used in establishing the general perceptions and application of quality in T & L. Zimbabwe was selected as a case study because of its nascent QA system and efforts being made to improve it by adopting "best practice" approaches. This is especially important within the global debate on QA and QE as well as the strong influences from countries in the global North whose quality systems have evolved over the years. I also selected Zimbabwe because very little research has been carried out to assess its QA policies and practices as well as research linking quality to human development. The instrumental case studies are the HEI's whose QA representatives were interviewed to provide a general understanding of quality as well as the two in-depth case studies to provide depth in understanding. I believe that an instrumental case study is more appropriate to my study rather than the intrinsic case study because it assisted me in understanding the phenomenon of quality T & L as well as to theorise about quality as human development.

4.4.2 Sampling, cases and data collection

The research was carried out in three phases and involved data collection from multiple sources. Phase one began by a review of documents relating to quality in HE, specifically T & L. These documents included QA policy documents and instruments from ZIMCHE and the universities where available; university websites and newspaper articles and other relevant statistics. All these provided a starting point in understanding how quality, especially in T & L, is conceptualised in Zimbabwean HE. This phase informed the next step in the first phase of the research process, which was conducting in-depth interviews with ZIMCHE officials.

I used purposive sampling throughout the research because I wanted to interview participants with in-depth knowledge of and involved in conceptualising and or operationalising quality T & L. Therefore, selection of participants was dependent on their knowledge or experience of the subject under study (Robson, 1993; Bernard, 2002 and Lewis and Sheppard, 2006). Purposive sampling was used to uncover their "multiple realities" (Nyagah, 1995). Layder (2013) refers to this kind of sampling as "problem sampling" because it is based on the

participants' relevance to key problem questions. Selected participants should contribute to solving or illuminating the problem under study and explaining issues raised.

Three ZIMCHE divisions were purposively selected and officials representing the departments were interviewed. These were the HEQAC, the Directorate of Registration and Accreditation, as well as the Directorate for Academic and Institutional Audits. These three were chosen for their positionality on quality because they are "dedicated to discharging the core business of Council" (Garwe, 2014: 4). Quality in universities is assured through accreditation and audits which are conducted by these two directorates. The directorates report to the HEQAC which in turn makes recommendations to the ZIMCHE Council. In-depth key informant interviews or focused interviews were employed to establish the policy perspective and the factors informing the conceptualisation of quality in Zimbabwe's HEI's. These assisted in understanding quality as it is conceptualised at macro level and how it is enforced. The information provided by the three representatives partly informed phase two of the research; uncovering how quality is then understood and implemented in the various HEI's.

The second phase of the research focused on the meso-level and examined how quality is conceptualised and enforced at university level. At the time of data collection, there were 15 universities in the country but only representatives from eight institutions were interviewed telephonically (See section 4.3). The QA representatives' were purposively selected for their key role in their universities' QA maintenance. These interviews were conducted in order to establish an overall understanding of the different HEI's conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality in T & L and how the idea of quality as it is conceptualised by ZIMCHE is understood and translated into practice by the various institutions. This also established whether universities have any QA systems in place, their general objectives and the university values.

Phase three was a micro-level in-depth assessment of how quality is understood and practised using two instrumental case studies. From the 10 participating universities, I selected two case studies: one public and one private university for an in-depth analysis as phase three of my research. This was because an in-depth examination of all 10 universities would be time consuming and given the length of the PhD study, unfeasible. The two case studies I selected were among the oldest comprehensive universities offering the largest range of degree programmes. However, the public university initially chosen declined (see section 4.3) and another was subsequently selected. After establishing the general perceptions on quality of T

& L in phase two, an in-depth evaluation was made by examining the perceptions of academics and students on the operationalisation of ZIMCHE's and universities policies on T & L. Although not a comparative study, having a private and a public university as instrumental case studies provided useful insights and variations given the increasing role played by private universities in Zimbabwe and beyond. In addition, the private university being church-based was contextually different from the public university.

During the interviews with the representatives from Baobab University and Msasa University, I asked for examples of "best case" departments in terms of quality T & L, one from the natural sciences and the other from the humanities. Although there was the possibility of overlaps, the faculties were broadly split into the natural sciences and the humanities to facilitate easier analysis. It was from these two "best case" departments in each university that I interviewed faculty deans, lecturers and students as phase three of the research. Because quality is stakeholder relative, there is a need for a clear understanding of what these various stakeholders' "have reason to value", their reasons for valuing them and whether they are in the students' best interest.

At Baobab University, from the three Natural Science departments identified as "best cases"; Maths, Chemistry and Physics I chose Maths because the chairperson was available and easily accessible compared to the other two. From the two "best cases" Social Sciences departments; Development Studies and Psychology, I chose the latter because some of the Sociology lecturers were away. At Msasa University, the "best case" departments in the Social Sciences were the Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance and the Sociology departments. I chose the latter because the former only offers diploma and Masters Courses with no undergraduate degrees. In the Natural Sciences the chosen departments were Health Sciences and Agriculture and I chose the latter because it was more accessible.

To uncover how T & L quality policies are understood and implemented at middle management level, I interviewed two faculty deans to which the "best case" departments belong. According to Hénard (2012), the participation of deans is important because they are on the boundary between the institution's decision-making bodies and academics doing the actual teaching. "They encourage the cross-fertilisation of strategic approaches, build and support communities of practice, and nurture innovation in everyday practice in the classroom" (Hénard, 2012: 5). Given the lecturers centrality to the T & L process, in-depth interviews were conducted with

two lecturers from each "best case" department in order to uncover academics viewpoints and establish how notions of quality are understood and enacted at departmental level. Because of the possibility of perspectives differing according to gender and teaching experience, where possible, I interviewed one male and one female lecturer and or one with the most teaching experience as well as one with the least. For example, at both universities, I interviewed a male and a female lecturer in three out of the four departments. The fourth department only had two permanent male lecturers, one with over 20 years teaching experience at university level and the other with only one year. I interviewed both. I selected permanent lecturers because they are usually on campus during working hours and I also felt that they are more involved in university business than part-time lecturers. A total of six interviews were conducted with key participants from each university (two deans and four lecturers).

The last part of phase three, comprised FGD's with four final year students from each of the "best case" departments. These were made up of both male and female participants in order to identify gender differentiations, if any. The students voices helped identify what students' value, how they conceptualise quality in HE and establish any intersections and divergences with the lecturers and policymakers views. I purposively selected final year students who were near completion, having gone through most of the required modules and work related learning and would therefore have a better understanding of what quality T & L entails, as well as have a better sense of their expectations of HE. Three out of four FGD's were conducted initially and the remaining one done at a later stage because the students were preparing for exams at the time. From each class I only selected four volunteers because I wanted to keep the focus groups small and manageable and enable each participant to have a chance to speak.

4.5 Data collection

The instruments and data collection methods were informed by the requirements of the conceptual framework, research design and the type of data required to answer the research questions. What follows is a discussion of the data collection methods employed in the study.

4.5.1 Document review

Despite the limitations of document review identified by Yin (1994) such as having insufficient detail and biased selectivity, it is a useful method of collecting data. For instance, Neuman (2006) argues that documents provide accurate, detailed and often unbiased data useful for qualitative research. They assist in uncovering official positions and meanings and further understanding of the problem (Merriam, 1988). Additionally, document analysis is useful when used in conjunction with other qualitative research methods (Bowen, 2009). A review of university websites revealed institutions' implicit and explicit views which inform their conceptualisation of quality. As has been noted by Kuenssberg (2011), university mission statements are an important indicator of how universities wish to present themselves, their priorities, aims, and values. These were also useful in understanding how universities perceive quality and the values they expect from graduates. Newspaper articles on perceptions of quality, graduate attributes and HEI's were also important in tracing developments relating to HEI's over time.

 The documents used include the ZIMCHE Act and QA instruments such as institutional and programme accreditation and audit requirements, universities QA and T & L polices where available, university websites and newspaper articles as well as any other relevant statistics. Document review is important because as Stark and Torrance (2005) observe, documents can provide information on immediate content, changing content over time and illustrate the resultant changing values. Policy documents provided an understanding of how quality is conceptualised and gave an insight into the country's required standards.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

These were the main source of data collection. I used interviews because I intended to obtain "qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject with respect to their interpretation of meaning" (Kvale, 1996: 124). My thesis aimed to understand the meanings that the participants ascribed to quality in T & L and how they operationalise it. This enabled an assessment of how quality can be conceptualised as human development. Interviews also offered insights into the past from the participants' memories, explanations of how things are and descriptions of current problems (Stark and Torrance, 2005). Out of the possible options of using structured,

unstructured and semi-structured interviews I opted for the latter because it is a "conversation with a purpose" (Thomas, 2009). These interviews are referred to by Layder (2013) as directed, in-depth, key informant interviews, focused or intensive interviews. Robson (1993) notes how such interviews are flexible enough to allow people's views and feelings to be heard but still give the interviewer control over the interview, directing it according to specific pre-determined themes. Similarly, Kvale (1996) acknowledges the flexibility of semi-structured interviews and argues that while there are specific themes to be discussed, there is still "openness" to changing the sequence in order to follow up on answers. Similarly, Layder (2013: 83), highlights that in these kinds of interviews "the questions are shaped and influenced by the problem-focus of the research and the 'problem' and 'topic' questions that flow from it". The combination of general and explanatory problem questions and specific and descriptive topic questions influence the research design and research questions to be answered.

Open-ended questions were asked in the interview guides, for example, "What knowledge, skills and values does this institution intend to foster in its graduates?" Such questions elicited responses based on participants' knowledge and experience, making their implicit knowledge more explicit (Flick, 2009). This triggered the participants' reflections, enabling me to obtain subjective material that would not be gathered by a close-ended questions which restrict participants to yes or no responses. Cohen et al (2007: 356) explain how focused interviews "focus on respondents subjective responses to a known situation in which s/he has been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview". The open ended questions were guided by the literature, theoretical framework and the four research questions. Such questions are flexible, allowing the researcher to probe, clarify and test the limits of the participants' knowledge, sometimes resulting in unanticipated answers which suggest previously un-thought of relationships or hypotheses (Cohen et al, 2007).

The interview questions for the ZIMCHE representatives, university QA representatives, deans and lecturers were broadly grouped into four themes: Understanding of quality, T & and L, Implementation of quality and intrinsic and extrinsic development of students. While the first theme teases out general conceptions of quality, the second theme centres specifically on T & L as the focus of the study. The third theme examines how conceptions of quality are operationalised from policy level down to university level. The last theme focuses on subjective perceptions relating to the developmental role of HE and the values that are emphasised. The

aim was to gather perceptions on individual and collective notions of quality, verify some findings from literature on issues such as academic perceptions on QA and the development of QA systems in developing countries. I also wanted to examine the stakeholders' views on the role of HE in Zimbabwe. With the participants consent, all interviews were recorded and notes taken during and after the interview because "impressions of incidents and events fade rapidly, so it is best to try and record them as they happen or as soon as possible thereafter" (Layder, 2013: 81).

A mixture of telephonic and face to face interviews was used. Telephone interviews were used for university representatives because they were cheaper and quicker than face to face interviews or surveys which might not have elicited responses. Personal contact via the telephone rather than an anonymous survey was assumed to be important in gaining access. Since the 15 universities are situated in different geographical locations, telephone interviews eliminated travel costs with participants being contacted relatively quickly. It was also easier to make frequent call backs where necessary. In addition, telephone interviews provide the possibility to clarify questions or probe, something that cannot be done through a questionnaire (Robson, 1993). However, from my experience, the telephone interviews major drawback was that a participant could easily dismiss the researcher by hanging up, something not easily done in a face to face interview. In addition, in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, some areas lack or have problematic telecommunication systems, making access to these institutions difficult. Face to face interviews were used at the two case study universities. These allowed me to observe and interpret bodily gestures which "lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed" (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000).

4.5.3 Focus group discussions

FGD's were conducted with final year students from each of the "best case" departments to discuss their perceptions and experiences of quality T & L. A focus group is a qualitative data collection technique. It entails an informal discussion about a specified topic, among a small group of participants selected because of similar characteristics related to the topic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Maree, 2007). FGD's allow dialogue about a specific issue which is introduced by the moderator, who has to stimulate and guide the conversation. I was the moderator in all four discussions. Morgan (1988) argues that FGD's are useful for examining what people think,

how they think, and why they think in that manner about issues. In addition, focus groups potentially offer more in-depth and qualitatively rich feedback from students in contrast to the information collected from questionnaires. This method of data collection was also used because it is relatively inexpensive to conduct as compared to individual interviews and the group dynamics can aid in participants contributions and recall.

Interviewing students enabled an assessment of whether policies are translated into practice, intended outcomes achieved as well as to understand what students conceive as quality T & L. Barbour and Schostak (2005) argue that despite the FGD usefulness, it is important to consider such aspects as the power relations within the group. However, Robson (1993) notes that having a small number of participants will improve individual participation, enable the researcher to manage power relations within the group and clarify given meanings to ensure the correct interpretation of given information. The need for striking a balance and mediating on group relations is also highlighted by Krueger and Casey (2000) who note the possibility of some participants influencing or dominating the discussion while in others, some group members may be too intimidated to speak and others may simply conform to the dominant ideas present in the group. While these were potential challenges faced, I think this method of data collection gave me rich data on the students' views and experiences.

4.5.4 Observation

Observations were used to supplement data collected from interviews, FGD's and documents. According to Gold (1958), there are three forms of observation, namely, complete observation, where the researcher's role is concealed and s/he observes from a distance with no interaction with participants; complete participation, where there is interaction between the researcher and the participants but the researcher's role is concealed; observer as participant, where the researcher's role is known and s/he makes irregular observation combined with interviews. I employed the latter. My role as a researcher was known as I had sought and had been granted permission by the universities to collect data and I also introduced myself to the participants as a researcher. Because of ZIMCHE emphasis on quality as resources, I was able to move around the two case study universities observing their available infrastructure such as lecture rooms and resources such as computers, the library and general university environment. I jotted down

notes in a field notebook. Given the possibility of participants modifying their behaviour because of my presence, I did not observe any lectures.

Table 4.1: Summary of data collection

Target group	Institution	Data collection method	No. of participants
Phase 1			
Document review	ZIMCHE, universities, national context	Document review of policy, website, newspaper and any other relevant material	
Representatives from the Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, the Directorates of Registration and Accreditation and Academic and Institutional Audits.	ZIMCHE	Face to face semi-structured interviews	3
Phase 2			
Key personnel involved in quality assurance	Zimbabwean universities	Telephonic semi-structured interviews	8
Phase 3			
University quality assurance representative	Baobab University	Face to face semi-structured interview	1
Deans- Faculty of Science and Technology and Faculty of Social Sciences	Baobab University	Face to face semi-structured interviews	2
Lectures- Maths (2) and Psychology (2) departments	Baobab University	Face to face semi-structured interviews	4
Final year Maths (4) and Psychology (4) students	Baobab University	Focus group discussions	2
University quality assurance representative	Msasa University	Face to face semi-structured interview	1
Deans- Faculty of Agriculture and natural resources and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	Msasa University	Face to face semi-structured interviews	2
Lectures- Natural Resources (2) and Sociology (2) departments	Msasa University	Face to face semi-structured interviews	4
Final year Natural Resources (4) and Sociology (4) students	Msasa University	Focus group discussions	2

4.6. Data transcription

The audio recordings of the interviews and FGD's were transcribed verbatim and typed in Microsoft word format. The transcription process focused on the verbal communication, with the aim of later analysing and interpreting the spoken words. After the transcription process, I "cleaned" the data which entailed editing the transcripts to remove grammatical errors and fill in gaps where possible without altering the meaning of the discussion. The transcriptions were followed by thematic coding.

4.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an iterative process meant to understand how participants make sense of the phenomenon under study (Hesse-Biber, 2010). This kind of data analysis involves going through the data in search of patterns to establish what is important before synthesising the data (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). Although my interview questions had been grouped according to themes, I manually coded all 29 interview and FGD transcripts in order to determine the codes and identify emerging themes because as Ryan and Bernard (2000: 781) highlight, themes are "abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection".

The data analysis was informed by the research questions on how quality is conceptualised and operationalised at macro, meso and micro levels. For the analysis, I came up with three over-arching themes for the questionnaires for all study participants. The structuring of the questionnaire helped in simplifying and organising the data which informed the coding and analysis process. The first theme was "Conceptualisation of quality" which sought to uncover factors informing general notions of quality and particularly T & L. For example, table 4.2 illustrates how quality was generally conceptualised as "fitness for purpose" despite variations in the purposes it was fit for. These variations informed the different sub-codes such as the purpose of meeting national requirements and achieving the university mandate. Specifically on T & L quality was seen through outcomes. Differentiating between general perceptions of quality and T & L in particular, enabled a nuanced discussion on the perceived importance of T & L in notions of quality, how these are operationalised and to what end. This stressed the potential contribution of a human development informed conceptualisation of quality.

Table 4.2 Conceptualisation of quality

Theme 1	Example
Conceptualisation of quality	*"Our definition of quality is that it is fitness for purpose. In other words, whatever we are doing as a university in Zimbabwe must meet national requirements. The skills that we are producing must be the skills required at national level". For example in Agriculture, the skills and technology we are producing must be relevant to our agricultural industry".* *"The first appreciation of quality that we have at this university is to be able to deliver on our mandate. We were created for a purpose and we should judge our-self according to our ability to deliver as per expectation".*
T & L	*"When you talk of quality in teaching and learning you zero in on the outcomes in terms of what type of students come out, what kind of employees they make".*

The second theme was "Operationalisation of quality" which examined how notions of quality were practised. At macro level this was through audit and accreditation practices, while at meso level I examined the internal QA systems established to assure institutional quality. At micro level I focused on how quality was enacted in the lecture rooms and the implications on T & L. The last theme was "valued outcomes and constraints" which examined the expected outcomes resulting from the conceptualisation and operationalisation of quality for the policy makers, lecturers and students. My two ideal theoretical indicators, critical being and the capability for work were discussed as outcomes contributing to human development. Under this theme I was also able to include any other outcomes the participants valued. When discussing the three themes, I also included quotations from the participants to demonstrate that my interpretation emerges from their voices (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The field notes were also useful in the interpretation of data.

The interview data was grouped according to the participants over three chapters. The first one presents perceptions at macro and meso levels while the second and third chapter are on the two case studies. Although I had separated the macro and meso levels during data collection, I

decided to combine them during the analysis and presentation of empirical findings because the ZIMCHE and university representatives both represented a policy perspective, albeit on different levels. To some extent, this enabled me to illustrate how policy is conceptualised and operationalised at both national and institutional policy levels, highlighting differences and similarities. The opinions of the case study university representatives were presented together with the views of the other eight university representatives. The data from the two case study universities, deans, lecturers and students was presented separately because despite being governed by the same national policy, the two institutions had different contexts which impacted on how quality in T & L was operationalised.

4.8 Researcher positionality

Qualitative research is regarded by Holliday (2002: 149) as an interactive process where the researcher and participants "enter into a relationship of culture making" and "the presence of the researcher is entangled with the politics of the research setting" (Ibid: 145). Because the researcher is the one who collects data and makes inferences and conclusions, research cannot be totally objective. This highlights the need for reflexivity, "a process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher" (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). As a former lecturer in Zimbabwe, I had to distance myself from my own prejudices and pre-drawn conclusions on academic perceptions on QA and ZIMCHE's expectations and put the study's aim into perspective. However, my knowledge of the Zimbabwean HE context was also helpful in negotiating issues of access and to some extent, made me less of an "outsider coming to do research" and more "acceptable" to study participants. In addition, examining the issue of quality from a policy and student perspective allowed me to broaden my perceptions about T & L and the human development values associated with quality. By acknowledging my positionality as a researcher, I believe I was able to "capitalize on the complexities of [my] presence …in a methodological way" and make the research process reflexive (Holliday, 2002: 146).

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the study's research design and methodological approach that informed data collection. A discussion of the ethical considerations made and ways of gaining access to the participants preceded the discussion on research design. Because of the in-depth data required to answer the research questions, I opted for a qualitative research design using a case study approach with Zimbabwe as the collective case study and two particular universities as the instrumental case studies. The data collection methods were document review, semi-structured in-depth interviews with policy makers, middle managers and lecturers; FGD's with final year students and observations. The chapter also provided an overview of the data transcription and analysis procedures through coding and the identification of major themes that informed the findings discussed in the forthcoming chapters. The empirical chapters analyse the data using the literature reviewed in chapter two, the theoretical framework developed in chapter three and the methodology discussed in this chapter to examine the participants' perspectives on T & L. This enabled an assessment of quality through a human development lens.

Chapter Five

Quality as policy and quality as practice: ZIMCHE and university perceptions

5.0 Introduction

The national policy perspective is based on interviews conducted with three key officials; Shizha, Chimuti and Ruwa, representing the HEQAC, the Directorates of Registration and Accreditation as well as Academic and Institutional Audit. Their experience as ZIMCHE employees ranges from two to six years. Despite the three interviews mostly echoing the policy documents, the respondents' clarified some aspects, which together with the ZIMCHE Act and QA instruments provided a helpful policy perspective. In this chapter the claims of the ZIMCHE officials are interspaced with relevant comments by the university representatives. In order to understand how the QA policy is translated from macro to meso level practice and how universities conceptualise quality, I also include data from the in-depth interviews with the 10 university representatives from six public and four private institutions, three of which are church based. Despite the different academic posts held by the university representatives, they were all involved in the management of the institutional QA system. As explained in the previous chapter, the universities are labelled from A to J and the two case study universities indicated as either Baobab University or Msasa University in brackets to enable the reader track the discussion through the three empirical chapters. Table 5.1 below present's brief data on the interview participants.

The chapter is organised according to three themes. Theme one examines how quality is conceptualised, factors informing its conceptualisation and the differences in understanding between ZIMCHE and the universities, as well as among the universities. Particular attention is paid to T & L as the study's examination of quality is focused on the learning process. The second theme assesses the operationalisation of quality, for ZIMCHE through accreditation and auditing and for the universities through institutional QA arrangements. It also examines the disjuncture between policy as text and policy as practice (Ball, 1993). The last theme examines the participants' valued outcomes and constraints faced in achieving these. It also

includes an examination of my two ideal theoretical indicators as human development outcomes of HE. This is followed by the conclusion in section four.

Table 5.1: ZIMCHE and university policy representatives interviewed

Institution	Position	Gender	Years of employment	Qualification Level	Representative pseudonym
ZIMCHE	Directorate of Registration and accreditation	Male	3	PhD	Shizha
ZIMCHE	Directorate of Academic and institutional audit	Male	2	PhD	Chimuti
ZIMCHE	Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee	Male	6	Professor	Ruwa
University A (U-A)	Chairman of the Department of Technical Teacher Education.	Male	15	PhD	Lunga
University B (U-B)	Director- QA office	Male	4	Professor	Zonda
University C (U-C)	Director- QA directorate	Male	3	MSc	Sando
University D (U-D)	Senate council member and Representative- QA Directorate	Male	3	PhD	Banda
University E (U-E)	Deputy registrar	Female	2	MSc	Pada
University F (U-F)	Dean- Faculty of Education	Male	2	PhD	Choto
University G (U-G)	Dean School of Industrial Sciences & Technology	Male	10	PhD	Gondo
University H (U-H)	Deputy Director of Business Development, Information and Public Relations	Male	5	BSc	Khumalo
University I (U-I) [Baobab University]	Pro- vice chancellor- Academic affairs and research	Male	2	Professor	Huni
University J (U-J) [Msasa University]	Deputy Vice- chancellor	Male	2	Professor	Mpofu

5.1 ZIMCHE's standardisation and benchmarking

This section examines ZIMCHE's understanding of quality in terms of human capital and or human development as well as the determining factors. It also includes the voices of the university representatives in commentary to ZIMCHE's perspective. Chimuti and Ruwa (ZIMCHE) explained that ZIMCHE was established to act "*as a gatekeeper of standards*" as HE expanded amidst political and economic challenges. For Ruwa, when UZ was the only university, quality was assured because "*all resources were channelled there*". This implies that availing resources ensures quality. While acknowledging HEI's established systems of QA, through for example, external examinations and second marking, Ruwa noted the need to expand the scope of what constitutes quality such as governance structures, lecturers' qualifications and facilities provided. Illustrating a technical rational approach, quality was explained as formal procedures, inputs and outputs, standardisation and benchmarks. Standards and benchmarks were formulated through workshops involving universities to determine an adequate level of resources, lecturers' qualifications and student-lecturer ratios. Through accreditation and audits, ZIMCHE claims to ensure that benchmarks are implemented in universities. For ZIMCHE, quality can only be achieved if the minimum standards are met and failure to do so results in education being "*deficient*".

Of the three ZIMCHE representatives, Ruwa gave a more detailed understanding of quality, albeit framed in human capital concerns. He explained quality as fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose, transformative development and value for money. The first meant that HE ought to be relevant to Zimbabwe's economic needs and comparable to similar programmes in "*reputable*" universities while the second referred to HEI's providing programmes appropriately equipping students to be employable graduates or to create their own employment. Unlike my understanding of transformation discussed in chapter three, Ruwa narrowly understood it to mean changing students into knowledgeable and "*suitable*" employees. Quality as value for money was meant to assure stakeholders such as government and parents that their "*investment was worthwhile*" and this is illustrated by the graduate being employable and a competent worker. The expected graduate outcomes is discussed in detail in section 5.4.

In explaining quality, Shizha (ZIMCHE) emphasised standards. He noted, "*Quality involves quite a number of things relating to the standard of the programme, lecturers' qualifications and the standard of the facilities where those programmes are delivered*". The standard of programmes was measured against content, contact hours and lecturer-student ratio. A programmes' content is benchmarked against the delivery of a minimum body of knowledge (MBK) which Shizha explained as:

> *Not everything that will be taught in the programme, but the minimum information required by the programme, so that a student who comes out is comparable to another from a different institution in the country and outside.*

The MBK is "similar to the European Bologna 'Tuning' project[12] aimed at comparability and compatibility of university curricula for the global higher education community" (Garwe, 2014: 5). However, ZIMCHE's understanding of the Tuning project seems limited to prescribing a standardised Zimbabwean curriculum across all universities. Arguing against this approach, Mpofu (U-J) [Msasa University] indicated:

> *I don't think th[is] standardisation is good because it kills the academic spirit; this is one thing we cherish in academia, the freedom of thinking and innovativeness. Standardisation has its limits. If we standardise so much that philosophy for Utsu at UZ is similar to philosophy for Utsu at MSU and we should use the same textbook, I think that's going too far. While there should be some basic requirements for philosophy for Utsu, universities and lecturers should have some leeway to play around with what they want to include.*

Moreover, ZIMCHE standardises systems in all institutions regardless of the discipline requirements. Their failure to appreciate differences in what universities value as part of their curriculum and outcomes points to significant weaknesses in its QA system.

Other important benchmarks related to programme standards are lecturers' workloads and lecturer-student ratios. National policy stipulates that each lecturer teaches no more than three modules with 48-60 contact hours per semester for theoretical courses and 72-90 hours for practical courses. Anything below these thresholds is considered under-load and anything

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[12] The Tuning process reflects that universities should not have a "unified, prescriptive definitive European curricula" but should have "points of reference, convergence and common understanding". This has been grounded in the value placed on ensuring diversity and respect for academic and subject specialists as well as local authority. (www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/Publications)

above, overload. For a 15 week semester this translates to a maximum of six hours/week, which is low compared to countries such as India with 14-16 contact hours/week (UWN, 2009) and the UK's 25 hours/week (atl.org.uk). However, these contact hours are only those spent in lectures excluding time spent on administrative duties, lecture preparation, student consultation and marking which also constitute a lecturer's duties as is the case elsewhere. Adding these would considerably increase the contact hours. Chimuti (ZIMCHE) also emphasised the importance of the lecturer-student ratios due to variations in department size. ZIMCHE provides lecturer-student ratio guidelines, for example, in the Criteria for Institutional Accreditation or Final Registration (ACCR 1A) it is 1:20 for the Arts, Humanities and Commercials, while it is 1:15 for the Sciences and 1:10 for programmes such as medicine. Subsequent chapters will discuss the lecturers' perspectives on the lecturer-student ratios and teaching loads and their impact on the quality of teaching.

Resources such as library books, conducive learning environments and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) facilities were also considered important for quality. In benchmarking lecturers' qualifications, the minimum official requirement was a Master's degree, with a PhD as an added advantage. However, recent media and university reports have indicated that a PhD is increasingly becoming the minimum requirement, with all lecturers expected to at least be enrolled for one by the end of 2015 (Mashininga, University World News, 2012). It is assumed that a PhD qualification is synonymous with good pedagogical skills. Questioning this logic, Gondo (U-G) argued that at his technical university, there are comparatively few Masters and PhD holders in programmes such as engineering and even fewer willing to be full-time lecturers thus making it difficult to meet this requirement. Similarly, Pada (U-E) rhetorically asked "*how many PhD holders graduate each year? They're very few and having 60 percent full-time lecturers being PhD holders is difficult to meet*". Out of the 15 universities in Zimbabwe, only six public universities offered doctoral studies in 2014 producing 28 PhD graduates nationwide. Because of stringent institutional requirements, a shortage of supervisors, lack of funding, resources and a limited range of doctoral programmes available, most PhD students opt to register with foreign institutions. For example, in 2014 there were 565 Zimbabwean PhD students registered in South Africa and Zambia (Garwe, 2015) with few likely to return to Zimbabwe, given the prevailing socio-economic conditions.

In standardising and benchmarking, ZIMCHE's focus is on the "*maintenance of standards*". ZIMCHE expects HEI's to comply with set standards, thus equating quality with compliance.

This simplifies a complex process of learning into a set of inputs and outputs, neglecting important, unquantifiable aspects. Despite the socio-economic and political challenges that exist, factors such as social citizenship, critical thinking and other human development values are not considered in ZIMCHE's conceptualisation of quality. Given the fast changing landscape of HE, the set standards appear inadequate in making Zimbabwean graduates competitive on the job market within and outside the country. Consequently, Mpofu (U-J) [Msasa University] stated that while complying with ZIMCHE's requirements, his university has to surpass them. He explained:

> *I'm not worried about translating ZIMCHE's quality requirements, we just have to meet them....in terms of the quality of our products I want to surpass ZIMCHE's requirements, so for me, they are not a goal post.*

U-J stands out in its claim to exceed the set standards. While ZIMCHE erroneously assumes that universities will comply with and exceed set standards, the representatives did not claim to benchmark beyond ZIMCHE's expectations. While U-D mentioned a strategic plan to build up and surpass the needed resources, Banda (U-D) commented, *"the minimum standards are not a problem to meet but given the environment we are operating in, we cannot claim to provide the excellent learning environment that we want"*.

As part of QA standardisation and assuring employers of quality, ZIMCHE verifies the authenticity of degree qualifications acquired from foreign universities. In explaining the verification process, Shizha indicated that a foreign transcript is "*subjected to a comparative schedule with our minimum body of knowledge*" and an assessment by local experts in the field. Verifying foreign qualifications is crucial as some Zimbabwean undergraduate students studying abroad return to Zimbabwe seeking employment. This is especially important for disciplines such as Law or Medicine with country specific systems and practices. In addition, the rising number of questionable qualifications also necessitates verification. For example, 28 percent of verified qualifications from South Africa, Malawi, USA, Netherlands, Canada and even Zimbabwe between 2009-2013 were found to be incomparable "with similar local qualifications in terms of curriculum content, rigor, duration of study and entry requirements" (Garwe, 2015: 44). The rise in cases of fake credentials in Zimbabwe has been partially attributed to "credentialism", where higher qualifications are unnecessarily required for one to favourably compete for limited jobs because of high unemployment levels (Garwe, 2015). This

poses challenges because the holder of the qualification will be unable to perform up to the expected standard.

5.1.2 Stakeholder participation

In coming up with benchmarks and standards, ZIMCHE emphasised stakeholder participation. Chimuti highlighted that the stakeholders consulted in compiling the MBK included "*consultants and experts in the discipline under consideration; professors and lecturers as well as representatives from institutions in the faculties offering the programmes under consideration*". The emphasis on graduate employability as a HE outcome underscores employers as the major stakeholders. Consequently, there are efforts to ensure employer satisfaction through consultation and satisfaction surveys. Ironically, while students are considered as stakeholders, they are not consulted. To a large extent, students are viewed as passive recipients and consumers of a service deemed important by academics, employers and certified by ZIMCHE. The students are homogenised as a collective group whose only interest is employment. At policy level, there is no platform for their participation in determining the quality of the education they receive and their valued outcomes. Students are relegated to objects rather than subjects in the process.

Contributing to conceptions of quality are national and international collaborations and the adoption of "best practices". Collaboration with regional and or international QA agencies is important in standardising qualifications and ensuring student and academic transferability. Ruwa highlighted that ZIMCHE is finalising the Zimbabwe Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ZIMCATS), to calculate students' credits and facilitate their transfer between national and regional universities. Shizha (ZIMCHE) similarly identified the establishment of the European Education Area as "*the way to follow*". He noted:

> *if you go to Europe, they've now gone on to an extent of making a European standard, that is every European country has to look at the Bologna[13] kind of framework, whereas in Africa there isn't a standardised framework…In Southern Africa, the framework is*

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[13] The Bologna process is a series of agreements among European countries based on international cooperation to ensure the comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications.

there in the form of the SADC protocol on higher education[14] but we haven't gone on to implement it.

The SADC Protocol notes that collaboration "can be facilitated more effectively by the development of harmonised and …eventually standardised policies regarding education and training" (SADC, 1997: 8). However, member states still run individual systems. The importance ZIMCHE accords regional standardisation is seen by its spearheading the formation of the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) and holding the current position as interim president. According to Shizha, the SAQAN is meant to identify best practices in promoting quality, propose strategies to overcome barriers to regional collaboration, standardise HE and promote student mobility within the region.

ZIMCHE also collaborates with the AfriQAN, a member of the INQAAHE. With INQAAHE's support, AfriQAN assists African QAA's identify and implement international best practices. Although Ruwa (ZIMCHE) expressed the need to adapt best practices to local contexts, some university representatives argued that ZIMCHE's standards and benchmarks overlooking local contexts and universities different visions and missions. For example, Lunga (U-A) commented, *"while learning and understanding other peoples' best practices, we have to be creative and learn what quality is and which quality we want to develop"*. Chimuti (ZIMCHE) also indicated ZIMCHE's use of benchmarks established by the UZ, as "*the mother university in Zimbabwe*". However, given this institution's decline, it may not necessarily provide appropriate benchmarks.

5.1.3 Quality enhancement

Internationally, the discourse on quality has shifted from focusing on assurance to including the concept of enhancement, from 'the what-is", to the "what-might-be" (Barnett, 1994). However, ZIMCHE's focus is still seemingly limited to QA. For instance, while equating the Zimbabwean QA processes with other countries, Shizha focused on maintaining standards without shifting towards QE. Although ZIMCHE's mission is *"To promote quality*

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[14] The 1997 Protocol on Education and Training in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) identifies areas of cooperation including HE and training. It aims to promote regional integration and harmonisation of the education system regarding access, relevance, equity and quality of education (www.sadc.int/themes).

enhancement and development of higher education in Zimbabwe, and act as a regulator and vanguard agency for high standards in teaching, research and academic qualifications", its conceptualisation of quality is limited to compliance with minimum standards with little emphasis on QE, or much attention to university contexts in a period of severe economic problems.

In contrast, most university representatives clearly differentiated between QA and QE. Huni (I-U) [Baobab University] noted that QE follows QA, but given Zimbabwe's context, the latter needs to be nurtured first. Choto (U-F) explained:

> *QA is meeting set targets in terms of performance levels and you are trying to ensure that you don't perform below those targets. Whereas QE is about improvement, continuous growth in order to meet the needs of the people because these needs are not static. QE is about interrogating factors that can improve quality as an institution.*

The understanding of quality as dynamic indicates the university representatives' awareness of the need for constant reassessments. QE seems to be more a component of institutional than external QA. Moreover, the universities are better placed to identify context specific issues that improve institutional quality beyond ZIMCHE's minimum standardisation.

5.1.4 Teaching and Learning

All three ZIMCHE representatives considered T & L to be important. For instance, Ruwa expressed it as *"one of the main reasons why we have QA"*. However, T & L does not prominently feature in the QA policy. Ruwa and Shizha noting this policy gap, explained that ZIMCHE is under-resourced, with a staff component of 32 instead of 40 employees, which is still insufficient to monitor T & L. However, for Ruwa, if followed properly, ZIMCHE's standards avail resources such as library facilities and lecturer qualifications which promote quality T & L. T & L is understood in terms of resources and not necessarily the process.

Although not specifically focusing on quality in T & L, ZIMCHE underscores the MBK in providing guidelines. Chimuti stated, *"we do not tell the universities how to teach, we just set up the minimum body of knowledge that students should learn"*. The mode of communication is left up to the universities. While difficult to devise a standard T & L strategy for diverse

universities with multiple missions, faculties and sometimes campuses, there is a need for general teaching guidelines. ZIMCHE's criterion for programme accreditation vaguely recommends an "appropriate" strategy (See appendix 4: Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (19/01/11) Criteria for programme accreditation (conventional institutions) ACCR 2A). The interpretation of "appropriateness" is left up to the universities. Given diverse pedagogical approaches, such guidelines ought to provide some direction for learning, for example, the encouragement of approaches which promote student participation and understanding. This can only be achieved if ZIMCHE's expressed learning outcome is centred on student understanding rather than employment. The T & L methods could then be aligned to foster such learning outcomes.

Similar to most QA agencies, ZIMCHE's focus is resource oriented and quality of T & L is overlooked because of the difficulties in its evaluation. Yet, these problems should rather encourage the inclusion of T & L in an evaluation of quality rather than exclude it. Given ZIMCHE's emphasis on employment as the HE outcome, its QA approach does not foster students' understanding and knowledge application thus possibly restraining graduates' work performance, even in a human capital setup. ZIMCHE's conceptualisation of quality is a narrow form of human capital discourse as it assumes that access to resources automatically assures quality. While quality can incorporate aspects such as participation, voice, critical thinking and social citizenship, ZIMCHE narrows it to the MBK for human capital development. From the foregoing, some of the university representatives disagree with ZIMCHE on aspects such as the establishment of a MBK, the need for standardisation and the adoption of best cases. Given the ZIMCHE policy perspective, it is therefore necessary to examine if and how the university representatives' perceptions of quality differ from ZIMCHE and the implications for human development.

5.2 University representatives' conceptualisation of quality

An examination of how universities conceptualise quality contributes to the multi-dimensional perspectives on quality. It also highlights differences in understanding between ZIMCHE and HEI's and the implications in terms of human capital and human development. The interviews with university representatives yielded varied insights on their understanding of quality and

specifically on T & L. Six major definitions of quality could be discerned. These were fitness for purpose, value for money, quality as resources, quality as transformation, quality as international standards and quality as aspiration. Despite variation of purpose, fitness for purpose was the most common.

5.2.1 Quality as fitness for purpose

Quality at some of the universities was framed as being fit for the purpose of contributing towards broader national economic development. Banda (U-D), reiterated a skills and development notion:

> *Our definition of quality is that it's fitness for purpose. Zim Asset[15] is a macro-economic framework which also stipulates the national contribution of universities. As a university we must contribute to the country's socio-economic development through research producing skills required at national level.*

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset) explicitly highlights areas where HEI's, especially S & T universities should contribute towards economic development. The three S & T universities, U-A, U-D and U-G had specific niche areas distinguishing them. Banda (U-D) explained niche areas as *"core focus areas like engineering and agriculture where we seek to attain excellence and uniqueness in fulfilling national requirements both in terms of manpower and technology requirements"*. This differentiation of niche areas illustrates the government's aim of harnessing universities' innovativeness for contribution to economic development. However, the emphasis on S & T side-lines the Arts and Humanities which equally promote the country's development and encourage values of critical thinking, social citizenship, participation and voice.

At other universities, quality was understood as being fit for the purpose of achieving the university mission. For example Choto (U-F) explained:

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[15] The Zim Asset is the country's current economic policy (2013 to 2018).

> *At this university the first appreciation of quality that we have is being able to deliver on our mandate. We were created for a purpose and we should judge our-self according to our ability to deliver as per the expectation of those who established us.*

This university's mandate is "to be the centre of excellence in arts, culture and heritage studies as well as the advancement of other academic disciplines for the promotion of the development of society". To this end, the university realigned its curriculum towards culture and heritage through two compulsory modules, Culture Studies and Heritage Studies in all undergraduate programs so that students *"enrich their modules and not only focus on their specific areas".* Hence the university has programmes such as *"ethno-mathematics or ethno-science"* combining "*scientific"* and *"indigenous'* knowledge as a way of ensuring the relevance of education to local contexts. This is an example of circumventing the emphasis on standardisation and overlooking local contexts.

Stakeholder participation

For others, quality as fitness for purpose meant meeting the needs of the various stakeholders. Zonda (U-B) stated:

> *We believe that quality has to do with achieving our goals in an efficient and effective way to meet the requirements of all our stakeholders; the government, employers, the academic world, students, parents and the society at large.*

Implicit in ideas of efficiency and effectiveness is a technical rational belief that following procedures will result in quality, again supporting a technicist approach to quality aligned with human capital.

The stakeholders identified by all universities were employers, government, academics, students, parents and in some instances, the church. The government as a stakeholder was represented by ZIMCHE which according to Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] *"checks on our performance".* As with ZIMCHE, employers were considered the most important stakeholders and were consulted when starting new programmes, carrying out curriculum reviews and during learning. Banda (U-D) stated that all programmes are *"based on market legitimacy"* and *"demand rather than supply driven"* with Khumalo (U-H) adding that they employ market surveys, *"so we respond to the needs of the industry and society".* Employers, Lunga (U-A)

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reiterated, are "*the consumers of the knowledge and the skills we produce and our main aim is to see how we can satisfy them*". This idea of employer satisfaction reinforces the instrumentality of HE. From this perspective, graduate employment based on acquired skills is an indication of quality education.

As stakeholders, academics were important for their discipline-specific knowledge. In devising internal QA systems, all universities purportedly consulted academics within and outside their institutions as well as during curriculum reviews. Pada (U-E) indicated academics' importance because "*they are up to date with new material and have networks with other academics that may have different approaches*". While unanimously identifying students as stakeholders, HEI's, unlike ZIMCHE, to some extent encourage student participation in QA. Students' views were heard through student representation in committees from department to Senate level, and lecturer assessments. But they are not involved in curriculum review or formulating universities' internal QA procedures. While this level of inclusion is laudable, students' exclusion from defining institutional quality reduces them to participants in a system pre-determined by more influential stakeholders. A factor contributing to students' exclusion is the characterisation of students as clients. Exemplifying HE as a commercial activity and relegating students to customer status, most university representatives referred to them as "*products*", "*customers*", "*clients*" and "*chief clients*". This was despite Banda's (U-D) claim that:

> *we say to students you come to university, you are not customers per se but partners in learning because you invest money, time and a lot of resources so you must be able to contribute to the development of your learning environment.*

Sando (U-C) explicitly linked notions of quality to the economic survival of the institution. He noted:

> *Quality is customer satisfaction, without satisfied customers you do not have a business. You do not have students. So if doubts have been cast on any of the products; that constitutes poor quality and may result in poor recruitment of students, poor recruitment of staff and ultimately failure of the university.*

The linking of quality to institutional reputation and ultimately economic viability results in QA being designed to assure "*customer satisfaction*", running the risk of compromising the wider notion of quality. There is an assumption that, like employers and HEI's, students' goals and satisfaction are reflected through employment. Student views in subsequent chapters will interrogate this assumption and illustrate what they value.

Although not a comparative study, notably, quality teaching is conceptualised differently between the public and private universities, with the latter emphasising Christian values and growth. Because five of the six private universities are church-run, they stress the importance of emotional and spiritual growth in addition to academic development. The church was considered a major stakeholder whose doctrines had to be incorporated in the concept of quality. While some only included Christian values in the curriculum, others had specific institutional guidelines. Zonda (U-B) explained:

> *We have standards set by ... ZIMCHE and in our own Seventh Adventist institution we have the Adventist Accrediting Association[16] which accredits about 102 Adventist universities and colleges worldwide. Each new programme has to go through the Adventist Accrediting association first, before we can process this through ZIMCHE.*

In addition to ZIMCHE's quality expectations, institutions such as U-B are also accountable to the church. According to Zonda, quality means providing a "*holistic education which includes the student's mental, physical, social and spiritual growth*". Being a social institution with moral inclinations, the church expects its universities to foster public good values and morals in addition to contributing to economic development.

At technical institutions such as U-G, benchmarking is an integral part of assuring quality. U-G has to "*comply with international standards*" because of its membership in *"professional associations"* in engineering and technology. Illustrating quality as extending beyond ZIMCHE's national confines, Gondo (U-G) indicated that *"engineering programmes have to*

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[16] The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities accredits institutions based on the maintenance of academic quality thresholds and promotion of Adventist Christian values.

be ABET[17]compliant and also comply with the Washington Accord[18]" While benchmarking against international standards is especially important in technical institutions, it seems less so in comprehensive universities. However, it might be more relevant at faculty or departmental level.

As shown above, quality as fitness for purpose is generic and leaves the definition of "fitness" open to individual interpretation. The casting of HE either as a public or private good influences how quality is conceptualised and what purpose it is fit for. Similarly, the determination of good or bad quality depends on whose or what purpose it is serving. The multi-stakeholder nature of HE means that there are multiple expectations and purposes of quality. The other definitions of quality given are discussed briefly because they were not as common as quality as fitness for purpose.

5.2.2 Quality as value for money

Quality was also understood as value for money by two universities. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] understood value for money as government recouping its investment in HE through employable graduates. However, for U-J [Msasa University], a private university, value for money was to reassure parents. Mpofu (U-J) [Msasa University] noted:

> *That's why my emphasis is on demonstrating to parents why we are expensive. If parents get value for money, we can double our fees and still get students. Parents will see no need to send their children to South Africa when they can send them here.*

Because of its high fees, U-J [Msasa University] targets affluent parents who can afford to pay. The concept of quality is reduced to reassuring parents that HE is a worthwhile investment. In some instances, value is linked to well-paying jobs, disregarding non-instrumental attributes such as critical thinking and democratic participation. Also, often overlooked is the difficulty

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[17]ABET is the Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology, a non-governmental agency that accredits programmes in Applied Science, Computing, Engineering and Engineering technology.
[18]An international agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programs. It recognizes the substantial equivalency of programs accredited by those bodies and recommends that graduates of accredited programs be recognized as having met the academic requirements for entry to the practice of engineering (http://www.ieagreements.org/Washington-Accord/).

in determining the value of HE immediately as the benefits are ongoing. Quality as value for money perpetuates the misconception of education as an investment which should yield private economic returns. This commodifies HE and encourages consumerist attitudes, while the intrinsic value of HE is secondary.

5.2.3 Quality as resources

Almost all the representatives, especially those from public universities also equated quality to infrastructural, financial and human resources. For instance, Lunga (U-A) highlighted, *"Quality is when the students access resources"* while for Khumalo (U-H), quality was *"proportional growth in the student numbers and available resources"*. Given institutions reliance on fees, increasing student numbers are partly fuelled by financial considerations. Khumalo acknowledged the need to regulate student numbers and maintain adequate resource-student ratios. This need for adequate resources shows universities' awareness of their importance and the supportive role they play to T & L.

5.2.4 Quality as transformation

Quality was also understood as transformation by three of the representatives. This conceptualises education as a process of continuous transformation for the student and illustrated an expectation of HE beyond economic development. Khumalo (U-H) explained the transformative role of HE through the university's concept of "Thought leadership" aimed at nurturing graduates who "*can bring about transformational ideas. Not just to read and learn from what other scholars have done but can lead and be innovative in solving society's problems*". In highlighting the importance of the educational experience being transformational, Mpofu (U-J) [Msasa University] stated:

> *We are not making tables and chairs, we are making future leaders. Our products are the students so if we are not here to improve what comes in after four years we might as well go home.*

Although it is difficult to ascertain whether this transformation occurs, the locating of HE as a public good which aims to foster social development reveals the universities awareness of their need to overcome an "ivory tower" mentality. This understanding of quality was mostly associated with students being potential leaders and spearheading change in areas such as corruption.

5.2.5 Quality as internationalisation

For universities such as U-I, quality was synonymous with internationalisation. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] understood internationalisation as attracting international students, interaction with international academics through thesis supervision, external examination and collaborative publications and:

> *whether our graduates can enrol at Oxford for a Masters' degree without having to do any bridging courses. It is also the employability of our graduates straight from university.*

Graduates are regarded as university ambassadors and their acceptance internationally validates the quality of the education. University ranking is another important source of international validation and Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] noted that while "*it might not be accurate it is at least an indication of how others feel and view you*".

Words such as "*world class standards*" and "*excellence*" were also used in explaining quality. Banda (U-D) explained world class as incorporating "*human talent, governance a[nd] abundant resources*". Human talent referred to academics and students, with emphasis on the former. A world class academic would have three requisites: be a "*vibrant and pro-active scholar*" with a good research record, "*ability to communicate with students*" and "*international outlook*" illustrated through local and international connections, including membership of "*any discipline's societies or research consortia, publications or any activities in collaboration with scholars from elsewhere*". For Banda, "*world class academics*" would produce "*talented scholars*". The second pillar of world class standards stipulated that university governance be "*transparent*" with stakeholder participation to enable "*people to contribute and allow the university to exploit the inherent talents of people*". The final pillar required "*state of the art facilities, equipment and environment within which to train students*".

5.2.6 Quality as aspiration

Given Zimbabwe's political and socio-economic challenges, quality as world class or excellence is linked to the notion of quality as aspiration. In the three pillars explaining world class standards, Banda (U-D) noted that the third pillar, abundant resources does not have to be present. The important thing is to have "*a strategic plan to build abundant resources*". Another university conceptualising quality as aspirational was U-J [Msasa University]. Mpofu, the representative, argued that the UZ was not an adequate benchmark because "*it is there yet people send their kids to South Africa*". For him, quality was:

> *consistent with high level productivity and high standards thus my benchmark is the University of Cape Town because it is called the Oxford of Africa. I guess it's subjective but I don't' think I'll go too far wrong benchmarking with UCT.*

While acknowledging that U-J [Msasa University] is not yet at the level of competing with UCT, Mpofu aspires to provide similar standards. Quality as aspiration typifies the acknowledgement of an institution's limitations, combined with its ambitions based on the systems in place.

Thus, quality was variously conceptualised as fitness for purpose, value for money, resources, international standards, transformation and aspiration. The first four are mostly influenced by the human capital approach which positions HE as a private good for the economic development of the individual and the nation. While quality as aspiration could potentially incorporate human development values, the context within which it is used emphasises "*high level productivity and high standards*" thus limiting it to human capital discourse. The conceptualisation of quality as transformation goes beyond an emphasis on human capital to include the intrinsic value of HE. This will be discussed in greater detail under the third section and in chapter eight. Given these multiple conceptions of quality in general, I now examine what the university representatives understood quality T & L to mean.

5.2.7 Teaching and learning

This section examines the conceptualisation of quality in T & L. Similar to ZIMCHE, most of the university representatives linked quality T & L to resource provision and lecturer

qualifications while others felt that it was based on the learning outcomes. For instance, Lunga (U-A), stated, "*When you talk of quality in teaching and learning you zero in on the outcomes in terms of what type of students come out, what kind of employees they make*". While the universities explained the quality of T & L in terms of inputs and outputs, one university stood out. Banda (U-D), explained:

> *Quality in T & L is in what we call constructive alignment with 3 pillars: firstly, we articulate the learning outcomes of all our programmes and courses in terms of the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes our students should acquire after going through the programme. Next we design T & L activities consonant with these learning outcomes. Then we constructively align the assessment practices to the learning outcomes and T & L activities.*

Unlike the other universities who emphasise inputs and or outputs, the inclusion of the T & L process as contributing to quality is noteworthy. The constructive alignment of the three components is the university's attempt to coordinate T & L differently. While this could have been rhetoric, the institution's recognition of the need for this synchronisation between inputs, outputs and processes illustrates a level of importance attributed to teaching.

The above illustrates that some universities have a broader understanding of quality in comparison to ZIMCHE. Although dominated by human capital and technical rational factors, there are areas promoting human development. In this, the private, church-run universities were exceptions because their understanding of quality included fostering social development.

5.3 Operationalisation of quality

This theme examines how QA is operationalised in the universities. At national policy level, I examine how ZIMCHE employs accreditation and auditing to maintain standards, while at university level I examine the institutional QA systems in place. The universities were found to operationalise quality either through QA units or various committees from department to Senate level. The first section examines ZIMCHE's operationalisation, while the second examines university QA processes.

5.3.1 Auditing and accreditation by ZIMCHE

ZIMCHE assesses the quality of HE through auditing and accreditation. This involves ensuring that universities meet the minimum standards in terms of staff, programmes and facilities. According to Chimuti (ZIMCHE) auditing involved "*external quality assurance procedures whose objectives are to improve or maintain the standards of an institution's quality management system*". Academic and Institutional audits are carried out when necessary. Given the vagueness of "when necessary" it is difficult to ascertain how many audits have been conducted or the feedback to universities. Audits are meant to verify the performance of academic practices and procedures against university plans. They facilitate and support accreditation of HEI's and programmes offered. Consequently, audits are meant to encourage public confidence that quality is being provided and "standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced" (Academic and institutional audits instrument no. 2: institutional information. AIAI 2). Audits precede accreditation. For Chimuti, an audit entails appraising staff qualifications and congruency with taught courses, reviewing facilities to ensure correlation with student numbers and programme assessment which examines the programme's content, its relevance and the adequacy of the MBK.

The process of institutional audit, Chimuti highlighted, involved assessing institutional governance structures in "*supporting efficient and safe learning at the university*" from department level up to the VC. He stated:

> *It's important to understand the governance system. For instance, Senate is key because you cannot pass a degree without its approval, so you want to look at the composition of Senate and the University Council. You will look at the organogram, both on paper and in reality to assess the linkages, reporting structures and the extent that they support an effective learning environment.*

While the committees and sub-committees system is meant to enhance democracy in institutional governance, the large number of partisan political appointees in public universities' committees curtails their effectiveness. This is illustrated by the numerous cases of maladministration and administrative corruption at various universities and colleges (Mambo, 2014). The effectiveness of these structures in supporting "*an effective learning environment*" is thus questionable.

Accreditation includes both institutional and programme certification, with the former a prerequisite for the latter. Shizha (ZIMCHE) highlighted that accreditation is "*the worthiness of an institution or programme for which you need a stamp of approval before it's called a university or a degree*". According to the ZIMCHE Act, accreditation is "a process of external quality review to scrutinise institutions of higher education and their programmes for quality assurance and quality improvement". A certificate of accreditation is given if a university shows the achievement of "acceptable standards in terms of physical, human financial and material resources, management and operational procedures and acceptable standard of academic life focussing on teaching, research, public and expert service". Before a programme is accredited, institutions submit the necessary regulations for peer evaluation before ZIMCHE makes a site visit. The Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee then assesses the programme and gives recommendations to the ZIMCHE Council. Shizha expressed the need for the accreditation process to be repeated every five years in order to "*encourage institutions to maintain standards above a certain minimum in their operations*".

ZIMCHE holds annual QA workshops to inform universities about quality. It also requires HEI's to establish QA units to oversee internal QA before their external evaluation. ZIMCHE shares its findings with the university under evaluation on areas of improvement or satisfaction. It is up to the HEI's to improve their systems and practices beyond QA and the next section discusses how universities operationalise and enhance quality in T & L.

5.3.2 Operationalisation in universities

Foregrounded by a discussion of the relationship between ZIMCHE and HEI's, this section examines the internal QA systems employed by universities. Despite variations in universities' conceptualisation of quality, it was implemented similarly through practices such as external examination, peer review and student evaluations.

Relationship between ZIMCHE and the universities

All universities acknowledged the need to regulate quality and ZIMCHE's role, but reported varying degrees of success. For Huni (U-I) [Baobab University], ZIMCHE provides "*a seal of approval*", while Banda (U-D) cited ZIMCHE's importance in setting minimum standards and Lunga (U-A) highlighted the significance of establishing the MBK coupled with an emphasis on resources to curb the operation of under-resourced institutions. Apart from accreditation and auditing exercises, Lunga (U-A) explained that ZIMCHE met regularly with VC's and senior academics to "*discuss issues of common good among universities and issues that would improve the universities*". While some universities reported having a good working relationship with ZIMCHE, referring to them as "*partners in this process*" or "*the mother body*", others were highly critical. Despite regarding ZIMCHE's role as necessary, some alluded to it having a top-down approach. Khumalo (U-H) explained:

> *We understand quality from ZIMCHE, the main regulator of universities in the country. ZIMCHE holds workshops where directions are given in terms of what universities should do to ensure that quality is achieved.*

This illustrates a level of paternalism between ZIMCHE and the universities. Consequently, some HEI's established before ZIMCHE's formation were opposed to its approach of monitoring quality The most vocal was Sando (U-C) who argued that, "*we are not people that are supposed to be monitored and tracked for compliance*". He highlighted the difference between policing universities and providing *"counsel"* which ZIMCHE "*as a council*" should do. This exposes a measure of resentment against ZIMCHE for intruding on activities carried out "*successfully*" before its formation. Sando believes that ZIMCHE infringes on academic freedom and posits that, *"there must be due respect to the composition of senate; the professors' deans and chairpersons who are involved in approving programmes and ensuring quality"*.

ZIMCHE's "*directives*" to universities illustrates how it imposes quality control rather than fostering mutual collaboration. As a government parastatal, its 21 council members are Ministerial appointees, constraining the agency's independence. Most universities consider it as representing government's interests and at times, specific politicians. This raises questions

of whose interests are represented and whose voice is the strongest in determining what constitutes quality? Ruwa (ZIMCHE) acknowledged the QAA's limitations giving the example of governments' aim of having a university in every province, to which ZIMCHE "*can't say no*". He explained, "*ZIMCHE is there to make recommendations, not to order the ministry*". However, he also cited an incident where ZIMCHE was instructed to investigate a university running a programme with a "*regime change agenda*". Ruwa indicated that, "*in the final analysis we advised that the programme be continued as it met QA requirements*". Because ZIMCHE is mandated to evaluate and ensure quality, the recommendations in this case focused on QA rather than anything else. This instance highlights the political nature of quality in Zimbabwe. While ZIMCHE may aim to focus on improving quality, political interference may limit its effectiveness.

Institutional Quality Assurance

Institutional QA includes all activities carried out internally to promote accountability. Only four of the 15 universities, one private and three public have independent QA units. The remaining 11 operate through various committees within departments and councils. Of the 10 universities in the study, only three had independent QA units staffed by academics and non-academics with different qualifications and areas of expertise. For U-H, these included "*faculty deans, academics, representatives from the library, ICT, the registry, and the business development information and public relations office*". The remaining seven universities QA systems operated through various committees from department up to Senate level. Choto (U-F) explained that these committees "*had a symbiotic relationship*" in ensuring quality. Only two representatives admitted to flaws in their systems resulting from a lack of coordination in following up on implementation. For instance, Lunga (U-A) noted that the absence of a fulltime QA unit in his university to follow up challenges raised, partially explains failure to implement policy requirements.

Banda (U-D) explained that his university's QA system uses the Total Quality Management system because "*quality is not about a dedicated specialised unit but about everyone's' participation*". Banda explained that the QA directorate assigns institutional officers to monitor and evaluate T & L in specific schools in the university. In addition:

> *the QA directorate carries out curriculum development through workshops and capacity building as well as reviews of T & L evaluations by both students and peers. It collates and analyse the information, identifies areas of weakness in terms of T & L, comes up with improved agendas and give the units feedback.*

Employing the TQM approach in HE is controversial as a university differs from business organisations with centralised authority. However, Banda argued that it was effective in promoting "*total participation*". Yet some university administrators who make such claims rarely consult across the university. While some indicated that their internal systems were a result of participation, others implemented more of a top-down approach. For example, Khumalo (U-H) stated:

> *In terms of quality of T & L, we realised that this should be cascaded down to all members within the university and we organised a workshop where all lecturers were inducted into this subject; what is meant by quality, and how it should be applied within the programmes offered.*

The administration's need to "*cascade*" the idea of quality down to the lecturers raises questions about its uptake by lecturers and consequently, the systems' efficiency as will be examined in the case study universities.

Teaching and Learning

Regarding T & L Lunga (U-A) emphasised that ZIMCHE is "*only interested in the learning environment and content. They don't look into issues of teaching, exams and results. That is done within our own universities through the academic board*". While all university QA officers expressed the importance of quality in the learning process, they admitted that it was difficult to measure. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University], explained:

> *There are things such as assessing the philosophical orientation of teaching approaches which will influence the quality of teaching. These are very subjective and will always be there. So when you measure the outcomes, those assumptions might be invisible but contribute to the end product. But we are only talking about those outcomes that we see and can say this is good and this is deviating.*

Only easily measurable inputs and outputs are taken as proxies for quality. Sometimes, the T & L process is neglected despite it being the most crucial determinant of whether the inputs are converted to expansive outputs.

Sando (U-C) stressed that, "*the quality of T & L is paramount for the university to be there in the first place because with poor quality you are out of business*". Out of the 10 universities, two institutions, U-D and U-I noted the gap between academic qualifications and teaching. Consequently they introduced a compulsory T & L programme *"to ensure that every lecturer has the basic minimum in terms of pedagogical skills so that they can appreciate what it means to teach".* U-D introduced "*a continuous professional development for building teaching competencies*". U-I introduced:

> *a post- graduate diploma in tertiary education, compulsory for all young lecturers at lecturer grade who did not have a teaching qualification. This is a prerequisite for a permanent appointment as a lecturer. You had young scholars, twenty something years old joining with their MA's and PhD's but with no teaching experience and were unleashed on poor unsuspecting students.*

While this is a laudable idea, in practice it is imbued with challenges. The assumption that only young scholars need this training neglects senior academics that may at least require refresher courses. Also, being compulsory, the lecturers' involvement might be perfunctory without actually improving their teaching. Nevertheless, the universities' recognition of the need to improve the lecturers' pedagogical practices illustrates their desire to improve the quality of teaching. In addition, as Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] reiterated, they also have seminars and peer review *"but these are just stop-gap measures because if you don't have the knowledge and the qualification it might be difficult to understand what you should be doing".*

Another agreed on measure of improving the learning process was the adoption of deep learning rather than rote learning. Banda (U-D) explained;

> *Previously teaching was based on the transmission model, it was about what a lecturer does. I could go into a lecture theatre and give a brilliant lecture, leave the students breathless and awed, thinking that guy really knows his stuff! Now we've changed that. Teaching is about making sure that students learn. The lecturer must ensure that at the end of the day students have understood. It's not what I'm going to do in the lecture; it's what the student is going to be able to do after the lecture, after the course and after the programme.*

In promoting student learning, the representatives claimed that instead of lecturers "*giving a sermon*", a range of learning activities actively involving students were adopted. These included "*seminar presentations, problem based learning, group-work, tutorials, lectures, portfolio presentations, field visits*" (Zonda, U-B) and for technical courses; "*practical work design and development of prototypes*" (Gondo, U-G). These learning activities, it was suggested, enhanced the quality of learning through promoting individual and group work, creative thinking and practical learning. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives can only be confirmed by student experiences discussed in the following chapters.

Another internal QA initiative was student evaluation of lecturers and courses. Zonda (U-B) noted that these assessments are based on *"criteria such as providing the course outline timely, the quality of teaching and consultation with the lecturer"*. This provided a platform for students' input on quality and collaborative learning. Banda (U-D) stated:

> *Students are the best placed people to evaluate teaching and learning and they also have an opportunity to participate in institutional governance. At departmental level they're members of the departmental boards, they help in the formulation of agendas for various meetings, they're also part of the school board, and senate which makes decisions around issues to do with T & L.*

Although feedback was supposed to be given on students' assessments, it is not always the case. Lunga (U-A) admitted that "*it's not universally practised; you get some lecturers going for many semesters without submitting these forms*". At a university with an independent QA unit Banda (U-D) explained the process as follows:

> *the data is analysed by the department's chairperson then it goes to the departmental QA committee, which looks at arising issues. This committee then drafts an action plan responding to the issues raised which is sent to the faculty QA committee which consolidates a faculty action plan. The QA office receives the reports from the faculty QA committee and develops a monitoring and evaluation system based on the issues raised by students and the faculty's response. The QA office ensures that the faculty follows up on the issues and at times offers assistance on certain improvements.*

At institutions without QA units, evaluations were a matter of the faculty dean's consideration. Zonda (U-B) explained:

The evaluation forms are coded, analysed and submitted to the Dean, and the deputy VC's or VC's office. It is the Deans responsibility to discuss with the lecturers their weaknesses and the strengths so that they can improve. If the Dean is also a lecturer then the Deputy VC will do the checking and discussions.

University representatives claimed a high level of student involvement as stakeholders in the HE QA system, but this could only be verified at the two case study universities.

Other aspects of T & L at some universities involved compulsory courses for students. These were determined by the university's mandate such as gender, culture and heritage, disability studies while others were generic such as communication skills and entrepreneurial studies. For the technical universities such as U-G, practical aspects were central to learning in groups at first year and individually from second up to fourth year in "*producing prototypes and developing technologies*".

All the universities claimed to have national, regional and international collaborations which improve the quality of teaching. Pada (E-U) explained:

we bring in external examiners to evaluate our assessments and procedures. We have guest lecturers coming to teach or give seminars and others supervising our post graduate students. Our relationship with local and international universities is based on academic provision of which QA is part, because when we bring somebody with certain skills to assist a department, already, issues of QA are embedded in that.

Explaining how U-F assures T & L quality, Choto indicated that lecturers were also involved through "*marking moderation*". He explained:

A certain percentage of marked university scripts are remarked by a colleague to ensure that the lecturer's interpretation of the marking scheme is consistent with everybody else's.

Only five universities emphasised the need to use ICT as part of the teaching strategy. Pada (U-E) indicated the importance of assessing whether lecturers "*are also using modern technologies or they're just old people who stick to the assignments and writing on the board*".

Overall, universities had different criteria for identifying departments providing quality T & L, illustrating that they valued diverse aspects as part of learning. These included departments *"which attract visitors and collaborations"* (Lunga, U-A), with a *"high number of PhD holders"* (Huni, U-I) [Baobab University], with *"high student numbers"* (Sando, U-C) illustrating public interest in the programme, with *"the largest number of international students"* (Choto, U-F) and with *"theses of good quality"* (Mpofu, U-J) [Msasa University]. This range of indicators highlights the varying values the universities hold as quality.

Work-related learning

Another important component of T & L identified was work-related learning (WRL) or attachment, whose period ranges from three to twelve months. This gives students the opportunity to put theory into practice. Lunga (U-A) explained WRL as:

> *experience outside the university in a typical work place by a student who has not yet completed their degree. They experience and participate in the workplace and then return to university to complete their degree.*

At all universities, WRL is mandatory and has to *"contribute to some aspect of their learning"* by adding to students' final grades. Choto (U-F) emphasised that the quality of one's degree was not assessed on the examination alone; the final mark comprised *"continuous assessment, seminar participation and presentations, tutorials and written work"*. WRL contributes 25 percent of the student's overall mark and was assessed:

> *in 3 parts; a community leader, maybe a chief or the councillor, assess the student in terms of his academic performance and his ability to function and work with them. That's quite subjective but that's important in real life situations. Then a lecturer will also visit them on site and do an assessment. The student will also do a kind of self-evaluation through writing reports.*

The assessment of student learning through various ways other than exams demonstrates the desire to have a more balanced evaluation of learning.

Graduate tracking was also considered important at all universities although some admitted to not following through because of resource constraints. Banda (U-D) clarified:

> *We call it monitoring graduate definition. It is a requirement of the QA policy that each department and school must do a study on graduate definition service or find out where their graduates are, the kind of jobs they are doing, the quality of the jobs and their impact on the industry. It actually informs the programme review process every 5 years.*

Despite differences in the way that some universities conceptualised quality, there are similarities in how it is operationalised. The universities conceptualise quality from a somewhat wider perspective than ZIMCHE and operationalise it in more diverse ways. This partly explains the resentment from those universities established before the formation of ZIMCHE. The divergent conceptualisations of quality expose the disjuncture and tension between policy and practice. The universities generally surpass ZIMCHE's standards by focusing specifically on T & L. Despite these differences with ZIMCHE, such initiatives are still aimed at enhancing students' employment prospects in a dynamic market. The focus on graduate attributes and skills emerges from the dominant conceptualisation of quality that emphasises employers' needs. The main exception in enhancing the quality of teaching was the requirement at two universities that academics learn teaching skills. Despite their efforts in assuring quality, all the respondents noted that they face challenges.

5.4 Quality constraints and outcomes

This section focuses on the constraints to achieving quality and the outcomes valued as quality education. The factors hampering the effectiveness of the internal and external QA policies that emerged are the evolution of quality, academic perceptions, resources and Zimbabwe's economy. This is followed by a discussion of the consequences of universities not meeting agreed standards. Valued graduate outcomes are examined on the basis of human capital or human development. The former foregrounds the instrumental value of HE with emphasis on employability and graduate skills while the latter underscores both the instrumental and intrinsic value of HE. My two indicators for quality; critical being and the capability for work are included under the discussion on human development.

5.4.1 Evolution of quality in higher education

While the formalisation of QA may be regarded as an advantage, some representatives considered it a disadvantage. The representatives unanimously declared that quality has always been an essential part of HE and was practised by HEI's before the establishment of ZIMCHE. Banda (U-D) noted that with ZIMCHE's establishment, QA "*is now professionalised and there are personnel in the university dedicated to QA*". Choto (U-F) observed that quality had evolved from an individual to a shared understanding. He stated:

> *the concept of quality had a private interpretation and each university decided for itself. With the formation of ZIMCHE, there is now a broad understanding of quality which is helpful because we are getting to the space where the qualifications of students from all universities will be of the same value.*

The foregoing discussion illustrates that quality still has institutional interpretations in spite of ZIMCHE's general standards. Emphasising resources, lecturers' qualifications and a minimum body of knowledge, ZIMCHE overlooks certain aspects that universities consider valuable. These include Christian values, T & L and the inclusion of students' voices. Shizha (ZIMCHE) indeed admitted:

> *One of our challenges as a young organisation is being accepted by institutions because they were doing all this on their own. There wasn't too much, I don't want to use the word 'supervision' but it's to that extent. So you find people having problems accepting that there is an external body.*

Of the 10 universities, three representatives highlighted that lecturers disliked QA requirements. Sando (U-C) explained the reason being because of:

> *the mind-set of the academic. The academic thinks that quality is all about policing and they have this negative attitude towards quality imperatives. I'm not saying all of them but you have those pockets of resistance.*

Ironically, Sando had also accused ZIMCHE of too much interference. Resistance by academic staff is variously explained by loss of academic autonomy, constant monitoring and a lack of motivation in an inhospitable working environment compounded by the QA top-down approach. However, Mpofu (U-J) [Msasa University] argued that lecturers:

are aware of the importance of quality assurance and were involved in coming up with the new system. … I tried to get lecturers buy in as much as possible because this is the core business of our profession. There is resistance because there was a laissez faire atmosphere before.

Banda (U-D) explained that the professionalization of quality *"upset the applecart by introducing a structure and a system that was non-existent"*. However, professionalization was a response to new challenges in HE such as "*the commodification or marketization of HE, the need to refresh old systems, more universities and thus more competition and demands on the universities and academics"*. Banda highlighted that the new HE system:

requires more openness, transparency, accountability, monitoring and evaluation of the academics which has created a wedge amongst academics, some of whom consider it an erosion of academic freedom and tantamount to bureaucratisation of the academy.

For Banda, academic resistance resulted from *"fear of the unknown, inadequately understanding the objectives of QA and a failure to understand the new HE challenges"*. From the literature, lecturers are not opposed to the idea of quality but to the related bureaucratisation and managerial procedures. The recasting of students as paying customers emphasises assurance and power relations implicit in quality. While various reasons are given for academic resistance, they are still expected to conform to the system, making it "de facto compulsory". Among other things, the next two chapters will examine academic perspectives on QA.

5.4.2 Resource shortages

Financial, infrastructural and human resource challenges compromising quality were highlighted by some representatives. Chimuti (ZIMCHE) highlighted that because ZIMCHE operates with a "*skeleton staff*", auditing; a continuous process involving two or three visits to the same institution annually was compromised. This created the risk of sub-standard programmes and institutions' operating before corrective action is taken.

While most of the university representatives were reluctant to discuss their problems, Lunga (U-A) explained that "*we are always saying sorry to our students because we can't give them*

what we know they deserve". He added that because of limited resources, demotivated staff and students as well as inadequate infrastructure, students are:

> *not experiencing the learning environment that would propel them to greater heights. At university you are teaching skills, capabilities and mind-sets, you are teaching people to be thinkers and doers. You can't do that in a depleted environment situation.*

Lunga's (U-A) remarks mirror the dire predictions made by the 1989 Williams Report about university expansion, resources shortages and the provision of quality education.

Both private and public universities cited financial challenges and the "*detrimental*" lack of government support. Khumalo (U-H) explained:

> *government doesn't do much in terms of supporting private universities. ...we receive no funding at all... our funding is totally from the church and students. When government sets standards without supporting mechanisms in terms of funding, that's a challenge because for standards to be met and quality achieved... there should be a financial provision.*

Choto (U-F) from a public university also revealed that since 2008 there has been declining government funding. In 2015, the government declared that, "*universities are on their own and must find innovative ways of raising money and developing their institutions*". Consequently, most universities have begun running as business enterprises. Banda (U-D) reiterated that all university departments now "*operate as profit centres*" attracting students to raise revenue for the institution. Ruwa (ZIMCHE) acknowledged that universities are "*in a catch 22 situation*" because they have to "*survive*" by enrolling more students despite not having the requisite resources. "*If we stop them, they may not survive, but that also affects quality because the number of students will be too much*". ZIMCHE's awareness of this challenge has resulted in the formation of the HE Shape and Size committee, legislated in the ZIMCHE Act to advise on the optimum number of students an institution should have in relation to its facilities and the optimum number of institutions a country should have in relation to resources and population.

Declining government funding has transferred HE costs to parents. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] stated, "*It's the students and parents that will build the school and hostels.*

Everything we are doing now rests on someone paying; they must have a willingness to pay". In order to supplement income, HEI's are increasing student enrolment in parallel programmes. Although university representatives generally downplayed the associated problems, Khumalo (U-H) highlighted, *"this usually has a negative effect on the quality of education because there are inadequate resources".*

Broader economic problems also compromise quality. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] complained that lecturers:

> *face challenges in trying to use technology because of factors beyond their control. For example, when one is trying to give a power point presentation and there's no electricity. Although we've tried using generators, these disruptions have worsened and it means huge outlays in terms of resources.*

Given the intersecting conversion factors cited above, the provision or improvement of quality is severely limited and this results in several consequences as will be explained next.

5.4.3 Consequences of lack of quality

The discussion now turns to the consequences of universities not meeting the agreed standards. ZIMCHE's compliance approach "has implications for approval or sanctions" for universities (UNESCO: p. 7). Failure to comply with ZIMCHE's standards results in either the closure of institutions or suspension of programmes. Shizha (ZIMCHE) stated:

> *We shut the programme down immediately! Because, if you allow it to continue, it's going on with those deficiencies. We publish that in the media so that students do not register for those programmes. We also attend graduation ceremonies in Zimbabwe so that students from unregistered programs that have gone through the net can't graduate.*

While this may regulate quality, it adversely affects students. Chimuti (ZIMCHE) outlined three stages that ZIMCHE follows in shutting down programmes or institutions. If a university has a sub-standard programme, the programme is stopped and the institution advised to upgrade the programme within a given time frame depending on the gravity of the issue. Failure to

comply results in the programmes' suspension. For example ZIMCHE suspended programs at U-C and U-A and 10 foreign institutions including the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (Mashininga, 2012). This was a result of their failure to register programmes and an "increase [in] enrolments without corresponding increases in appropriate facilities, infrastructure and adequate numbers of competent staff, leading to quality being compromised" (Ibid). A medical degree programme was suspended at U-A because it did not meet the requirements of the Medical and Dental Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (Ibid). If a programme does not meet ZIMCHE's requirements, the consumers (students) are not consulted but warned to withdraw.

In instances where a programme has been suspended, little sympathy was expressed for the students. Chimuti (ZIMCHE) stated, "*as standards controllers we are not worried about other things, we are worried about standards*". Students have to wait while the process unfolds. Although ZIMCHE promotes quality, it is sometimes detrimental to the students' immediate benefit. For example, the five programmes suspended at U-C in 2011 affected the 3 214 students who had graduated prior to the ban as well as the 1 090 then enrolled. The students were stranded until the ban was lifted in 2013 (Nhambura, The Herald Newspaper, 2012). While it is necessary to ensure that universities meet the basic standards of education, it is unfortunate that students are vulnerable to predatory institutions which are closed after failing to meet ZIMCHE's standards. Although commendable, ZIMCHE's closure of deficient programmes or institutions does not consider students' diverse circumstances. For instance, in 2010, 48 percent of the students in HE were receiving financial aid from the government while another 28 percent had student debts (SARUA, 2011: 5). Postponing studies or the attainment of qualifications only exacerbated students' financial challenges. While there is a need for improving the quality of education, the temporary and in some cases permanent closure of institutions and programmes prejudices the students who get disadvantaged both as recipients of sub-standard education and when closure occurs and this has implications for human development.

Out of the 10 universities, two admitted to having programmes discontinued by ZIMCHE only to be resumed after complying with set benchmarks. Choto (U-F) stated that ZIMCHE *"is not just an organisation doing their work in a ritualistic manner, they really have the teeth to bite*

and they keep universities on the straight and narrow". However, Sando (U-C) provided another dimension stating:

> *The closure had nothing to do with quality! The major challenge was that these programmes were getting too big for comfort and were challenging conventional universities and colleges in terms of enrolment.*

For him, the growth of distance learning in Zimbabwe was threatening enrolment in conventional institutions because they "*took education to the people*" and "*this disappointed certain individuals with vested interests who wanted to protect their territories at the expense of the nation*". This brings forth the issue of power and control intertwined with the notion of quality. Given the political ties between ZIMCHE and government, government determines the "proper" learning experience and the purpose it should serve. The shifting of the authority to determine quality from academics to the government and other external players is part of the changing power relations and politicisation of quality.

Despite the challenges faced by ZIMCHE and the universities, graduates with different attributes are produced. These attributes vary in terms of human capital and human development. The following section focuses on the valued outcomes by ZIMCHE and the universities.

5.4.4 Quality outcomes: Human capital

For Chimuti (ZIMCHE), the outcome valued by the QAA was ensuring "*the relevance of the programmes to the key stakeholders such as the industry*". Similarly, Ruwa (ZIMCHE) indicated that there are efforts to ensure that HE, government, ZIMCHE and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce have "*a common understanding of the kind of graduate we want to produce- a person who can contribute to economic development*". Admittedly, employment considerations are central to HE in any case, but the focal point of policy seems to be the production of graduates who can "*play a meaningful economic role*". The understanding of quality as fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose and transformative development are all human capital oriented. It is for the purposes of economic development, not just of Zimbabwe, but other countries. Given Zimbabwe's high unemployment levels, graduates are expected to be "*global players*", capable of working in other countries. The emphasis on graduate

employability as a quality outcome without broader issues of human development highlights the instrumental value placed on HE.

Similarly, the university representatives emphasised HE's instrumental value. Banda (U-D) stated that they aim to create an "*expert or technologist*" who also possesses generic skills such as "*entrepreneurship and lifelong learning*". Other graduate attributes identified were "*versatility in meeting needs and expectations, someone who is hands on, someone good at technical aspects* (Sando, U-C)*, time management* (Khumalo, U-H)*, communication skills* (Mpofu, U-J) [Msasa University] *and team work and communication skillls* (Choto, U-F and Lunga, U-A)*.* The emphasis on such skills highlights the importance of student employability, which is regarded as the objective of HE.

Neo-liberal influences have also resulted in the markets/employers' playing a central role in determining what is taught in universities, including graduate attributes. While HE has always been central to professional education and training, the development of a knowledge based society has resulted in increased pressure to produce employable graduates. This has emphasised the teaching of generic skills in addition to the discipline specific knowledge to enhance graduate employability. HE is expected to be relevant and ensure employer satisfaction rather than relevance to the greater needs of society. In most instances, graduate employment is used as a proxy for quality learning. However, given the high levels of graduate unemployment in Zimbabwe, this may mean that there is poor quality in the universities. Although some of the university representatives highlighted the need to match employer needs with graduate skills, none admitted to producing poor quality graduates.

5.4.5 Quality outcomes: Human development

Despite acknowledging the importance of values such as critical thinking, ZIMCHE focuses on students learning the MBK. On promoting specific skills or values, Shizha (ZIMCHE) admitted:

> *We are not there yet. We haven't gone into that area, at the moment we are simply looking at the minimum body of knowledge and facilities. But our universities are going beyond that because when you go into some institutions there have university-wide courses through which they instil skills other universities do not have.*

As Ruwa (ZIMCHE) indicated, the assumption is that if HEI's follow the QA guidelines as specified, then it would result in students learning skills, knowledge and values such as critical thinking, empowerment, participation, sustainability and citizenship. However, they have no way of assessing what students learn and leave it up to the universities.

Although secondary to academic knowledge and generic skills, half of the representatives highlighted the need to foster human development values. The church-run universities valued Christian ethics and morals in addition to academic skills. Khumalo (U-H) stated that in addition to forming *"somebody who is academically sound",* they aim at *"producing a graduate who is morally upright in terms of their Christian or ethical conduct".* Given the university's niche area of special needs education, the university also values issues relating to *"tolerance and inclusivity"*.

Human development values were not only limited to church-run institutions, the secular universities also cited values such as *"high level of ethics"* (Sando, U-C) and *respect* (Huni, U-I) [Baobab University]. Choto (U-F) also expressed that their graduates should be guided by *"the philosophy of Ubuntu[19]".* Ubuntu conjures ideas of citizenship and HE being for the public good. In addition, Choto expressed that their graduates *"should be servant leaders and lead in a manner that empowers people and makes those people realise their full potential".* This is linked to the conceptualisation of quality as transformation and issues of both social and individual agency as indicated by the CA. While the need for skills was mentioned, there was also an acknowledgement of diversity in what students' value. Choto (U-F) explained, *"We believe that students' value different things and the education they receive should enable each of the individuals to have better choices, not just in work but in their social lives as well".* Freedom is central to the CA and normatively, HE ought to increase people's choices and assist them in attaining valued ends.

As explained in chapter three, I identified critical being and the capability for work as being central HD values fostered by HE. Although the university representatives unanimously

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[19] Ubuntu is derived from the African humanist philosophy. Broodryk (2002) explains it as a traditional African philosophy that offers an understanding of humanity in relation to the world embodying values such as justice, tolerance and kindness.

identified the two as being fundamental to quality learning, their understanding was somewhat narrow.

Critical being

The participants' understanding of critical being was mostly limited to critical thinking, with little reference to critical self-reflection and critical action. Critical thinking was unanimously identified as one of the outcomes of university learning. For example, Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] emphasised:

> *Without critical thinking there is no university and critical thinking doesn't necessarily mean negative thinker, it simply means people who are able to reflect and question because it's a questioning mind that leads to discovery. Whether in the humanities or natural sciences, Zimbabwean universities also need to be a place where critical thinking is nurtured and developed.*

While underlining the centrality of critical thinking, the above also implies the tension between universities as sites of critical thinking and universities as sites of political dissent. Given increasing state control in Zimbabwe, this is an important contribution that universities, given the space, could make to human development. Huni also noted the importance of critical thinking to both the humanities and natural sciences, without emphasising one over the other.

For some representatives, critical thinking meant a questioning mind while others understood it as knowledge application. For instance, Sando (U-C) explained critical thinking as "*the ability to question and critique knowledge*" while Khumalo (U-H) understood it as "*enabling students apply some of the knowledge they get in the classroom to actual real life examples.*" Despite this difference, the university representatives all agreed that critical thinking cannot be taught separately as a skill but should be developed through T & L activities. Infusing critical thinking within the curriculum illustrates the need for students to learn to think critically within their disciplines. Though promoting a level of criticality, according to Barnett (1997), this only promotes criticality in the areas of knowledge without self-reflection and action. Again, outside the two case study universities, whether critical thinking was in fact fostered could not be verified.

Capability for work

Because of HE's potential to increase employment opportunities, ideas of work were central to the discussion on the quality of T & L. However my understanding of the capability for work and what constitutes work differed from those of the participants whose focus was limited to graduate employment. Similar to the others, Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] understood work in terms of "t*he students' ability to work well and execute the duties required of them. It depends on getting a job and having the required skills to perform well in that position"*. Given Zimbabwe's high unemployment levels (See footnote six- p. 12) Gondo (U-G), indicated that HE should "*prepare students to work in an environment in which they could either be employees or employers"*. Other representatives also mentioned both formal and informal employment citing the need for skills to work in the more prevalent informal economy in Zimbabwe[20]. The constraining economic environment was acknowledged by all representatives who argued that the skills and knowledge acquired at university positioned graduates advantageously. Huni (U-I) [Baobab University] stated, *"We understand that jobs are scarce*, *some companies are closing but our graduates will always find a way and be among the few successful ones and get well-paying jobs*". A well-paying job was narrowly valued above other variables such as the working environment, flexible working hours and job-satisfaction. However, this is not surprising given the country's economic conditions.

While representatives such as Khumalo (U-H) castigated the employment of graduates in jobs unrelated to their fields arguing that it wasted resources, there was a general acknowledgement of high unemployment forcing people to compete for few opportunities. Pada (U-E) argued that, "*Given the scarcity of jobs in the country, one gets any job and then looks for a suitable one while in employment. You don't sit and wait for the right one"*. While graduates are expected to exercise their agency and look for more suitable jobs, the idea of making do with the limited options stifles the freedom to choose resulting in adaptive preferences. The limited

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[20] Between 2011 and 2014 the informal sector grew by 29 per cent while the formal sector shrunk by 40 per cent. The informal sector comprises agriculture, trade, commerce, manufacturing and mining. http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=453276029&Country=Zimbabwe&topic=Economy. In 2012, 84% of the 5.4 million employed people were in the informal economy. http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2012/11/04/marjority-employed-in-informal-sector-zimstat-survey/

employment opportunities prompted the teaching of entrepreneurial studies as compulsory modules at two of the HEI's to enable graduates to start and run their own businesses. Under such adverse circumstances, the capability for work becomes difficult to apply as there are limited choices for students to choose from. There is an emphasis on the instrumental value of work and economic gain, neglecting non-instrumental aspects such as creativity, enjoyment, as well as voice and participation. Regardless of the human capital emphasis of QA policy and skills level, graduates' opportunities for employment, their earning potential and capability enhancement are limited by the economy as a negative conversion factor. This restricts graduates' freedom to convert capabilities into functionings such as valued work.

5.5 Discussion

The notion of quality in Zimbabwean universities is an imposition from above, and a conceptualisation of quality cannot be separated from ideas of power and control. While the ZIMCHE representatives stated that the organisation is a quasi-government institution with government involvement limited to funding, some of the university representatives identified ZIMCHE as representing state interests or specific individuals within the state. This idea is strengthened by the number of political appointees in the universities and in the ZIMCHE council. To a great extent, government controls HE expansion, with quality being compromised for political expediency. As seen by Ruwa's (ZIMCHE) comment, government has its own ideas concerning HE, for example the establishment of a university in every province to which ZIMCHE can only offer advice which can be accepted or disregarded. Governments' involvement in HE illustrates Neave's (1994) idea of the politics of quality which refers to the political agendas related to the monitoring of quality. Because of political interference, ZIMCHE suffers from a crisis of legitimacy with some universities regarding it as a policing body rather than one aimed at improving QA. This results in academic resistance.

Moreover, ZIMCHE's QA process is rather basic with an emphasis on resources and standardisation. While ZIMCHE claims to maintain and improve quality, the evaluative systems in place such as auditing and accreditation and their emphasis on resources may actually do little to improve quality. Although ZIMCHE has closed several institutions and programmes providing sub-standard quality, it does not mean that the remaining accredited

universities and programmes provide quality teaching. Quality teaching is more than availing resources such as qualified lecturers, infrastructure and books. Central to quality is the pedagogical process, the quality of which ZIMCHE does not assure.

While ZIMCHE's understanding of quality as compliance is reductionist with a narrow conceptualisation of human capital, the universities conceptualisation of quality is broader, although still largely informed by human capital concerns. The universities are largely informed by international discourse on QA and the need to assure stakeholders, especially the government, that resources are being put to good use. Although all universities have to comply with ZIMCHE's standards and establish internal QA systems, they are not confined to its resource based concept of quality. The quality outcomes identified by the universities would not be achieved by only adhering to set standards. A few of the university representatives highlighted that despite their compliance with set standards and benchmarks; they go beyond ZIMCHE's expectations and identify their own institution specific outcomes.

The universities conceptualisation of quality as fitness for purpose, value for money, resources, international standards and as aspiration emphasise the instrumental value of education. However, within this predominantly human capital discourse, there are a few instances of the desire to foster human development, for example, among the private, church-run universities. Because the church is a social institution whose purpose is to foster public good, these values are then expected of church affiliated universities, in addition to contributing to economic development. The conceptualisation more related to human development is quality as transformation which positions HE as fostering growth in terms of gaining discipline specific knowledge as well as an awareness and appreciation of the need for social and political development. Such a conceptualisation of quality is essential in countries such as Zimbabwe which are still developing their QA systems and have little political freedom and wellbeing. This will be discussed more in coming chapters.

Although all universities identified critical thinking as a valued graduate outcome, a thick notion of critical being, agency and participation was not strong. There was more emphasis on skills that increased graduate employability. HE was regarded as the means to an end, with employment being the end. However, there were a few instances where critical thinking was

practically highlighted as being important to graduates and the society especially in promoting leadership values necessary to eradicate endemic African challenges such as corruption. Ideally, university education provides a space that fosters critical being (critical thinking, self-reflection and action) and freedom of expression. However, this space is missing in Zimbabwe's universities where a questioning mind is synonymous with opposition to the government and is thus discouraged. The proclivity for university students and academics for political agitation especially in support of democratic values and general human development has seen the government tightening control over HE as a possible site of dissent, while ostensibly promoting quality.

Given Zimbabwe's political economic environment described in chapter one, the capability for work and the freedoms and opportunities to make employment choices are not considered. There is a human capital discourse informing employment and economic opportunities with HE being instrumental. Ideally, HE creates an enabling environment to expand the learners' capabilities and not impose specific functionings by limiting the choices available to them. The shrinking Zimbabwean economy limits the freedom to choose the job that one values, a fundamental aspect of wellbeing. Because individuals differ in what they value in terms of employment, for example, wages, benefits, health, safety and availability of jobs, HE ought to enable graduates to choose. However, for this freedom to be exercised, the social, political and economic environment needs to be favourable. Such conditions are explained by Bonvin's capability for work as well as Sen's instrumental freedoms. These include political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These will be discussed in greater detail in chapter eight.

Understanding quality as human development means that HE is a means to an end. While the instrumental value secures well-paying jobs, the intrinsic value engenders capabilities such as voice, participation and critical being. In Zimbabwe, because of constraints such as the autocratic nature of the state, limiting policies and the country's economy, universities are not well positioned to develop wellbeing and agency. Thus, the conceptualisation of quality is narrowly limited to compliance and human capital. In foregrounding the state's political interests, the provision of quality as human development promoting wellbeing, critical being and agency is neglected.

5.6 Conclusion

ZIMCHE ensures quality technically through the achievement and maintenance of set standards designed to enable graduates to gain discipline specific knowledge for employment. Its conceptualisation of quality in human capital terms compromises the transformative potential of HE. Universities are positioned as providing discipline specific knowledge with no obligation to society or broadly, human development. This limits the effectiveness of the institutions in providing a transformative process in relation to the intrinsic value of education. At national policy level there is little possibility of improving the quality of learning based on the current QA system. Rather than focusing on improving the students' learning, the QA system focuses on standardisation and assurance. The responses give the picture of a tightly controlled HE system in which quality is assured procedurally and efficiently. HE seems to be the subject of a securely and coherently framed policy informed by human capital needs. The interviews with the university representatives illustrate that the area of QA in HE is a contested terrain which needs to take account of the numerous stakeholders involved and their expectations. At university level, quality assumes several meanings based on factors such as institutional mandate, aspiration and international and local contexts, all of which informs the valued outcomes beyond employability.

Despite the limitations to ZIMCHE's notion of quality, its closure of some HEI's and programmes is an attempt to regulate the quality of the education and eliminate sub-standard systems. In addition, it is important to highlight that this chapter presented the views and claims of the university representatives which might not be a reflection of the situation in practice. This raises questions relating to how quality is practised within the departments. The following chapter will therefore present the views of the deans and lecturers who implement quality systems as well as those of the students who participate in the learning. The discussion will corroborate some of the issues raised by the university representatives as well as explain the intricacies of QA in two case study universities at faculty and departmental level.

Chapter Six

Micro perspectives on the quality of teaching and learning: Case Study 1, Baobab University

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents multiple perspectives on the quality of T & L at Baobab University, previously referred to as University I (U-I). This case study approach moves away from a meso assessment of quality policy and practice in the previous chapter, to focus on the micro intricacies of how quality is conceptualised, implemented and the challenges faced at a localised institutional level. While not a comparative study, the chapter focuses on a public university and the next chapter examines quality in a private institution. The chapter uses the perspectives of deans, lecturers and students from the departments of Psychology and Mathematics in the faculties of Social Sciences (FSS) and Science and Technology (FST) to inform the analysis. These were among the 'best case' departments identified by the university. See Table 6.1 for information on the interview participants. The deans are important in an assessment of quality because they are the link between university management (meso) and the lecturers and students (micro). In most cases, deans are also lecturers; therefore, it is important to see how they translate policy into practice. Lecturers are central to the study because they are the ones guiding the students through the learning process and implementing the teaching policy. It is also important to uncover students' perceptions as the recipients of the education, and compare their expectations of quality with those of academics and policy makers. An examination of how the Baobab University understands and operationalizes quality will facilitate a discussion on the possible contribution of a human development informed conception of quality.

The chapter is divided into six sections. Section one provides a brief background of the university in order to contextualise developments within the institution. In the second, third and fourth sections, data is presented according to three themes for the deans, lecturers and

students respectively. The first theme is the conceptualisation of quality; factors informing notions of quality, the stakeholders involved, and what constitutes quality specifically in terms of T & L. Theme two examines how quality is operationalised within the two departments from faculty level. The third theme examines the valued quality outcomes in terms of human capital and human development and challenges faced in achieving these. The fifth section analyses the implications of conceptualising quality from a human development perspective, followed by a conclusion in section six.

Table 6.1: Baobab University study participants

Position	Gender	Duration of employment / Study	Respondents level of qualification	Respondents name
Pro- Vice chancellor- Academic affairs and research	Male	2 years	Professor	Huni
Dean – Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS)	Male	5 years	PhD	Gumbo
Dean- Faculty of Science and Technology (FST)	Male	6 years	MSc	Vera
Lecture- Mathematics	Male	8 years	MSc	Tsotso
Lecture-Mathematics	Female	6 years	BSc Hons	Shoko
Lecture-Psychology	Male	3 years	MSc	Hata
Lecture-Psychology	Female	7 years	MSc	Gondo
4 Students (FGD) Honours in Mathematics	4 Male 1Female	3 years	Undergraduate students	George, Morris, Tino and Ashley
4 Students (FGD) Honours in Psychology	4 Male 1 Female	3 years	Undergraduate students	Kudzi, Albert, Trust and Chipo

6.1 Background

Baobab University is a large comprehensive university established around 2000's as a result of the policy of HE devolution and in fulfilment of governments' policy to have a university in each of the country's 10 provinces. Using four indicators namely, Presence, Rate of impact, Openness and Academic excellence, Webometrics[21] ranked the university third in the country, the second comprehensive university. Baobab University receives only 50 percent of its operating costs from the state, 32 percent from student fees, 10 percent from investment income, and the remainder from 'sundry income' (SARUA, 2012). The university has two annual intakes, with four or five year full-time degrees students enrolled in either the government supported conventional programs or parallel/evening courses without government support. The latter are full fee-paying students. It also has a multi-campus approach and offers compulsory courses including ICT, Communication skills and Entrepreneurship studies.

As noted in the previous chapter, the QA representative (Huni) conceptualised quality as 1) fit for the purpose of achieving national and institutional goals, 2) as internationalisation and 3) as value for money. These notions of quality inform several practices at the institution, for instance, the realignment of research with the Zim Asset policy, the introduction of a compulsory course on entrepreneurial studies and an emphasis on WRL. In its effort to promote internationalisation, the university has appointed a dean of international relations to cater for international students and ensure that the education is relevant to both locals and foreigners. Value for money for the university is assured through the maximum use of resources by having conventional, parallel and visiting students at different times throughout the year.

While the views of the university representative were given in the previous chapter, excerpts of his interview will be used in this chapter to emphasise particular points. The chapter also highlights points of differences and similarities in the views expressed by the deans, lecturers and students, as well as between the faculties. Because of the university's size and its standing as third ranked, an examination of its notion of quality will provide an example of the dynamics involved in conceptualising and implementing quality in Zimbabwean HE. While the results

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[21] This is a ranking system based on university web presence, visibility and web access which measures a university's presence in the web by its own web domain, sub-pages, rich files and scholarly articles.

cannot be generalised to all universities in the country, it will provide a starting point in identifying alternative ways to conceptualise quality as human development.

6.2 Conceptualisation of quality in teaching and learning: the deans' perspectives

Illustrating a human capital perspective, the two deans' focused on graduate employability and compliance. While the university representative, Huni had a more outward conception of quality, the deans were more micro-focused, concentrating on processes within the university. Gumbo's (FSS) conceptualisation of quality was based on what he considers to be the objective of teaching; producing employable graduates. For him, *"quality means training manpower which is acceptable to industry"*. Proof of quality education is when a graduate does not have to undergo graduate-training before employment. Also because social sciences involve the application of theories to real life situations, Gumbo (FSS) conceived of quality as student understanding and knowledge application. He viewed quality T & L as a process through which:

> *students' learn more than just regurgitating what they've been taught, they should be able to apply the knowledge to real life work situations. If they do that it means they will not forget but if they parrot, after two or so months the concepts will be forgotten.*

Given Gumbo's objective to produce employable graduates, T & L was meant to facilitate knowledge application at work, making students effective employees.

Similar to ZIMCHE, Vera (FST) understood quality as compliance with clearly defined regulations. His understanding was largely procedural, focusing on the presence of a QA committee and adhering to processes in "*crafting regulations, faculty planning, stakeholder consultation and [number of] lecturers with PhD's*". This perspective assumes that quality is assured by the availability of inputs/resources and overlooks the actual teaching process which is central to quality student learning. It reproduces a thin input-output model of quality which typifies human capital approaches. For example, there are 10 PhD holders out of 74 lecturers in this faculty excluding the dean. It raises questions about whether this shortfall means there is no quality in the faculty and if quality cannot be achieved without having PhD holders.

Vera also understood quality in terms of rankings and international best practices. The influence of international standards and best practices seems to be more pervasive among the

S & T disciplines. Just as the university representatives from S & T institutions highlighted, the discipline specific standards set by international associations and the best practices they identify, inform the curriculum and assessment practices in the FST. Vera stated:

> *we are not there to reinvent the wheel, we are now a global village. We just consult with other renowned universities to see how and what they are teaching in terms of programmes and content. This is how we craft our programmes. If I go on to the internet I won't take more than 2 minutes before I show you which universities are ranked according to the quality of their programmes, research and so forth, this is what we are trying to follow.*

Although easy to adopt, best cases are problematic in their assumed uniformity of contexts. In most instances, best cases are adopted from universities in the global North which are comparatively well-resourced and have different value systems, political contexts and challenges from developing countries such as Zimbabwe. There is an adoption of words such as "*international standards*" and "*excellence*" which may only be marketing gimmicks used to attract students without an understanding of their implications for quality. Indeed, the transplanting of such ideas may be detrimental to the development of quality in Zimbabwe.

Unlike Vera (FST) who viewed quality as a technical rational system, Gumbo's (FSS) conception of quality had more potential to improve T & L because of its emphasis on student understanding. Vera's understanding of QE as "*improving our existing learning infrastructure by procuring equipment*" compared to Gumbo's view of it as "*giving detail over certain aspects of the knowledge body, enhance it so that the students know more*" highlighted the differences in their understanding. Vera's resource-based explanation illustrates his failure to appreciate the broader concept of quality beyond resources, and is complaint with ZIMCHE's requirements. The deans are the bridge between university management and lecturers, a task requiring an in-depth understanding of quality in order to effectively communicate it to departments within their faculties. Although the position of dean is administrative and does not require knowledge of QA as a prerequisite, there is need for some basic understanding of the process in order to implement it. The FST dean's compliance with ZIMCHE's QA requirements means that although they are providing quality according to ZIMCHE, it is limited in terms of human development.

Stakeholder participation

Understanding whom the deans think determines the quality of T & L in their faculties illustrates whose voice is the most influential. Similar to Huni, the university representative, the deans identified the employers/industry as the most influential stakeholder. For instance, Gumbo (FSS) claimed that this was because:

> *if you are a good institution you follow up on students at work-related learning and talk to their supervisors. They give you feedback on what your students know and don't know. So when they tell you what your students don't know, you return and review your learning programme.*

This highlights the human capital oriented nature of the deans' perspectives on quality and the instrumental role of HE.

While ZIMCHE understands quality as compliance and standardisation, the university representative conceptualises it as value for money, fitness of purpose and internationalisation, whereas the deans understand it as fitness for purpose, T & L, compliance and international best practices. This raises the possibility of contention among these variant conceptions. Moreover, although universities provide a wider understanding of quality, it is still human capital oriented.

6.2.1 The deans' role in operationalising quality

There is no T & L centre or specific policy governing teaching at Baobab University, the policy is communicated verbally. This may mean that the establishment of an institutional QA system is more in compliance with ZIMCHE's requirements than a need to improve quality. There is no independent QA unit and quality is assured through a committee system from department up to Senate level. At faculty level, the deans chair faculty planning meetings whose members comprise all heads of departments. Reflecting a top-down approach where the departmental chairpersons are given directives on how to assure quality, Vera (FST) indicated that these are meant *"to ensure that instructions are competently carried out"*. The deans were also lecturers, making it easier as Gumbo (FSS) noted, "*to administer what one knows*". To both deans, ZIMCHE's requirements were easy to meet and its' QA polices appropriate in *"polic[ing] university activities"*. The idea of ZIMCHE policing universities again denotes elements of

control. In explaining their duties, Vera (FST) indicated that the Faculty governance ordinance 4 stipulates that:

> *The Dean is responsible to the VC on the quality teaching and management of the faculty, property, equipment and so forth and ...it's the Dean's responsibility to address first year students and explain the academic processes at university.*

In executing their duties, the deans are mostly compliant with ZIMCHE's institutional QA standards and benchmarks, although some room is given for students to "*discuss other matters*" through lecturers and chairpersons and directly with the deans, both of whom claimed to have an "*open door policy for students*". The deans' methods of advancing quality in the two faculties were procedural and included ensuring that departments carried out student evaluations, peer reviews, exam moderation and used external examiners.

Institutional quality assurance system in place at Baobab University

One of ZIMCHE's requirements for all HEI's, institutional QA involves all activities carried out internally to promote accountability. Because of the absence of an independent QA unit at the university, the PVC Academic Affairs and Research chairs the institutional QA committee, while the deans oversee quality within the faculties. Each department has a "*quality team*" which reports to the dean. Although a new system called Key Results Area (KRA) has been introduced at Baobab University faculty and departmental level to improve performance levels, the effectiveness of this system is yet to be seen as it is still new. Through this system, performance targets are set at the beginning of the semester for teaching, research and community service and evaluations carried out at the end of the semester to assess whether set goals have been achieved. In teaching, the KRA sets targets on, for example, the number of tests, assignments and modules to be covered. At department level, quality is assured through peer and external review, student participation and WRL.

Gumbo (FSS) explained that departmental teaching is monitored in four stages. The first stage involved peer review through which the quality team and any other peers are invited to attend a lecture and "*at the end they discuss how the lecture went… and suggestions are made where there is need for improvement*". Secondly, through student evaluation at the end of every semester enabling students "*to assess the module so the lecturer knows their deficiency in teaching*". Both deans' concurred on the importance of student evaluations which promote

student participation and as Vera (FST) stated, "s*tudents as the recipients of the education are the ones better positioned to comment on their learning experience"*. The inclusion of students in the assessment process is important in developing capabilities such as voice and participation. It is therefore necessary to find out from the students whether this system is effective. The third stage involves the examination process, when a lecturer sets exams, and the departmental quality team "*assesses whether the questions are of the right standard*" and after the exam is written and marked, the scripts are subjected to moderation by the team. Vera (FST) believed that, "*the credibility of any institution of higher learning is in the examination system*". The fourth stage is an assessment of the course module, exam questions and scripts by an external examiner from any regional university. For Gumbo (FSS), this was important because "*an independent mind is better qualified to identify errors*". At the end of the semester in both faculties there is a "*performance management and assessment of every lecturer done by the chairperson and the Dean*" based on the student, peer and external examiners evaluations to determine whether a follow-up on a lecturers' performance is warranted.

Although both deans are also lecturers, Gumbo (FSS) had more to say in terms of T & L than Vera (FST). To achieve student understanding in learning, Gumbo (FSS) was against the use of Eurocentric texts that "*use foreign examples which students do not understand.*" He further noted the need for a lecturer to be well-prepared by "*reading around and effectively mastering the topic*". He explained:

> *If you don't teach them well, they will regurgitate what you have taught them and what they have read in books with foreign examples. Obviously as a lecturer you can't say that this is trash because that's what you were talking about. Therefore, I emphasise the need to make the students apply the concepts in examples they know and for them to do so, the lecturer must be aware of them.*

Gumbo (FSS) admitted that "*a teacher is not a fountain of knowledge so as educationists, we can also learn from our students.*" Although focusing on student employability, the dean's comprehension of teaching illustrates the need to ensure student engagement with knowledge.

As part of T & L, quality conceptualised as fit for the purpose of employability is operationalised through WRL. Compulsory for all third year students, WRL is part of the

university's strategy to improve graduate employability and engender a closer relationship between HEI's and employers. WRL is a test for student work readiness and another way which the university receives feedback on the quality of their graduates from employers. Gumbo (FSS) explained:

> *we inform our students to behave as graduate trainees; go into a situation and learn from it. Where possible, you can apply what you have learnt but you may not always have the privilege of applying those theories.*

For Gumbo, the major benefit of WRL was that "*some industries are better equipped than universities and when students return, some could be more knowledgeable than their lecturers*".

The deans talk about quality from a managerial position and are optimistic about the effectiveness of the systems in place. They perceive quality of T & L as being under their control with effective checks and balances in place to ensure efficiency. In their implementation, the deans follow a procedural approach to QA, emphasising the instrumental value of education. Such emphasis overlooks the ethical obligations of HE. Although the deans are better placed to identify flaws in the system and adapt the system to faculty contexts, they are seemingly compliant, giving directives to the chairpersons and collecting the required information.

Despite the perceived efficiency, the deans face challenges in assuring quality and achieving quality outcomes. The following section examines the outcomes they value and the constraints they face in achieving quality.

6.2.2 Desirable outcomes

This section discusses the deans' perspectives on the desirable outcomes of HE. It traces the outcomes in relation to conceptualisations and operationalisation of quality, underlining the major differences between quality as a human development and human capital outcome. The quality indicators used in this study, critical being and the capability for work, are also discussed as human development outcomes because of their centrality in developing an employable graduate who is socially and politically aware.

Although the underlying aim of HE at Baobab University is human capital development, there are a few glimpses of human development outcomes. A valued outcome of university learning identified by Gumbo (FSS) was "*educating a total person*" which entailed not just a focus on academic aspects but other elements such as family and health. He believes that because most university students are young, they tend to experiment with sex, drugs and alcohol necessitating the need to "*bring in people to talk to them about real life situations*". However, such talks are generally limited to health issues and not broader human development topics such as inequality or democracy. Another attempt to promote the students' wellbeing in attaining education is made in the FST. The dean explained about the Faculty of Science hardship fund, meant to assist disadvantaged students and curb drop-outs. Vera explained that every month:

> *every faculty member voluntarily pays $10 towards the fund. We receive requests from students in our faculty; some of whom would have gone through levels 1, 2, 3 and fail to pay for level 4. We don't allow those students to drop out, it's not a loan and we don't expect them to pay it back.*

This is a faculty initiative to assist students achieve the capability to be educated. Because of the potential economic benefits of HE, the lecturers and deans have undertaken an ethical responsibility, beyond their expected duty to promote student well-being.

Another way of promoting human development is through the fostering of capabilities, such as critical thinking and the capability for work discussed below.

Critical being and the capability for work

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the university representative, Huni expressed a strong need for HEI's to promote critical thinking. However, he also acknowledged it be a "*subjective area*" which the university "*needs to work on*" and "*they can begin to do that*" as they get more qualified staff. This was buttressed by Gumbo (FSS), who explained the need for students to "*constantly question knowledge*" but were limited by high student-lecturer ratios inhibiting a deeper engagement. For example, some undergraduate classes in the FSS had 150 students and there are no tutorials or teaching assistants. However, Vera (FST) argued that there was critical thinking in the university. He stated, when students "*can apply the knowledge they learn in class to real life situations, it shows that they are thinking critically*". Both deans understood

critical thinking and critical action as knowledge application. This typifies a thin understanding of Barnett's notion of critical being as it was reduced to a skill with little self-reflection and action. This is concomitant with knowledge acquisition for instrumental purposes, without any broader social accountabilities.

The deans' conceptualisations of the capability for work were similarly narrow. The capability for work foregrounds non-instrumental aspects of work such as job quality, job satisfaction and freedom to choose a valued job. In their discussions on work, the two deans' highlighted the importance of simply getting a job, with issues such as students preference relegated to the margins. Gumbo (FSS) indicated that "*education should enable students to get a job that pays well, better than someone without a degree.*" Because of Zimbabwe's high unemployment levels, Vera (FST), emphasised the importance of students learning entrepreneurial skills meant to enhance graduates' prospects of either securing employment or creating employment opportunities. HE's potential role as an avenue for social and economic mobility means that degrees are pursued for instrumental reasons and while the quality of the education is valued, the paper qualification is more important. This conceptualisation of work limits it to personal advantage thus positioning HE as a private good. The Zimbabwean economy is largely informal (see footnote 20, p.138) and this means competition for the few available formal jobs, making the capability for work difficult to apply. The primacy given to graduate employment as an outcome illustrates the instrumental nature of education. Although there are moments of human development, the dominant discourse is that of human capital and quality is thus synonymous with graduate employment. Conceptualising quality as critical being and the capability for work would enable students to critically discuss and act to implement changes that would improve not just their own well-being but other people's as well. However, the spaces for such discussions are not available.

Although the deans' noted the effectiveness of their QA system, they nonetheless identified challenges in achieving their valued objectives. Because the constraining factors identified by the deans are similar to some of those highlighted by the lecturers, to avoid repetition these will be discussed as part of the lecturer challenges.

The conceptualisation of quality determines its operationalisation and outcomes. Gumbo (FSS) thus conceptualised quality as student understanding and consequently proposed the use of examples that students understood. Also, his understanding of quality for the purpose of

graduate employability resulted in his emphasis on WRL and knowledge application in the workplace. Vera (FST) conceptualised quality as compliance, standardisation and best practices and consequently advocated for following set procedures in QA. Although there wre differences in the two deans understanding of quality, they were both driven by human capital concerns and graduate employability, possibly because of Zimbabwe's high unemployment levels. To some extent, conceptualisations of quality are also discipline related. For instance, Mathematics as a "hard science" is procedural and technical, while Psychology as a humanities discipline is more interpretative therefore Vera (FST) was more concerned about following guidelines while Gumbo (FSS) emphasised student understanding and knowledge application.

The discussion now turns to how the lecturers in the Mathematics and Psychology departments understand and implement quality. This will illustrate how if at all, the deans' ideas of quality travel to department level.

6.3 Conceptualisation, operationalisation and challenges to quality: lecturer perspectives

In discussing the quality of T & L, lecturer voices are important because lecturers teach students and implement QA processes at classroom level. This section examines the lecturers' conceptualisation, operationalisation of quality and the outcomes they value, including challenges faced in realising those outcomes.

6.3.1 Lecturers conceptualisation of quality

It is necessary to examine how lecturers understand quality because that is what informs their teaching. Their perceptions on the influential stakeholders in HE are also important in shaping how they locate themselves within the quality debate.

One commonality expressed by the four lecturers is the need to ensure graduate employment. For instance, Tsotso (Maths) viewed quality in terms of his ability to "*impart the necessary skills… that students should have… and doing exactly what we have to do in order for our*

graduates to be employed". Although the ultimate end was to ensure employable graduates, the lecturers achieved this differently. Maths lecturers' Tsotso and Shoko as well as Hata (Psychology) underscored the importance of following procedures such as peer and student evaluations and stakeholder consultation as well as emphasising the attainment of graduate skills such as communication and teamwork. While Gondo (Psychology) stressed knowledge application and relevance of knowledge to local contexts, both Psychology lecturers also agreed that the subject content should be understandable and applicable to everyday situations making the content easier to understand and retain. The lecturers' understanding of quality is intertwined with the T & L process and will therefore be examined in greater detail in the discussion on T & L.

Out of the stakeholders identified; the government through ZIMCHE, employers/industry, academics and students, the lecturers considered themselves as having the most influence. Despite their admission that the power to determine quality has shifted from academics to external stakeholders such as the government and employers, lecturers still enjoy room to determine their course content. Shoko (Maths) clarified:

> *You don't necessarily govern what you are going to teach, your job is to teach. But because the lecturer is the one who teaches, sets and marks the exam, one might choose to skip certain topics or just scratch on the surface but go into greater detail in others.*

Given the lecturers complaints of high work-loads, the view that they can skip or skim over some topics and '*spot*' what will appear in the examinations is highly likely. The effectiveness of measures to counteract this will be discussed as part of the operationalization of the QA system.

A common understanding of quality by the four lecturers interviewed was that it was fitness for purpose of employment. Despite this shared understanding, there were some differences in the lecturers' conceptualisation of quality, focused on T & L. Similar to Gumbo (FSS), the Psychology lecturers understanding of quality hinges on knowledge application and relevance to context. These similarities seem more a result of discipline requirements than a consequence of the dean sharing his understanding with faculty members as the following discussion will illustrate.

6.3.2 The lecturers' operationalisation of quality through teaching and learning

By examining how T & L is executed, this section assesses the effectiveness of the QA system in promoting quality. The section also evaluates the lecturers' perspectives on the institutional QA system and its effectiveness in improving quality. An evaluation of lecturer practices illuminates how they operationalise quality and highlights (in)consistencies between conceptualisation and practice. Despite differences in conceptualising quality within the two departments, it was operationalised similarly.

The lecturers' perceptions of teaching

The QA system as it was explained by the deans is procedural in nature and emphasises the instrumental value of education. To some extent, this precludes approaches foregrounding personal transformation and enhancing wellbeing and agency. The focus on standardisation and benchmarks commodifies knowledge, side-lining the ethical obligations of HE. The discussion begins with an examination of the lecturers' teaching philosophies which provide a guide to how they understand teaching.

Although there is no specific institutional T & L policy, Hata (Psychology) stated that Baobab University encourages a problem centred teaching approach. However, he then commented that the university is "*not quite emphatic on the teaching policy… and I don't see that much emphasis on communicating this philosophy so that we all uphold it*". Consequently, the four lecturers had different teaching philosophies. Shoko (Maths) stated, "*If a student comes with a problem and shows us where s/he tried it out we are willing to help*". This implies that if a student is not proactive in asking for help then s/he gets left behind. It assumes that students have similar levels of understanding and confidence to seek assistance. Tsotso (Maths) advocated for "*doing the right thing at the right time*" a procedural approach to teaching that meant "*doing exactly what you are supposed to do and teach as required*". This teaching style does not encourage spontaneity and creativity in learning, focusing instead on procedures.

The Psychology lecturers had a more learning-centred understanding of teaching. Hata claimed to have a student centred approach where the "*teaching is centred on student concerns and interests, ensuring that they understand concepts, argue effectively and apply knowledge*". Gondo's teaching philosophy was Afrocentrism because "*some of the things in the texts have*

a European background and don't really apply to us so students don't understand". She stressed the need to "*bring psychology home*" and explained that she incorporates African perspectives in her teaching to make learning contextually relevant. Based on these philosophies and explanations, the Psychology lecturers claimed to promote "*deep learning*" in an effort to ensure student understanding. Attempting to ensure the relevance of education, through for example, Afrocentricism grounds it in realities that students understand and provides alternative ways of thinking about knowledge and society. While these may just be claims, the lecturers' indicate an awareness of the need for student engagement.

Although lecturers often teach the way they were taught, Gondo's (Psychology) undergraduate learning experience of having notes dictated and they would write "*until our hands were sore*", made her opt for active learning. In this way, students do most of the talking through discussions in pairs or groups and presentations. She believed that "*students also bring in some experiences from wherever they come from and these assist in their learning*". This enables students to learn through reconstructing and building on their existing knowledge.

The lecturers indicated that they are encouraged by management to constantly update their notes and discussion points and use media devices such as power points during teaching. All four lecturers concurred on the limitations of an over-reliance on lectures, and explained how they augmented these with other methods such as tutorials, group and single presentations as well as discussions. The lecturers claimed that these teaching methods engendered understanding and student participation in learning. However, in explaining the aim of and how these discussions unfold, differences emerged between the two disciplines. Tsotso (Mathematics) pointed out that while discussions are helpful, they ought to be "*confined within the boundaries of Mathematical theorems, we can't just have an open discussion that is not based on Mathematical logic*", while Hata (Psychology) highlighted, "*no answer is wrong and we encourage students to know that.*" This illustrates that although pedagogical approaches may be similar, discipline related specifications also determine how they occur.

While the lecturers attested to the potential effectiveness of procedures such as peer and external review in improving quality, there was agreement that there is limited follow-up by the chairpersons and deans. Despite the existence of departmental quality control and faculty committees, Hata (Psychology) highlighted that, "*the follow-up mechanisms could be better because sometimes things are just let go in the departments*". The lack of follow-up further

restricts the effectiveness of a system already limited by its procedural nature. The lecturers had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of student evaluations. For instance, while Tsotso (Maths) felt "*students can point out those areas which need improvement*", Shoko (Maths) thought it "*relative*". She argued:

> *Some students like the laissez faire attitude and if a lecturer is strict, students might just complain. Then next year you get a group which prefers a stricter lecture rather than the laissez faire one and they complain again.*

For her, implementing the students' comments was discretionary. Because the follow-up process was weak and in some instances non-existent, Tsotso (Maths) stated, "*in most cases we don't get feedback*". While the deans claim to have an efficient system, the lecturers refute this. Coupled with a lack of ownership of the system, the weak follow-up procedures limit its uptake by lecturers' which may affect the effectiveness of the QA system.

Unlike their Mathematical counterparts, the Psychology lecturers noted that student involvement could be improved. Hata explained that only students from the conventional and, to a limited extent, the parallel classes are involved in assessing quality, while the visiting students are excluded. Because the visiting students attend university for one week every month during the semester, Hata noted that "*when they come here they are busy because of the limited time we have with them. For us to involve them in QA issues is very rare*". Given Baobab University's high enrolment, excluding the visiting and parallel students' means eliminating a substantial part of the student body with the potential to make helpful suggestions in improving quality and which would also benefit from the engagement. Instead of just increasing access to HE through multiple enrolment processes, the university could also aim to nurture capabilities such as voice and participation amongst all students and not just a select few who are conveniently available.

The lecturers' perspectives regarding teaching highlight some challenges within the institutional QA system. Adherence to the procedures is to some extent lacking because of limited follow-up mechanisms. Through the deans, lecturers are told what constitutes quality and how it should be operationalised instead of a bottom-up approach encouraging academic participation in setting institutional goals. In teaching, pedagogical methods are influenced by the lecturer's individual conceptualisation of quality, possibly because of a lack of coherent institutional T & L policy. Consequently, they have similar practices but for different purposes

and with different outcomes. An evaluation of the outcomes valued by the lecturers' in terms of human capital or human development will indicate potential gaps that can be addressed by a human development informed notion of quality.

6.3.3 Lecturers' perspectives on quality outcomes

The most influential determination of quality at the institution is the human capital approach, positioning HE as instrumentally valuable. All four lecturers conceptualised quality for the utilitarian value of getting a job with Tsotso (Maths) stating that "*the whole reason for going to university is to get a job*". With this underlying goal, the curriculum includes compulsory courses such as entrepreneurial studies to enable graduates to be self-employed, and communication skills, gender studies and ICT to inculcate generic skills. The lecturers also indicated that in their teaching, they emphasise certain skills. Shoko (Maths) emphasised hard work and knowledge application, Tsotso (Maths) identified report writing, while Gondo and Hata (Psychology) underscored knowledge application and research ethics respectively. In addition to knowledge, these skills are meant to enhance graduate appeal and enabled them to "*work efficiently under any circumstances*" (Shoko, Maths). The emphasis on transferable skills highlights their perceived importance in the world of work.

Critical being and the capability for work

After explaining Barnett's idea of critical being, I asked the lecturers about their understanding of these and how they encouraged the three forms of criticality among their students. They explained more about critical thinking than critical reflection and action. Critical thinking was explained differently between the Mathematics and Psychology lecturers. Tsotso indicated:

> *It's about logic… when teaching we should give them questions to monitor how they are thinking and not spoon feed them because they will not reason logically.*

Given that Mathematics requires a logical approach to knowledge, the ability to illustrate rational thought in problem solving was equated with critical thinking. Expressing critical thinking as "*a questioning mind*" Hata (Psychology) explained:

the nature of students assignments are meant to develop critical thinking, we don't really encourage lower order questions, we try as much as possible to dwell on those questions that focus on evaluation and critical discussion. Students should be able to argue and defend their position rather than simply agreeing with what they're given.

Despite such attempts, Gondo (Psychology) commented, "*I think sometimes we confine them to class and exams, so they can't think outside the box*", implying the limitation of the education provided, as did the dean of the FSS. Despite this limitation, the Psychology lecturers explained that the students practise critical action through the activities of the Psychology club discussed later. Generally, the lecturers described critical action in terms of students' knowledge application. Consequently, it will be discussed under the students' understanding of critical being.

Similar to the deans, the lecturers' discussion on work emphasised the scarcity of jobs and the closure of companies in Zimbabwe. This necessitated graduates acquiring versatile skills. Gondo (Psychology) expressed that, "*university graduates should have an advantage in looking for work because of inter-disciplinary skills which enable them to do any work*". Because of the limited choices available, Shoko (Maths) noted that graduates do not have the "*luxury to pick and choose jobs*". While the capability for work centres on the freedom to choose a valued job, the Zimbabwean situation precludes such "*luxury*". Although this makes the capability for work difficult to apply in this context, it provides a starting point for discussions around unfreedoms and possible ways of removing these and promoting student welfare and participation in both economic and socio-political development.

6.3.4 Lecturers perceptions on constraints to achieving quality

Several factors constraining the achievement of their valued outcomes were highlighted by all the lecturers. These were, the evolution of quality and challenges related to T & L, such as financial and infrastructural resources and institutional policy.

Evolution of quality

According to the lecturers', the evolution of quality in HE is a constraint because it has been co-opted by external forces such as government and international agencies resulting in increased bureaucracy. This has shifted the balance of power from academics to government, employers and to some extent students, with the effect of alienating the lecturers who do not fully understand the QA systems they work under. The lecturers indicated that currently, QA involves formalising everything, making it seem as if "*we never used to do it*". Because academics feel undermined, Shoko (Maths) commented:

> *When people do not understand the importance of something they just do it for the sake of doing it. If you don't present people with the initiative for doing something they usually don't. If you don't do a thorough follow-up, people will just slip through.*

This kind of thinking by lecturers who are meant to advance quality through their teaching limits the effectiveness of the system in enhancing quality.

While acknowledging the importance of resources, Shoko (Maths) criticized ZIMCHE's resources and standardisation approach:

> *The ZIMCHE people don't always know your subject area. They have certain things that they expect but how applicable are they to all areas? Some people on the ZIMCHE board have only done Mathematics up to O Level and don't understand anything about undergraduate Mathematics. What is important to them is the availability of classrooms, computer labs and qualified people to teach. But how well they can teach or how well suited they are to those areas they don't really know.*

Because lecturers are the ones involved in teaching, they perceive quality in terms of T & L more than resources. This shows the need for the inclusion of lecturers in conceptualising quality. The lecturers conveyed the prevalence of a top-down approach with limited consultation. Rather than making lecturers part of the system, this top-down approach alienates them and results in compliance instead of QE. However, given that ZIMCHE understands quality as compliance, this submission by lecturers may be what is expected and preferred rather than genuine attempts to improve quality. This raises questions about the relevance of the QA system and its effectiveness in promoting quality. Zimbabwe's adoption of a one size fits all approach to quality raises tensions between discipline-specific requirements and QA's

reliance on resources, standards and accountability. It may not directly improve quality and may be detrimental to the idea it claims to be developing.

Challenges to teaching and learning

A number of challenges were highlighted by the lecturers and this section focuses on those directly affecting T & L. These include staff remuneration, high workload, students' access to e-resources, and other resource shortages. A common challenge raised by both lecturers and deans was that of remuneration which Tsotso (Maths) stated caused "*lack of motivation to work*". Because of government's underfunding, lecturers' received salaries late which diverted attention from teaching to "*finding money for fuel and subsistence*", and engaging in consultancies to augment their salaries. As a way of alleviating lecturers' financial challenges, Baobab University pioneered the system of offering conventional, parallel and visiting courses. According to Gumbo (FSS), this "*increased both access to higher education and the financial base,*" enabling the university to pay its lecturers an extra $500 per month[22], making Baobab University lecturers at the time of writing, the highest paid in Zimbabwe. However, this has impacted on the students' quality of learning.

Despite Gumbo (FSS) argument that the quality of learning is similar for all students from the conventional parallel and vising classes because "*they all have similar contact hours and write the same exams*", Hata (Psychology) observed:

> *I feel we have more time with the conventional students who tend to benefit more. As much as the contact time is similar, its 36 hours crammed within a few days. You achieve less than you do in 36 hours spread throughout the week.*

Learning is an iterative process requiring time and may be harder to achieve within the one week that visiting students learn, compared to conventional students' whose lectures are spaced over a 15 week semester. This may promote surface rather than deep learning and cramming to pass exams, thus sacrificing students' wellbeing and learning for institutional finance. While students secure a paper qualification and skills, they may not acquire a wide set of capabilities.

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[22] PhD holders at public universities earn approximately US$ 2 400/ month before tax.

A related problem for the lecturers is the increased demand on their time. Shoko (Maths) explained that lecturers teach the conventional, parallel and visiting students, conduct their own research and in some cases study for their PhD's and the compulsory HE teaching diploma, for those without a teaching qualification. While the introduction of extra classes was partly meant to boost lecturer earnings, Tsotso (Maths) noted:

> *You don't have time to do your own research and work, you are always teaching. Instead of resting, you teach parallel programmes during the evenings and weekends. It's no longer an incentive but a problem.*

The lecturers all stated that they teach for at least 10 hours a week in addition to lecture preparation, student consultations, marking and their administrative duties. While this may not be a "heavy" teaching load in comparison to universities, for example in the UK, for countries such as Zimbabwe with growing student enrolment, the teaching load is heavier than it used to be and exceeds ZIMCHE's requirements. Consequently, lecturers "*simply rush through most things*" (Shoko, Maths). Although these intakes were introduced partly to increase the university and lecturer incomes, it has resulted in a trade-off on quality, raising the need to balance both income and quality. Despite acknowledging this problem, Gumbo (dean, FSS) indicated that, "*lecturers are paid an incentive to encourage them to still find enough time for those classes*". Vera (dean, FST) highlighted that a PhD is a form of "*personal development… to be done overnight, at home or over the weekend, here it's business as usual*". Overlooking such challenges may affect the quality of teaching.

The lecturers also identified the compulsory post graduate diploma as time-consuming and unnecessary. Shoko, (Maths) underlined that she studies for the diploma out of compulsion and it does not help her. As a lecturer and a mother, she contends that it adds to her workload resulting in "*a lack of passion in her work*". On how this affects her teaching she expressed that lectures are hurried through and:

> *For the fast learners it's not a problem but for the slow learners it's a challenge because they're just going through the programme and attaining a degree but not the necessary skills.*

While her emphasis is on learning skills, the same can be said about the attainment of values fostering human development. Rushed learning means there is inadequate time to develop important capabilities. Although three of the four lecturers argued against the effectiveness of

the teaching diploma, the students thought it necessary. For example, George, a Maths student stated:

> *We have good lecturers but some of them cannot share the information. You can see they know their stuff but they can't communicate. There seems to be a barrier between us.*

Given the significance of teaching in fostering capabilities, it is important for lecturers to know how to teach well at university level. The top-down approach associated with QA may possibly invite negativity even in areas where it is potentially beneficial.

Another problem raised was lack of student access to e-resources because of non-payment of fees. Gondo (Psychology) noted that only registered students accessed e-learning resources and because "*some students only register towards exams they cannot access notes, tutorial questions or individual assignments throughout the semester*". Students registered after paying at least three quarters of the semester fees[23] and given that most students' parents are unemployed, self-employed or civil servants[24], Gondo explained that approximately "*30% will register at the beginning of the semester*". She therefore concluded that, "*some of our policies here may hinder quality*". The university representative Huni acknowledged that while this "*will definitely impact on student learning*", it has to be done in order to "*continue enabling students get an education that will differentiate them from the rest*". Although questionable in Zimbabwe's case, HE is regarded as an investment that people should be willing to pay for because of its supposedly high returns. Given increasing government withdrawal of funding to HEI's, one sees the necessity of timeously paying fees. However, from a human development perspective, student learning is disrupted due to lack of access to learning resources, contributing to students "*passing on the margins*" and acquiring degrees without real learning. If students' register just before examinations they would essentially be paying for a learning which they would not have received. Nevertheless, students and parents are willing to pay in order to acquire the paper qualification. In this case, quality is a secondary issue.

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[23] Fees are approximately US$700 yearly depending on the programme.
[24] Salaries in the informal sector vary while civil servants earn an average of $400 monthly.

Resource shortages

Another challenge to achieving quality is the unavailability of resources such as ICT services, limited lecture rooms and offices. These inhibit quality outcomes even in their human capital form. Although the university administrators largely extolled the availability of resources at the institution, especially e-resources and ICT, the lecturers indicated otherwise. While acknowledging the university's attempt to provide the best e-resources in the country and employ modern methods of teaching and communicating, the lecturers noted that the ICT system is only efficient at night and early morning, when there is less congestion.

While Vera (dean, FST) claimed that student numbers were concomitant with available resources, the lecturers expressed concern. Shoko (Maths) noted that lecture rooms are too small for the large classes and some students *"end up in the corridors"* where they cannot participate in learning. She also gave an example of:

> *one particular room partitioned by cardboard. Therefore, one lecturer is in front and another one is behind and we can hear each other so concentration becomes a problem…*

As a result of the unavailability of lecture rooms, some lectures occurred in the multi-purpose hall described by Shoko (Maths) as "*just an open hall where you can find about 20 classes, and there'll be a lot of noise and movement*" (See Appendix 7).

The problem of resources also directly affects the lecturers. In some cases three academics share a small office and are expected to use personal laptops for university business. Tsotso (Maths) explained that as a lecturer, "*you can't type your things in the student labs, some things are confidential*". He also noted a shortage of computers especially for practical courses such as applied statistics and a lack of software resulting in the use of "*pirated software*" which "*ends up compromising quality as students will be unable to deliver*". Failure by the university to provide these resources led him to conclude that "*mathematics is not at all valued at the university while departments such as Development Studies receive resources*". This conclusion goes against the growing emphasis on STEM subjects in Zimbabwe. However, possibly because Development Studies is one of the largest departments in the university, notably enrolling many full and part-time students, the university may opt to invest in it because of

higher rewards, unlike Mathematics with only six students. This would once again trade-off quality for income. Because of ZIMCHE's emphasis on resources, the lecturers underscored their unavailability. Given that Baobab University and its programmes are accredited, a shortage of resources implies that ZIMCHE's standards are unrealistic for achieving quality.

The foregoing has illustrated disjuncture between policy and practice. Although largely framed in human capital terms, there are differences in what national policymakers, university policymakers and lecturers understand as quality. While at university administration level conceptions of quality are broader and influenced more by external forces, conceptions at department level are more micro-focused, valuing T & L more. Both departments emphasise knowledge application and graduate employability. Given the lecturers' understanding of quality, I now present the students' perspectives to provide an understanding of their conceptions of quality and corroborate the claims made by university representatives, deans and lecturers.

6.4 Students perceptions on quality

Two groups of four students were interviewed from the Mathematics and Psychology departments. As stakeholders in HE and the recipients of "quality" education, students are central to the discussion. The students' initial reaction to the question on their understanding of quality was silence and shrugs. This was more so among the Mathematics students; Tino laughed and commented that "*no one has ever asked him that question*". Although both groups of students had little to say in explaining what quality is, there were similarities and differences between the two groups.

While the Maths students had a resource based understanding of quality, explaining it as "*qualified lecturers*, *availability of computers* and a *conducive learning environment*", the Psychology students understood it from a skills and employability perspective. Kudzi stated that quality is knowledge which is "*relevant, enhances adaptability to the environment and endows students with enough qualities to adapt or thrive*" while Trust suggested that quality is "*diverse modules that are not discipline specific and can make graduates flexible and able to work anywhere or be self-employed*". The prominence given to resources, skills and employability indicate similarities with the lecturers and deans.

The student reaction and discussion on perceptions of quality shows their limited engagement with discussions on quality. This reinforces the idea of students as consumers of knowledge the quality of which is pre-determined by others. Including students and supporting their participation in discussions on quality at policy and university level might give them room to think more about quality and what they value. Based on the assumption that HE, given its potential for social mobility and high economic returns is synonymous with quality, some students may not question or think about what constitutes quality. Yet students are stakeholders and should be included to enhance their capabilities "to live and act in the world".

6.4.1 Students perceptions of quality in teaching and learning

The students participated in QA through lecturer evaluations and representation in departmental and faculty meetings. While all their suggestions may not be accepted, inclusion in the process has the potential to build capabilities such as confidence and voice, promoting wellbeing and agency.

The process of lecturer evaluations was considered important by the students. For example, Ashley (Maths) thought it improves the quality of teaching because no "*lecturer wants to be rated poorly, so they will improve*". The students highlighted that their recommendations were implemented by the lecturers. Although in their lecturer evaluations, students answered questions relating to T & L, most of them like Chipo (Psychology) indicated that they "*don't really offer in-depth explanations of the learning process as most of the questions are on a Likert scale and only a few require explanations*". As recipients of teaching, students are the best placed to evaluate their learning and if not given a platform to properly express themselves, the exercise becomes a formality, with no real attempt to improve quality.

Another form of student participation was through the inclusion of student representatives in departmental, faculty, Council and Senate meetings. The Mathematics students reported a lower level of participation than their Psychology counterparts, citing erratic student representation in these meetings which they could not account for. In explaining student participation, Kudzi (Psychology) a student representative stated: "*they have discovered that to some extent there's a vacuum in representation or students can better represent themselves*". Although he highlighted that this was being practised in his faculty and during these meetings

he could freely contribute to the discussions, he also expressed the need for caution when mediating between students and staff members:

> *Sometimes when you talk to a person you have to think of the best possible way to present your problem… I might suffer for it so I'm cautious. Respect people, even if you feel that they're doing something that disadvantages you. There is a proper way to show that you are being disadvantaged.*

While respect is a good value, the possibility of "*suffering*" for mishandling issues illustrates the possibility of a constrained space to negotiate within HE. Of all the stakeholders involved, students seem to wield the least power.

Although there is student participation in QA, the students are not involved in determining quality; they only evaluate systems already in place. Their perceptions about what they consider as quality are not incorporated into the university's understanding. Although paying for the education, they do not determine what they learn but may to some extent determine how they learn through evaluating their lecturers. However, some lecturers might disregard this, with limited follow-up from the faculties, further disadvantaging the students.

To promote student participation beyond lectures, departments are encouraged to form clubs. While in other departments this system was "*non-functional*", the Psychology lecturers indicated that their department's club was "*vibrant*". The clubs purpose is twofold. Psychology students Chipo and Albert explained that the club provided a platform to "*discuss and find solutions to our general problems*" and "*we do field trips to psychiatric wards or recruitment centres*" which assist in learning. This club comprised a student president and committee, with both lecturers and students contributing to decision making. For Trust (Psychology) this increases collaboration between students and lecturers, with the latter providing "*some sort of mentorship*". While the discussions in the clubs were limited to issues within the university and not broader socio-economic matters, the opportunity for such collaboration and participation develops students' leadership and participative skills.

Teaching and learning

Both groups of students stated that their lecturers were always willing to help and open to questions in and out of class. This was facilitated by their relatively small classes, for example, the BSc Mathematics Honours had six students and 11 lecturers in their department while the BSc Psychology Honours had 82 students and six lecturers in the department. The relatively small classes especially in Maths promote a deeper level of engagement with lecturers who know them individually and can thus focus on their problem areas. The students and lecturers concurred about the use of different teaching methods such as lectures, tutorials, group and single presentations, as well as discussions. George (Mathematics) highlighted that they normally get notes and hand-outs in advance so that they "*spend more time explaining and discussing rather than writing notes*".

From the students' explanation of their learning, some discipline specific differences were evident. For example, discussions in Maths were confined within procedures. Morris explained that "*Maths is procedural so we have to follow particular steps and sometimes this gives us the chance to question things based on theorems*". This was criticised by the Psychology students who believed that this kind of learning is restrictive. Chipo argued:

> *There is no formula to nature or how we think…Although for instance, in Psychometrics there are formulas on how to calculate IQ we cannot say with certainty that these results are valid or not, we need to find out the reasons behind the results, there isn't one simple answer.*

Because of the subjects' inherent differences, learning takes different forms but that does not mean the primacy of one subject over the other. While the Psychology discussions were unrestricted, and students, by virtue of their discipline, engaged more with social issues than those from Mathematics, both groups of students indicated that they learnt to "*listen to other's opinions*, *argue factually* and *participate in the discussions*". Irrespective of the nature of discussions, the students show capabilities such as listening and thinking about other people's perspectives which point in the direction of the CA's emphasis on democratic participation and concern for public reasoning.

In some instances, the lecturers' teaching philosophies were apparent in how the students spoke. For instance, Gondo's (Psychology lecturer) aim to "*bring psychology home*" by using local examples to ensure student understanding, led Kudzi to comment:

> *We are really being taught to think out of the box and think for ourselves. To criticise mainstream psychology and see its weaknesses and to prove to some extent, that this psychology we are studying is not totally an African psychology. It has got discrepancies when it begins to describe the African person. There are some things that will not totally apply or that are difficult to apply.*

Similarly, Gumbo (FSS dean) and Gondo's (Psychology lecturer) incorporation of student experiences and using relevant examples was also picked on by Albert who stated:

> *So now I understand when I see a mentally ill person. People tend to say that they have been bewitched or it's intentional but I understand that it may be schizophrenia; this person is unable to control his meta-cognition, or something like that.*

From such examples, the lecturer and deans desire to foster student understanding is apparent, illustrating, for example, that Gondo's teaching philosophy and aim in teaching are realised.

Although believing that a student should be a proactive learner and "*education belongs to the person who is going to use it*", Albert (Psychology) observed that students *"associate lecturers with some sort of fear so they don't approach them"*. This inhibits the learning process and if Tino's (Maths) comment that "*lecturers give more during one on one discussions than they do in class*" is true, it means the numerous students who do not ask for assistance are disadvantaged. This illustrates the limitations of Shoko's (Maths lecturer) teaching philosophy and expectation of students to seek assistance. It highlights that the absence of a shared understanding of quality at the institution exposes students to different levels of learning, despite similarities in teaching methods. The lecturers' personal interpretation of quality influences the effectiveness of the teaching.

Despite the difference between Mathematics and Psychology, the students all valued putting theory into practice. In explaining their best learning experiences, the Maths students unanimously indicated that they enjoyed lectures where "*you can see the real application of mathematics, things that are tangible*" (George). Ashley (Maths) explained:

the way some of the lecturers apply mathematics makes you imaginative, especially in Mechanics, he can ask you to look outside and then you see a leaf dropping, and he will explain that it is moving at this angle and this equation is being formed. Wherever you go you will be seeing mathematics, seeing formulas. The module is hard but he makes it easier.

Good teaching earned compliments. For instance, of one of his lecturers Morris (Maths) exclaimed, "*that lady is good! The way she teaches the examples she gives, you will understand*". The Mathematics students gave examples of applying their knowledge to varied areas including mathematical modelling of epidemics such as Ebola, controlling wild game populations, business and weather patterns.

For the Mathematics students, the worst experience was when learning was abstract or a complex module is rushed through. Tino stated:

At the end of the day when you ask yourself what you know about that module, you know nothing; you only know the basics without any examples and explanations.

Given the technical nature of Mathematics, understanding abstract concepts is crucial to learning. While Mathematics include abstract knowledge, the students emphasise the need to ground it in reality, making it more applicable to real situations.

In explaining their best learning experiences the Psychology students enjoyed more diverse aspects. Chipo appreciated a "*relaxed learning process, which makes me open-minded and understanding*". Albert and Trust enjoyed the lectures which "*explained some of the things we grew up being subjected to, like social learning*" enabling them to make sense of and explain how and why things happened the way they did. Kudzi's enjoyable learning experience was because the lecturer:

allowed me to criticise. I could tell him that the Freudian theory is wrong because of one, two and three. Of course he never agreed that it was wrong and that made the fight go on. I did not know that he was actually developing me and after that period with him I discovered that I was good at arguing in all modules from different points of view.

The Psychology students all disliked the same module called Psychopathology which has a biological component. Because the university has no Psychology lab, everything was explained

in theory. Trust stated, "*automatically it demotivates you and you dislike the module*". Like their lecturers, the Psychology students valued understanding and application of knowledge.

Another important component of learning is WRL. As with the deans and lecturers, the students indicated that this was an invaluable experience through which "*we can suggest components that can be included in a particular module*" (Morris, Maths). Psychology students Albert, Chipo and Trust explained that they were able to practice what they learnt, as well as learn that reality differs from what is in texts. With this experience came aspects of personal development and confidence. Recounting how she had assisted a man with his son's problem, Chipo concluded, "*So I was very happy that things are better because of me*". Because of practising what she had learnt, Chipo became confident in her ability and knowledge, making her more "*assertive*" in class and other interactions.

While the learning discussed above shows important moments of human development, there is also an emphasis on developing human capital and related skills. However, the Psychology students,' as a result of their lecturers' teaching approaches and the discipline's social nature, seem to engage more and develop capabilities such as confidence and agency.

6.4.3 Students' valued quality outcomes

Because these students are in their final year of HE, it is not possible to evaluate educational outcomes through employment. The study therefore examines outcomes through acquired functionings attributable to their learning process.

The most influential determination of quality echoed by students is the human capital approach, positioning HE as instrumentally valuable. Mathematics students, Morris and Ashley valued such skills as problem solving, while Tino emphasised time management, and George identified the understanding of basic concepts. For the Psychology students, Albert cited the ability to market oneself through good grades and skills such as belief in oneself while Albert valued being a good leader and objectivity in listening. The skills cited above are considered to be graduate attributes which enhance employment prospects.

Critical being

I explained the concept of critical being to the students and asked them how it is taught or encouraged and how, if at all, it determines their actions. The students' discussion was mostly limited to critical thinking which, possibly because of discipline differences, was conceptualised differently. Unlike the Psychology students and similar to their lecturers, Maths students equated critical thinking to logical solution to problems and knowledge application. Ashley explained:

> *When we do our dissertations that's when we are able to apply our knowledge and think outside the box. We identify a problem, research and apply mathematics in coming up with a solution.*

In addition, Morris (Maths) stated that some of the modules "*just sharpen our minds and help us reason*". One such module was "Real Analysis" which is "*more about proofs, for example, why we say one plus one is two*". The Psychology students had a different interpretation of critical thinking. Trust stated:

> *we were taught that before accepting knowledge, you have to be sceptical and question. You need to know the sources, the reliability of the sources and how valid the issues are. That allows you to critique whatever you are given and not just take information as it is.*

Chipo added that it also includes the need to balance arguments, listen to both sides of a story and not make hasty decisions. Going beyond critical thinking, one of the psychology students expressed a level of self-awareness. Kudzi claimed:

> *Even the way we look at ourselves; we have developed this ability to distance ourselves and reflect on how our actions impact on others. Even if I mean something, it may be interpreted differently by the next person and I should take that into consideration. We might see things differently.*

The students attributed this understanding to their learning which has taught them to appreciate aspects such as diversity and voice. While critical thinking was mostly understood in terms of their relations within campus, one student touched on broader issues of citizenship and democracy. Critiquing government policies, Kudzi (Psychology) argued:

this nation is not giving us grants, we are fighting our way through university, some of us are working by night and during vacations. When I graduate from varsity you expect me to be patriotic to a nation that watched me suffer?

Such sentiments illustrate the student's awareness of broader issues and his use of "*we*" displays empathy with others who have to struggle to pay for their education, although this consciousness is not a result only of the learning process, but a result of his total university experience and interactions with others.

While the students exhibited an understanding of critical thinking there were some elements of how they could use their knowledge for the good of society, for example through mathematical modelling of diseases and Psychologists helping people with social problems. Despite differences in understanding critical thinking by the students, there was some level of desire to use their education for the social good.

Given that all participants anticipated better jobs because of HE, the discussion now turns to the capability for work and the students' perspectives.

Capability for work

In discussing work, the first point highlighted by the students was the scarcity of jobs and the adaptive preferences that have consequently developed. Tino (Maths) stated that, "*Due to the scarcity of jobs it's difficult; you can't afford to pick and choose*" while Trust (Psychology) commented, "*considering the current situation in Zimbabwe, I can be in any department doing anything*". Psychology students Kudzi, Trust and Albert indicated that they have had to adjust their expectations because as Trust indicated, "*You can't survive on an empty stomach. Even if you've got the passion, all the motivation it will be lost*". Hence Kudzi stated, "*We can always come back to our dreams later. Right now we are forced to either suspend our dreams and pursue survival or try and juggle both.* The idea of suspending ones' dreams was common amongst the students who seemed resigned to the situation. Tino (Maths) highlighted that, "*that is how it is, you just have to adapt*" There seems to be an absence of political awareness and desire for change which can also be explained by an unwillingness to openly discuss such issues. Capabilities such as critical being and participation would require students to question and seek to change the status quo rather than become complicit. However, as Barnett (1997)

noted, this requires characteristics such as bravery, especially in Zimbabwe's politically volatile and authoritarian situation.

Although work was considered for its instrumental value, for example, Trust (Psychology) stated:

> *of course there are issues of job satisfaction and so forth but for you to be satisfied with that job you need an attractive salary. There is nothing more satisfying than being able to provide for whoever is dependent on you.*

However, unlike the other study participants who only considered work in terms of getting paid, the students indicated that a job was not just for instrumental reasons. Albert (Psychology) noted that "*we all need money and nice offices but right now those are just fantasies and come in time*". The students also valued other aspects of work. George (Maths) stated that, "*You shouldn't just do it for the sake of doing it; you should do something that makes you happy*" while Chipo (Psychology) valued "*a job that gives me ample time to do other things. I don't want to live for the job*".

Another aspect that emerged from the interviews relating to the capability for work was that of entrepreneurship. While Morris (Maths) cited the potential of the compulsory Entrepreneurship module in assisting graduates to "*start their own projects and by so doing, create employment for others*", Kudzi (Psychology) argued that despite the importance of entrepreneurial studies:

> *there is more to entrepreneurship than what the course covers… it teaches young people how to write business plans. But at the end of the day we all know that you don't always need a business plan to start a business, you need a business model. Those are two different things. Business plans are for companies that are already up and running and not for a start-up company, so I think that was the mistake the institution made.*

Albert and Kudzi (Psychology) also emphasised the importance of changing people's mind-sets and the curricula in order to "*stop creating employees and start creating employers*". Albert explained:

what must be changed is how we see ourselves in the futures, we should see CEO's and entertainers. It's not supposed to be rigid. It should be revisited so that we are not conditioned to think of being in someone's company or in a government complex".

Within the Zimbabwean context, entrepreneurial studies become important for their potential to equip learners with the capacity to start their own businesses. However, the major challenge is the unavailability of funds to start those businesses, as noted by the Psychology students. Albert explained that when available, funding is accessible only to a select few, usually those with political connections, an example of partisan politics practised in Zimbabwe. Discussions around employment in the country to a great extent involve political issues as they are related to government policies. These policies combined with government involvement in HE through ZIMCHE and the governance of public universities all influence the conceptualisation of work and graduate expectations in the country. This means that if quality is to be conceptualised from a human development perspective, it would include such matters as (un)availability of work and working conditions all which determine the students freedom to decide what they value. However, in Zimbabwe's case it is difficult due to the authoritarian nature of the state and its narrow conceptualisation of quality as compliance.

Constraints on quality

Given the valued outcomes discussed above, the factors identified by students as inhibiting the attainment of quality were resource constraints.

The major challenge identified by the students was that of resources such as internet access and furniture. Although acknowledging the university's attempt to provide sufficient resources as compared to other HEI's, the students noted that the e-system is only efficient at night and early morning. George (Maths) stated that after reporting the internet challenges to the university administration, they were informed that the university "*has quite a solid base for e-learning, with a well-stocked e-library*". However, George explained:

> *the challenge is in accessing it during peak periods, so you have to walk from Hilton[25] at 10pm to come here and then go back around 4 am for you to return in time for lectures in the morning. You run the risk of being robbed along the way.*

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[25] A pseudonym for a high density suburb next to the university which houses most of the students.

Another problem identified was a shortage of chairs. Chipo (Psychology) complained, *"every single day I have to look for a chair, be it from the second floor or wherever!"*. Invoking the idea of value for money, Trust (Psychology) complained that, *"with the money I am paying I should be comfortable; have a good chair and desk. When I come to class I should be ready to learn"*. Given that the university representative, Huni understood quality as value for money, such a statement begs the question, whose value for money? From the foregoing, it seems to be the institutions' rather than students' value for money, as some trade-offs are made on quality in order to balance the university's books.

Although at institutional level students are more involved in QA, the level of engagement can still be improved. Possibly because of their exclusion from institutional discussions on quality, students mostly conceptualise it in terms of employment. Including them in such discussions might broaden their view and enable them to reconceptualise quality differently.

6.5 Discussion

A common theme running from policy to practice is dominance of the human capital approach. Based on this case study, the most common understanding of quality is fitness for the purpose of employment. The instrumental value of education is foregrounded by the participants possibly because of Zimbabwe's economic challenges and HE's potential for social mobility within and out of Zimbabwe. With a stifled national political space and economic crises, employability is foregrounded as the only option to instrumentally enhance student capabilities. There is little regard for the quality of work, freedom to choose and no exit options as suggested by the capability for work. Given the multi-dimensional nature of the problems in Zimbabwe, positioning HEI's as skills training institutions means they forfeit their social role of nurturing critical, agentic graduates who value not just their own but others development as well. Hence a more comprehensive human development approach holds better possibilities.

Although conceptions of quality are generally framed within a human capital discourse, there are several variations. The conceptualisation of quality is not trickling down to department level even in its human capital form. The differences in how quality is conceptualised within the same institution shows the disjointed nature of the QA policy in application. Where ZIMCHE representatives spoke of the "*cascading*" of their interpretation of quality to the universities, the foregoing discussion illustrates otherwise. Although only one of the two deans

understood quality as compliance, the institution is in agreement with ZIMCHE's benchmarks and standardisation and has established an internal QA system. However, the lack of an institutional T & L policy, means quality has individual meanings and interpretations. This has strong repercussions, especially for lectures because as the case study showed, they can use the same pedagogical methods to different ends.

The notion of quality is not just limited to its definition. Its definition has implications for its operationalisation and the intended outcomes. While my study argues for the centrality of T & L in conceptualising quality, Baobab University management conceptualises quality in terms of outcomes such as internationalisation and value for money, although lecturers understand it in terms of the T & L process. However, the pervasive influence of the human capital approach to some extent limits the broadening of teaching to achieve human development outcomes. If well-conducted, pedagogical practices such as discussions and presentations have the potential to develop capabilities such as confidence, voice and democratic reasoning. In some instances, the co-opting of quality by human capital utilitarianism retains the focus of learning on technical aspects and transferable skills. This may be more prominent in STEM disciplines such as Mathematics which may largely employ a rational approach to problem solving with limited if any value judgements attached. However, that is not say that there is no criticality in Maths.

The discussion on critical being was mostly limited to critical thinking and a limited form of critical reason and action. According to Barnett (1997), critical thinking is limited to criticality in the areas of knowledge, or critical reason. The participants understanding of critical thinking was mostly confined within their disciplines without a critique of their disciplines (metacriticism). Notions of critical reflection were mostly limited to metacompetence and being reflective practitioners (Barnett, 1997) who could apply their knowledge without a broader notion of societal reflection. Despite the similar emphasis on critical thinking within the two departments, there were differences in the nature of critical thinking and learning. Academics and students from the Psychology department understood critical thinking as questioning knowledge while the Mathematicians understood it as logical thinking. Because of the nature of Mathematics, it has to be understood within the confines of learning specific concepts or building blocks. Hoadley and Muller (2010: 74) explain that disciplines such as Mathematics "have long sequences of hierarchically related concepts. Getting stuck at any rung of the hierarchy usually means that conceptual learning stops". This means that criticality in Maths should be assessed in terms of incremental learning and how students understand this

knowledge in relation to the world. Hence, the Mathematics students' emphasis on logic in finding solutions as a form of criticality. Comparatively, Psychology has a horizontal structure where according to McLean, Abbas, and Ashwin (2011: 172) drawing on Bernstein, the language used is "based on different, usually opposing, epistemological/ideological/social assumptions" enabling pedagogies to focus on critique. The differences possibly underscore the nature of critical reason expressed and inform the pedagogy used.

Human capital positions HE to equip students with the requisite knowledge and skills thus conforming to the status quo without changing or questioning societal norms. This utilitarian view defines education in instrumental terms according to the competencies a student acquires through education for employment purposes. Hence the emphasis on graduate skills such as teamwork, ICT and knowledge application. However, as Sen (2003) argues, the nature of education a person receives may influence his/her ability to exercise freedom meaning that HE that focuses on economic competencies in unlikely to promote social justice and wellbeing. Employing a normative framework such as the CA highlights the potential of HE to transform students and society. The CA locates the individual within the society and structures around him/her which influence their choices. Although mostly concerned with human capital development, there were moments of human development shown by the participants. For example, encouraging students' participation in QA processes, clubs and in their learning. This provides a starting point in cultivating graduates with a strong sense of participation and agency, crucial to human development.

6.6 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter illustrate that while ZIMCHE's policies are adequate on paper, they are not very effective or even realistic in improving quality in the Zimbabwean context. The top-down QA system means institutions and academics lack ownership and thereby focus on compliance rather than attempting to improve quality. QA is not implemented in a vacuum as the institution has in place a number of policies which while good independently, may result in compromises on quality. A focus on human capital means T & L is aligned to the acquisition of skills with a limited normative position on HE's social responsibility. Despite the emphasis on employability, the shrinking Zimbabwean economy means graduate unemployment will remain high despite teaching graduates' attributes. A human development informed

understanding of quality would position HE to facilitate discussions around political and social development as well as freedom and wellbeing, areas neglected by the current compliance oriented QA system. There is a need to align policies at national and the meso-level to support quality learning rather than a top-down approach. While there may be differences in how quality is understood, with disciplines such as Mathematics seemingly less inclined to human development, there is need to understand the subjects' knowledge structure before a definite analysis is made.

While this chapter focused on a public university case study, the following chapter will look at the operationalisation of quality in a private institution. Although not a comparative study, this may highlight contrasts between the two systems and identify alternative opportunities to conceptualise quality as human development.

Chapter Seven

Micro perspectives on the quality of teaching and learning: Case Study 2, Msasa University

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents multiple perspectives on the quality of T & L at Msasa University, a private HEI, previously referred to as University J (U-J). As in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the micro complexities of the conceptualisation, implementation and challenges of quality at institutional level. It uses data from interviews with deans of the faculties of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) and Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS), lecturers and students from the Sociology and Natural Resources Management (NRM) departments to inform the analysis. These were among the 'best case' departments identified by the university. Table 7.1 presents information on the interview participants.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section one provides a brief background of the university in order to contextualise the discussion. The next three sections assess the perspectives of the deans, lecturers and students according to the three themes identified in the research. The first themes examines the conceptualisation of quality in general and specifically T & L, the factors informing it and the major stakeholders involved. Theme two evaluates how quality is operationalised in the faculties and departments under study. The last theme discusses outcomes valued as part of HE in terms of human capital and human development and the associated challenges. Section five analyses the findings implications of conceptualising quality from a human development perspective while section six concludes the chapter.

Table 7.1: Msasa University Study participants

Position	Gender	Duration of employment/ Study	Respondents qualification level	Respondents pseudonym
University representative	Male	2 years	Professor	Mpofu
Dean– Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR)	Male	4 years	PhD	Mada
Dean- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS)	Male	2 years	PhD	Zuze
Lecturer- Natural Resources (NR)	Female	6 years	MSc	Damba
Lecturer- Natural Resources (NR)	Male	7 years	PhD	Shawu
Lecturer-Sociology	Male	11 years	PhD	Muti
Lecturer-Sociology	Male	1 year	MSc	Midzi
4 Students (FGD) BSc Natural Resources Management	2 Male 2 Female	3 years	Studying for undergraduate degree	Roy, Noku, Sean, Melissa
4 Students (FGD) Sociology Honours	2 Female 2 Male	4 years	Studying for undergraduate degree	Dan, Max, Sandra, Anna

7.1 Background

Msasa University is a private, church-run university founded in the 1990's. Forty percent of the student body are international students from Portuguese and French speaking countries such as Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda. Because it is a private institution, there is limited government involvement although it has to adhere to ZIMCHE's standards. The institution's income is mostly from student fees. Inclusive of tuition, food,

accommodation and health insurance, the undergraduate fees at Msasa University is US$ 5 600 annually, which is expensive given Zimbabwe's 2014 GNI per capita income of $840 (World Bank, 2015). The university offers seven compulsory courses to all students, namely; Introduction to African Studies; Ethics and Christian Values; Introduction to Information Technology 2; English as a Second Language 1 and 2 or Portuguese for Beginners 1 and 2 or French for Beginners 1 and 2 as well as Communication Skills 1 and 2. At the time of writing, Msasa University had one annual intake, offered parallel programmes and had adopted a multi-campus system and blended learning (a combination of face to face and on-line teaching). Webometrics ranks Msasa University third in Zimbabwe and the first among the private universities. Because of this ranking, an examination of its stakeholders' perspectives will provide an example of how quality is conceptualised and implemented in private institutions in Zimbabwe. However, this is not to generalise the findings to other private universities.

From chapter five, Mpofu (university representative), had five conceptualisations of quality premised on both human capital and human development; 1) value for money, 2) aspiration, 3) Afrocentricism 4) employable graduates and 5) transformation. The first one justifies the university's high fees by providing "*quality*" education and thus attracting more students while the second one aspires to provide the same "*high level productivity and high standards*" as the University of Cape Town. Being a pan-African institution, the third understanding of quality proposes relevant education enabling students "*to think Afro-centrically*", while the fourth aims at producing high performing graduates in the labour market. The last typifies the students' growth not just in terms of acquiring discipline specific knowledge but also in relation to social development.

7.2 Conceptualisation, operationalisation and challenges to quality: the deans' perspectives

7.2.1 Deans' conceptualisation of quality

The two deans both understood quality as T & L, student transformation and QE. Additionally, Mada (FANR) conceptualised quality as resources.

Both deans understood quality as being synonymous with T & L. They claimed that a lecturers' teaching style determines the quality of learning which is central to the university's core business. As a dean and lecturer, Mada (FANR) considered quality to be "*the way a particular course is presented to the students which ensures student participation*" in the learning process. This has implications for student engagement and agency, as will be discussed under T & L.

Another shared understanding of quality held by the deans was as student transformation. Zuze, (FHSS) explained:

> *Ultimately, a graduate should show that the education received at university has made a difference in their outlook. S/he shouldn't come out of a three or four year programme having the same attitude and views as they had when they came in.*

Mada (FANR) reinforced that there should be a "*change in their thinking which impacts on how they view principles, read newspapers or books*". Zuze (FHSS) attributed failure to achieve this transformative process to "*the way things are taught and the programmes*" in the university. In addition to knowledge and skills acquisition, this understanding of quality considers HE as enabling students to challenge and reconsider knowledge as well as their views and attitudes. The idea of education being transformative is interrelated with HE's public good role where universities are not removed from the needs of society but foster capabilities such as critical citizenship, empathy and agency enabling graduates to be individual as well as social agents. To achieve transformation, Mada (FANR) nhighlighted the need to change the teaching process. For him, one weakness of the Zimbabwean HE system was its failure to reconcile theoretical and practical knowledge thus making education more relevant. He argued that, "*some sort of transformation must occur to include elements of lifelong learning, being able to critique and to generate practical business out of theoretical principles*". The dean's realisation of the need to transform the university's teaching strategy was also echoed by the lecturers and will be discussed later. To the deans, relevant education is a key determinant of quality. Although the University is a pan-African institution and education cannot be homogenously relevant, Mada highlighted some common African challenges such as high unemployment levels which can be reduced by curricula responding to the needs of students and their communities. This is related to, and will be discussed in greater detail under the capability for work. Again, Mada's awareness of the need to inculcate the ability to critique

and foster lifelong learning illustrates a consciousness of other capabilities that HE ought to foster beyond practical skills.

Both deans also understood quality as QE rather than QA. Zuze (FHSS) noted, "*Quality is not a static thing, it's a constant process of improving*" and Mada (FANR) explained quality as "*continuously rectifying deficiencies*". In differentiating between QA and QE, Zuze (FHSS) explained the former as:

> *a system meant to ensure that there is quality in the kind of education provided. It is part of the whole process from the inputs in the form of resources to outputs in the form of graduates… with academic skills and other non-academic attributes such as teamwork, independent thinking and reasoning.*

Mada differentiated QE to mean "*the process of building up on the existing system; it shouldn't stay static*". Although possibly just a claim, the acknowledgement of the need for constant improvement deters complacency and has the potential to advance quality. While ZIMCHE focuses on inputs and outputs in the form of resources and employable graduates, Zuze's (FHSS) understanding of QA as a system comprising inputs, outputs and the process which inculcates "*attributes such as teamwork, independent thinking and reasoning*" showed a more nuanced appreciation of quality. The inclusion of the learning process as a component of quality illustrated an appreciation of its multi-faceted nature. Mada, (FANR) expanded on the idea of quality as resources giving examples such as human resources and an effective ICT system enabling students to access the internet, library material, notes and assignments. As in the previous chapter, Mada also emphasised the availability of "*experienced PhD holders with high publishing outputs*" as lecturers, equating qualification with pedagogical prowess. Although this is similar to the resources identified by ZIMCHE, the deans' inclusion of transformation, T & L and QE as components of quality exhibits a broader conceptualisation beyond ZIMCHE's limited resource focused approach.

Stakeholder influence and quality

Both deans identified the major stakeholders in HE as employers/ industry, academics, students and government. On one hand, Mada (FANR) identified employers/ industry as having the

most influence over quality because their employment of graduates illustrates approval. For him, incorporating employers' views and requirements increases the relevance of education thus improving quality. On the other hand, Zuze (FHSS) was more micro-focused and identifies lecturers as the most influential because they are "*in direct contact*" with students and "*determine the teaching process and emphasise what they consider important*". This is similar to the Baobab University lecturers.

While ZIMCHE is acknowledged as a stakeholder, both deans, as did Mpofu (university representative), dismissed its quality standards. Zuze (FHSS) contended:

> *ZIMCHE has a very basic understanding of quality and mostly focuses on resources. We try to ensure that we surpass the minimum and constantly improve on what we have.*

Although students are identified as important stakeholders who have to be actively involved in their learning, the deans, more so Mada (FANR), refered to them as 'consumers'. In business focused language, Mada noted:

> *The delivery of quality is at the centre of the survival of any business and as such, the survival of the university is predicated on its ability to deliver good quality that the clientele, the students would want to be associated with.*

Given that Msasa University is a private institution reliant on student fees as the major source of income, the perception of students as customers is not surprising. However, although the deans referred to students as "*clients*" or "*pay-masters*", they were also interested in transformative learning.

Whereas at Baobab University the evolution of quality in HE was considered a negative conversion factor, at Msasa University it was an advantage for the deans and a disadvantage for the lecturers. Acknowledging changes in the notion of quality, Mada (FANR) observed that, "*it is now more formal and official*" and no longer a university's interpretation alone but also an international one. For Zuze (FHSS), the university's crafting of a QA policy is a result of competition for students because of the increasing number of universities, necessitating HEI's "*to be explicit about quality*". In addition to competing for students, Msasa University, as a pan-African institution also had to show that it provides quality, given the mobility of

students and academics within and out of the region. While this need to be more "*official*" might only result in increased monitoring, it also has the potential to improve quality.

The deans' understanding of quality as QE, T & L and transformation highlight the complexity of the notion. Although the university representative Mpofu and the deans are also lecturers, the former's conceptualisation of quality is broader, mostly determined by outside influences while the deans mostly understood quality at the localised level of the university, with particular emphasis on T & L. While one might assume that T & L is not considered a top priority at top-management level, possibly due to the difficulty in its measurement, at middle-management level it is an important indicator. This is especially given that there are no research-focused universities in Zimbabwe and T & L is the university's core activity.

7.2.2 The deans' role in operationalising quality

Similar to Baobab University, there was no independent QA office, or T & L policy at Msasa University. A new QA policy was at the time of data collection being crafted with aspects such as lecturer evaluation having been approved in December 2013 and implemented since 2014.

Both deanswere in favour of QA policies providing guidelines and the deans' roles in both faculties were similar. Before the semester begins, the deans had to ensure there were enough competent lecturers and if need be, appoint part-time lecturers and examine departmental course outlines to confirm that "*objectives, deliverance and outcomes are clearly outlined*" (Mada, FANR). Once the semester began, there was faculty orientation to inform students about their programme and the university's expectations. The deans also randomly visited lecture rooms to ensure that lectures had begun. In addition, there were meetings with student representatives as well as faculty board meetings with departmental chairpersons for planning purposes. About halfway through the semester, the deans expected to see students' continuous assessment marks as proof of work being done.

Mada (FANR) highlighted that he has to "*avail resources*" required by both lecturers and students such as projectors, laptops and organise field-trips for the different departments because "*it strengthens learning* [and enables] *staff members to deliver to the best of their ability*". These resources were meant to support the learning process. In addition to the above

duties, Zuze (FHSS) explained that in order to strengthen the lecturers' teaching abilities, he gave them a "*very relevant teaching booklet*[26]*...so everyone is aware of what we expect within the classroom situation*". He also claimed to organise teaching workshops run by consultants "*to try and keep abreast of new ways of ensuring quality teaching for students*". From the deans' explanations of their duties, the system was mostly a top-down monitoring approach. Since the QA policy was still being finalised, improving quality, for instance of T & L seems to be a personal initiative as illustrated by Zuze's (FHSS) efforts.

Institutional quality assurance system in place

The DVC oversaw QA at institutional level while the deans managed faculty QA. Because at the time of fieldwork the QA policy was "*awaiting final approval*", Zuze (FHSS) highlighted that there is "*an informal QA system which runs through the chairpersons and back to us. It's mostly dependent on making suggestions*". Thus, it was up to lecturers, overseen by the chairpersons and deans to devise a working system. The systems implemented in the two faculties to assure quality of T & L were similarly dependent upon peer and student assessment and external examination.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the lecturers' teaching, Mada (FANR) claimed that at least once every semester, during peer evaluation, "*the dean or other lecturers attend a colleague's lecture and evaluate aspects such as clarity of objectives, delivery, use of practical examples and how the students relate*" for which they give feedback. Zuze (FHSS) expressed that because the content "*can be found online*", assessing the delivery and students' understanding is more important during these evaluations. In order to evaluate the content and level of student understanding, Zuze (FHSS) explained that, yearly, "*external examiners examine the course outlines, exam questions and scripts*". These external examiners also appraise the quality of Honours and Masters Dissertations. Additionally, every semester, there are student assessments of lecturers on aspects of teaching, including clarity, content, feedback from the lecturer, use of ICT and the lecturer's accessibility. The lecturer evaluations are part of the new system introduced in 2014 because, as Mpofu (university representative) questions, "*How do we know that the lecturer is teaching well if the students don't tell us*?"

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[26] The booklet is Townsend. J, "The Instructors Pocketbook".

Summaries on each lecturer were compiled from these three assessments by the dean and assistant dean for discussion with the lecturer. Mada (FANR) indicated that, "*the expectation is that the lecturer will improve on deficient areas*". At the semester's end, the evaluation forms are submitted to the DVC's office. Continued non-performance by a lecturer would result in a written warning which, though unpopular, Mada (FANR) noted, "*has to be done because you cannot get quality if deficiencies are not rectified*". The deans have to ensure that the above systems are implemented and lecturers followed suggestions given by the external examiners, their peers and students.

Although these evaluations have the potential to improve lecturers' performances, there seems to be an assumption that monitoring and control will improve quality. This is not necessarily the case, especially given the problem of academic resistance to the bureaucracy associated with QA.

Teaching and learning

Because both deans understood quality as T & L, they had a lot to say about the learning in their faculties and in their own classes. In the absence of a formal institutional T & L policy, Zuze (FHSS) commented that all he could do was "*make suggestions on how to teach and possible ways of getting the best out of students. There is no way of dictating to lecturers what they must do and how they must do it*". For Zuze, whose teaching philosophy was "*make them work, and make them work hard*!" most lecturers dictate notes which he believed to be "*a total waste of time*". He advocated for student involvement in learning through a:

> *problem solving approach in which students are given challenges and have to come up with ideas and solutions. You don't just lecture and provide them with content without giving them a chance to examine that content critically.*

However, he noted that this is effective in small classes with a maximum of 40 students. Although the average class size ranged from 20-30 students in his faculty, some classes were smaller, which was ideal for him. Each lecture was therefore similar to a tutorial which promotes student engagement and lecturers could attend to individual problems. Msasa University generally has low student-lecturer ratios, with a class size of 70 being considered as "*huge*".

Zuze (FHSS) further argued that the teaching methods prevailing in the university were "*generally outdated with a lot of dictation of notes and spoon feeding*". For him, this could be changed by promoting student participation through presentations, class seminars and discussion so that "*everybody contributes in one way or another*". He contended:

> *The students are not reluctant to participate at all; it depends on the lecturer's approach. If you are open and encourage them to speak up they will, they're not afraid of speaking up. But if they are just sitting there as passengers on the train and you are the engine driver, then they will act accordingly.*

The dean believed that the university curricula is too theoretical, necessitating lecturers being "*creative*" in "*bring[ing] them to life*". Mada (FANR) buttressed the need to "*reconfigure the way we teach*" and make education more relevant. For Mada whose teaching philosophy was "*students learn by doing",* this "*makes the learning more permanent*". Because Agriculture is a practical subject, the dean advocated for "*involving students in the application of the principles and in producing goods and services for themselves*" through integrating theory and practise and at the same time "*developing entrepreneurship and small businesses*". Despite the FHSS being more theoretical than the FANR, both deans encouraged "*bringing the subject to life*". Apart from learning practical skills, student engagement has the potential to foster capabilities such as confidence and voice, important in enhancing employability and wellbeing.

The presence of non-English speaking students at Msasa University was one of the key considerations made in teaching. Upon entry into university, students undergo a language proficiency test and if below the required standard, are enrolled into an English language programme. For learning to be inclusive, Mada (FANR) explained:

> *We try and ensure that we communicate in a manner enabling students to move together as a class. If there's a problem, the class representative will come and see me and I'll discuss with the lecturer how best they can deal with it.*

Zuze (FHSS) also acknowledged the challenges faced by these students, especially in writing. Despite efforts to assist them, Zuze highlighted that, they "*don't run remedial programmes once students have done the intensive English programme*".

7.2.3 Valuable outcomes and constraints

Valuable outcomes are examined in terms of human capital and human development, with the latter including a discussion of the theoretical indicators used in this study, critical being and the capability for work.

Valuable outcomes

In an effort to promote student wellbeing, both faculties have student advisory services which attach students to an academic supervisor/counsellor for academic or social support because "*the academic life is not the only part of a student's life*". Where serious issues exist, the counsellor notifies the dean and where possible, "*ameliorative measures can be taken*". Such issues include financial assistance. Zuze (FHSS) also noted the availability of opportunities "*for students to enhance basic skills such as leadership and writing skills*". For Mada (FANR), the valued outcomes included a "*sound knowledge of the subject area*" and soft skills such as "*the ability to lead, confidence, communication skills*" and knowledge of a foreign language enabling them to "*communicate across borders and languages*". Zuze (FHSS) valued "*confidence, the capacity to undertake tasks, oral and leadership skills, willingness to undertake further training* and *creativity*". These skills mostly enhance graduate employability.

Critical being and the capability for work

As in the previous chapter, the discussion was on critical thinking rather than critical being. Critical thinking was said to be central to university learning. However Mada (FANR) admitted that, "*it's an area we find challenging…which everybody doesn't completely understand, even the academic staff*". For him, critical thinking involved the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge "*to critique material and come up with new ideas and views*". However, he noted that teaching critical thinking at university is starting "*from scratch*" because primary and secondary learning "*simply reproduces material*". This echoed Mpofu's (university representative) belief that HE has to "*unbundle and disarticulate the thinking that has been embedded in our students from primary school*". Zuze (FHSS) understood critical thinking as

"reviewing and testing problems and content against attitudes and opinions from other sources and making one's own assessments". However, he believed that:

> *We can't have students merely being recipients of our so called learning. As lecturers we shouldn't go there thinking we are the authorities in that subject area and all we have to do is give them information. We need to provide students with challenges, educational and otherwise, so they can resolve issues and problems in a thoughtful, rational and logical fashion.*

Although both deans' emphasised participation and active learning, Mada (FANR) seemingly faced more challenges in fostering critical thinking than Zuze (FHSS). From the deans' understanding, critical thinking did not appear to develop into critical being as the knowledge learnt did not foster critical self-reflection and action.

The deans' conceptualisations of the capability for work were similarly narrow, with emphasis being on securing employment. They indicated that jobs are scarce in Zimbabwe making it imperative to equip learners with the necessary skills to start their own businesses. Zuze (FHSS) emphasised *"any sort of employment related to what a student has studied for"* rather than any other considerations in looking for work. According to Mada the FANR's initiative for an agro-business based programme and integrating entrepreneurship with learning was due to the *"scaring proportions of graduates below the age of 25 looking for jobs"*. Despite such high unemployment levels, Mada commented that the university's theoretical focus does not *"create business or teach students to engage in business"*. Integrating theory and practise would equip graduates with skills and also teach them to market and sell the products. Mada noted that while WRL enabled students to engage with employers, agri-business enables them to be self-employed, thus moving away from creating workers to agricultural entrepreneurs.

Given Zimbabwe's socio-political unrest and economic instability, the basic resources, personal and social conversion factors are not conducive for the realisation of the capability for work. Although practical and soft skills such as leadership abilities, communication and confidence enhance graduate employability, these are not helpful on their own, especially in a shrinking formal economy. The growth of the informal economy (See footnote 20 on page 138) may be the reason behind Mada's (FANR) emphasis on the need for practical and entrepreneurial skills.

Constraints on quality

The major challenges inhibiting the achievement of the deans valued outcomes were a shortage of qualified lecturers, financial challenges and the theoretical nature of programmes. The deans indicated that to compensate for the shortage of full time lecturers, they employed qualified part-time lecturers. For instance, at that time, the FHSS had 20 full-time and nine part-time lecturers, while the FANR had 18 full-time and eight part-time lecturers. ZIMCHE's ratio of full-time to part-time lecturers of 7:3, means that the two faculties are still above the minimum. Explaining lecturer shortages in his faculty, Mada (FANR) noted:

> *Agriculture is not people's first choice; everyone wants to become an accountant, lawyer or medical doctor because of their visibility whereas the visibility and business success in agriculture is less obvious and tends to be in corporate institutions rather than individuals who have excelled academically.*

This is despite Agriculture being an important industry in Zimbabwe, accounting for people's livelihoods through commercial and subsistence farming. The challenges associated with the reliance on part-time staff to make up the numbers and its effect on quality will be discussed in greater detail in the next two sections.

Financial challenges were also identified as inhibiting the quality of education. Mada (FANR) explained financial limitations as a vicious cycle because the requisite qualified and experienced staff required to improve the institution's rating, quality of teaching and money to fund research "*don't come cheap*". For Mada, the institution's low student numbers "*translates to limited funding*" as students' fees are the major source of income.

Another challenge cited by both deans was the university's theoretical emphasis and limited practical learning. Mada (FANR) explained that this makes it difficult to easily adjust to market requirements. He attributed the inability to change to the "*conservative*" and "*bureaucratic*" nature of the university which could not accommodate aspects that "*might not be considered as part of the university mandate*"[27]. The discord between the emphasis on theory and application means that to some extent, the university is failing to achieve its mission of equipping learners with the necessary employability skills. This inability means that student

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[27] The university's mission is "to provide quality education within a Pan-African context through which persons can acquire general and professional knowledge and skills, grow in spiritual maturity, develop sound moral values, ethics and leadership qualities".

transformation cannot be fully achieved because skilling graduates is one of HE contribution to both human capital and human development.

The deans' perceptions of quality are closer to human development because of their emphasis on transformative learning, skills and values such as leadership, confidence and to some extent, critical thinking beyond a skills-based perspective. They operationalise their understanding of quality as T & L, QE and transformation by ensuring student understanding and encouraging lecturers to do the same. While they faced challenges such as funding and the theoretical nature of programmes, they have attempted to come up with ameliorative measures such as the agro-business based programme in the FANR.

7.3 Conceptualisation, operationalisation and challenges to quality: lecturer perspectives

Because the deans mediate between university management and lecturers, the discussion now turns to how Sociology and NRM lecturers understand and implement quality. This will illustrate how, if at all, the deans' ideas of quality travel to department level.

7.3.1 Lecturers' conceptualisation of quality

Lecturer's expressed diverse understandings of quality. These included T & L and student understanding, standardisation, resources, quality of graduates with the most common being student understanding. On quality as T & L, Midzi (Sociology) highlighted aspects of critical thinking, commenting, "*Quality is about students' learning, relating to the content and asking critical questions, not just repeating what they are told.*" For Shawu (NR), quality learning results from a lecturer's articulate delivery of relevant content and a fair exam process. To this end, he questioned, "*you may have standards written on paper but are the students getting the quality claimed on paper?*" Shawu highlighted the lecturer's calibre as the largest determinant of quality which will be examined in detail under T & L. Buttressing the notion of quality as T & L and emphasising student comprehension, Damba (NR) commented that "*students can only question or apply knowledge that they comprehend*".

The lecturers also had different views on quality. Damba (NR) and Muti (Sociology) also understood quality as competitive graduates. This is not surprising given the emphasis on HE enhancing student employability. Shawu's (NR) conceptualisation of quality also included standardisation, international comparability and resources. Standardisation and international comparability meant ensuring that their "*standards are at the same level as other universities in developed countries*" such as the UK, US or China. This is based on an assumption that Zimbabwean universities are on the same level and "*it's not enough to say that as a country we have quality when the quality is inferior to other countries best quality*". For Shawu:

> *if we train undergraduate students, they should be on the same level as their peers at Cornell or some other big university and if they want to further their education they can easily do so.*

Because of the interconnectedness of universities and student and academic mobility, quality is not only determined locally. Universities in developed countries are generally responsible for setting quality standards and providing "best practices". Although a baseline of comparable standards is necessary, it is important not to overlook the Zimbabwean and African context, which should also determine what constitutes quality. Differences in, for example, resources may make these best cases inapplicable in a developing country context.

Unlike ZIMCHE, Shawu (NR) understands quality as resources insofar as they "*feed*" into quality and are not synonymous to quality. Such resources include the library, internet access and for a "*scientific subject like agriculture, laboratories*" and should be proportional to the student population. The identification of resources as supporting quality, illustrates a rejection of the human capital belief that availing resources is providing quality.

Related to availing resources, Damba (NR) indicated that ZIMCHE's idea of QA was:

> *something that was just being shot down to us and until now, I'm not quite clear of the whole process of quality according to ZIMCHE. All I know is that ZIMCHE wants lecturers to have PhD's…*

ZIMCHE's resource emphasis includes lecturer qualification as one of the prominent aspects of its QA system. Damba's explanation of the top-down approach applied illustrates the disconnect between national policy and the lecturers on the ground. Although ZIMCHE representatives in chapter five claimed to have consulted lecturers, this shows the limited nature

of the consultation process. While consultation does not mean the incorporation of everyone's views, Damba's lack of knowledge on QA and ZIMCHE's aims demonstrates the absence of basic knowledge and ownership of QA by the academics who implement it.

Stakeholder participation

On the major stakeholders determining the quality of teaching, Muti (Sociology) and Shawu (NR) identified lecturers, while Damba (NR) and Midzi (Sociology) pointed to the university policy-makers. Shawu (NR) explained that despite both internal and external influences:

> *Lecturers' ensure that they teach at a standard where they can be hired by any university, not be a lecturer whose performance is determined by the institution they work for.*

Believing quality teaching to be a personal initiative driven by a desire to excel, Shawu argued that lecturers set high standards for themselves. For Damba (NR,) university policy-makers such as deans and the DVC were the most influential because they oversaw quality at institutional and faculty level. Midzi (Sociology) identified the university policy makers as determining the quality of teaching through their hiring policies. He complained:

> *they hire qualified lecturers and lose them as soon as they come because they won't pay... sometimes we go for ages with positions approved by the university being unoccupied.*

For Midzi, the shortage of qualified lecturers' results in poor quality teaching, therefore, "*the university itself is attacking quality*". This will be explained in detail under constraints to quality.

7.3.2 The lecturers' operationalisation of quality through teaching and learning

An evaluation of lecturer practices can uncover the kind of learning they promote and highlight (in)consistencies between conceptualisation and practise. All four lecturers explained similar

departmental processes in assuring quality and claimed to operationalise teaching through a student-focused approach.

The lecturers' perceptions of the quality assurance system

Despite the deans' claims that all lecturers are evaluated every semester, the lecturers' stated otherwise. For instance, after being at Msasa University for six years, Damba (NR) indicated that she has never been evaluated either by her peers, students or an external examiner and the chairperson or dean has never followed it up. She claimed not to see the need for evaluations because students can use it as a '*vendetta*', while lecturers can enlist friends to positively review them. Though the dean may identify lecturers s/he can evaluate, it is dependent on the lecturer to invite his/ her peers for an appraisal of his/ her teaching. If, like Damba (NR), a lecturer does not initiate the process, there will be no evaluation. Conversely, Muti (Sociology) having been at the institution for only one year, claimed to have been evaluated by the chairperson and received "*some helpful suggestions*". Possibly, Muti as a newly qualified lecturer was evaluated to ascertain his teaching ability while it is assumed that more experienced lecturers have pedagogical prowess. Midzi (Sociology) also questioned the effectiveness of peer evaluation "*where somebody evaluates you yet they have never heard of concepts you are teaching*". Because content constitutes part of the delivery, "*its relevance, and how it enhances students' understanding",* Midzi notes the difficulty in evaluating the delivery only.

Also doubting the efficacy of the evaluation system, Shawu (NR) advocated for more stringent measures because "*If a lecturer does not feel threatened by poor performance then there is no incentive to improve".* However, as explained by Mpofu (university representative), under the new QA policy, a lecturer's bonus, promotion and salary increment are dependent on their teaching, research, leadership and outreach abilities. In teaching for instance, documented evidence of courses taught, student and peer evaluation, effective use of ICT, student mentoring and presentations within and outside the university is required. The requirement of "*documented evidence*" is meant to compel lecturers like Damba (NR) to be evaluated. Implicit in these new requirements is that increased monitoring will improve the quality of teaching. While lecturers might be compelled to carry out evaluations, as Damba indicated, there is always the possibility of manipulating the system through using one's friends for positive evaluations.

The deans also considered student evaluation to be an important component of QA. Although two of the three lecturers did not receive feedback on their student evaluations from either the dean or the chairperson, only one, Muti (Sociology) thought evaluations were potentially helpful in improving his teaching. Despite not receiving feedback, Muti believed students "*are the ones who can tell whether I'm making sense or not*". Damba and Shawu (NR) and Midzi (Sociology) considered evaluations as "*a futile exercise*" because of lack of feedback and being prone to abuse by students. Attesting to weak follow-up measures, Shawu (NR) explained, "*Such mechanisms for feedback are not there. It doesn't apply to this university only … that's one weakness Zimbabwean universities have*". Midzi (Sociology) who received feedback on his evaluation expressed discontent:

> *Students having difficult experiences with lecturers can take the opportunity to hit back. The system is well meant but sometimes it achieves less than what it's meant to because of abuse.*

This echoes Mpofu's (university representative) comment on his experiences of lecturing in the USA where students would, "*use it as a vendetta mechanism. When they're feeling cross and its evaluation time I'd always be told 'send him back to Africa!'*"

The lack of follow-up may demonstrate that only lecturers with negative comments receive feedback while those with good evaluations do not. Student evaluations may provide a dilemma for lecturers' as students' satisfaction and good evaluations might become more important than providing students with an intellectual challenge. For some students, quality may mean getting what they want without any effort. While the student evaluation system is potentially helpful, the possibility of its abuse by students limits its effectiveness in improving quality. Given the possibility of such abuse, it is important to use student evaluation in conjunction with other evaluation methods such as peer and external review to increase the systems' effectiveness.

Although the deans mentioned external examiners, the lecturers did not include them as part of the QA process. This is possibly because the external examination system is still to be introduced as part of the new QA policy. At Msasa University there is a strong policing role accorded to evaluation involving academic self-surveillance. There is an assumption that monitoring and control will result in improved quality. The lecturers are sceptical about the effectiveness of the systems in place possibly because of weak follow-up on issues raised.

The lecturers' perceptions of teaching

The lecturers teaching philosophies provide a starting point on how they understand and thus practice teaching. All four lecturers claimed to aim for student understanding and it is important to examine how this was practised. In teaching, the lecturers uniformly claimed to employ various teaching and assessment methods such as assignments, presentations and tests.

Damba (NR) reported that she believes in "*student participation*" and therefore gives activities such as group work, presentations and discussions to "*bring theory and practise together*". Shawu (NR) also emphasised student participation and understanding; not having students "*just sitting through a course for the sake of getting a grade*". He believed that a sign of student understanding is not an "A" grade but putting knowledge into practice. Given the practical nature of NR, there is an emphasis on putting theory into practise from Mada (dean, FANR) and the lecturers. The Sociology lecturers teaching philosophies were also comparable. Muti indicated that his philosophy was "*fostering student involvement in their learning*" and thus emphasised participation through presentations. Midzi claimed not to have a philosophy, stating, "*I'm just a pragmatic instructor, assistant and facilitator. I try hard to involve students in their own education*". The Sociology lecturers' ideas on teaching are similar to those of Zuze (dean, FHSS) who advocates student participation.

Despite the similarities in teaching philosophies, the absence of institutional guidelines means that T & L is not clearly defined. Damba (NR) noted, "*I don't think there is a document on quality, you just define quality yourself and deliver whatever you deliver*". Despite the absence of a T & L policy, Shawu (NR) stated:

> *There are many institutions with good guidelines on what they consider to be quality or a QA policy but are they sticking to it, that's the important question. In my view it doesn't help to have a very good QA policy or a unit that deals with QA when lecturers are not maintaining the process.*

Although the lecturer's teaching practices are important in ensuring quality teaching, it is important to have institutional or faculty guidelines to ensure uniformity of practise given that each institution has different mandates and visions.

While the Sociology lecturers claimed to favour discussions, they noted challenges. As a young academic, Muti highlighted that it is "*a problem*" getting students to discuss topics and sometimes he opted to "*just give them notes*". Citing the challenge of lecturers dictating notes Mpofu (university representative) declared:

> *We are not paying lecturers to read to students; students can read, they should refer them to textbooks. We want lecturers to be critical thinkers and be able to teach that to students.*

Despite Zuze's (dean, FHSS) efforts in giving lecturers a "*relevant*" booklet on T & L, the practice of teaching seems to be a challenge for some.

Consistent with his understanding of quality as standardisation and international comparability, Shawu (NR) explained that he benchmarked his content and teaching against other institutions in and out of Zimbabwe. However, this required exposure to other systems because:

> *If you have little exposure then you just deal with what you know but if you have a broader view of what is offered elsewhere, you have a better chance of improving and being at the same level with others.*

Damba (NR) explained that one gets exposure from "*conferences, workshops and not just from the PhD, especially if it's from the same institution.*" Because quality is no longer just institutionally determined, exposure to other institutions' practices is important in assessing the level of the quality of education provided.

As part of their teaching, the two faculties make use of "*smart lecture theatres*" with in-built projectors, white boards and other features to promote learning. Shawu (NR) believed that the use of different technologies varied from dictating notes or writing on the blackboard because "*you can use different enhancements such as photographs, or videos so the learning process for students is easier.*" However, Midzi (Sociology) argued against over-reliance on teaching aides such as power-point which "*just schematise things*" resulting in students "*counting bullets and expecting you to give them the opportunity to* [only] *remember those bullets*".

The lecturers also acknowledged the need to include the non-English speaking students during learning. This was done through mixed group exercises where students could help each other

and learn together. Additionally, Shawu (NR) explained that combining assessment practices such as tests, assignments, practicals and student presentations provided equal opportunities for all students. He commented:

> *students from non-English speaking countries tend to do better on practical aspects than the theory because of their limitations in English. But their performance also changes as they move from first to third year and they understand the language better. I have to ensure that my assessment is all embracing and in the end the marks are almost average for everyone.*

Although acknowledging the need to accommodate non-English speaking students, Midzi (Sociology) similar to Zuze (dean, FHSS), indicated that the students must be willing to ask for help because lecturers' tend to assume all students understand. While reinforcing the idea of learning as a collaborative process with students taking responsibility for their learning, it is possible, because of their limited English-speaking ability, that foreign students may not be confident to seek assistance. This highlights the need for lecturers to provide a conducive learning environment encouraging those needing assistance to comfortably seek it, without any sense of "othering".

Generally, the deans' ideas of quality influenced lecturers' practices, especially in the FANR. Mada's (dean, FANR) idea of quality as learning by doing is reflected by the NR lecturers especially Shawu who emphasised practical learning. While the Sociology lecturers and their dean, believe in student understanding, the lecturers seem to face challenges operationalising it. This can possibly be rectified by providing institutional support, through for example, workshops helping lecturers teach. However, despite the deans' guidelines, in the absence of an institutional T & L policy, quality is still a personal interpretation and initiative and academics construct their own practices based on their experiences and contexts.

7.3.3 Lectures' valued outcomes and constraints

The lecturers had different graduate attributes that they valued, the foremost being knowledge application. Damba (NR) also identified soft skills such as being a team player, willingness to learn and time management; Shawu (NR) noted independent thinking, commitment and focus

while Muti (Sociology) favoured good communication skills and interest in learning new things and Midzi (Sociology) valued communication skills, critical thinking and the ability to research. These attributes are meant to enhance graduate employability through improving performance in the work place. There was very little on human development outcomes.

Critical being and capability for work

After explaining the notion of critical being, lecturers' were questioned on how, if in any way, their teaching contributes to this state among the students and to give examples of instances where students practised critical action. Although varied, the lecturers' responses were mostly on critical thinking and action in the domain of knowledge.

Muti (Sociology) acknowledged that getting students to think beyond "*the notes given in class*" was difficult while Midzi (Sociology) explained that "*the idea that the teacher knows the truth is too strong in our society*" resulting in students wanting to "*be spoon-fed*". Similar to Mada (dean, FANR) he argued that despite attempts to teach students to think critically, the banking system of education "*imposes itself*" because:

> *Students are coming from backgrounds where they sit and take notes. Frequently I've to ask students to stop writing and have a conversation. Then you find the product of long years of banking education, of silence; they want notes, they are used to it! How do you get out of that long tradition of habitual submission to the instructor and empower the learner? ... How do you liberate people like that, do you fight them or prevent them from looking for their own ideas of how to go about life, how to learn?*

For him, pushing students too hard would result in bad evaluations from "*the people you are trying to liberate*". He concluded, "*It's difficult to cultivate critical education in this country because uncritical education is very much alive*". This is similar to Mpofu's (university representative) and Mada's (dean, FANR) observations of a lack of critical thinking in schools. From the Sociology lecturers' comments, rote learning is prevalent and may be an easier option for lecturers. However, it does not equip students with analytical or practical skills which foster human development.

The NR lecturers regarded critical thinking as knowledge application and were more optimistic about its operationalisation. Shawu explained that he gave extra marks to students' showing that they read "*outside the notes*" and used practical examples as an incentive for students to engage with knowledge. As an example of critical action, Damba identified a student initiative in forming a club "Friends of Biodiversity" where they "*identified activities to do and implemented what they learnt in class*". For instance, the club teamed up with groups such as the Students Representative Council and the intensive English class and organisations such as the Environmental Management Agency and Environment Africa[28] for a clean-up campaign in the areas surrounding the university and sensitising the communities about waste management. While to some extent this does reflect some form of critical action, it mostly typifies reflective practitioners (Barnett, 1997) or criticality within the discipline and not necessarily the ability to critique the discipline or a deeper social critique. However, as limited as this form of critical reason is, it displays notions of individual and social agency, voice and participation which contribute to wellbeing achievement.

Concerns around students' employment opportunities informed the lecturers' views on the capability for work. The lecturers indicated that jobs were scarce in Zimbabwe necessitating the learning of practical and soft skills to enhance employment opportunities. The scarcity of jobs resulted in the FANR advocating for an agro-business based programme in Agriculture. Damba (NR) stated:

> *we want to incorporate entrepreneurship courses because of the low employment rate… and we are hoping that when students leave they will be employed, or become entrepreneurs or employers*.

Muti (Sociology) also indicated that Msasa University's requirement that students learn either French or Portuguese meant that "*they stand better chances of employment because they have more options beyond Zimbabwe.*" However, while jobs were said to be scarce, the pan-African nature of Msasa University may improve graduates' employment chances as they are not just limited to Zimbabwe. In most instances, graduates return to their country of origin, while

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[28] These two are responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment.

Zimbabwean students also increase their chances of migrating to other countries through networks made at university.

The NR lecturers were more optimistic about their graduates' employment prospects due to the practical nature of their discipline. Damba explained that because Agriculture and related programmes were not a popular choice among students', there was more demand for their graduates than those from faculties such as Humanities. Shawu further explained that because of the growing prominence of natural resources conservation, graduates from the faculty were marketable within and beyond Zimbabwe. This availed some freedom to choose a job one values. Apart from the potential for employment, the lecturers did not mention the quality of the jobs. Coming from an economically restrictive environment such as Zimbabwe, the emphasis on securing employment rather than the freedom to choose or job quality is understandable.

Constraints on quality

The factors constraining the achievement of quality outcomes were identified as the evolution of quality, and financial and manpower shortages.

The evolution of ideas of quality in Zimbabwean HE was considered a constraining factor because of its controlling and managerial tendencies rather than an emphasis on QE. Damba (NR) indicated that quality is "just a *buzzword that involves paperwork*" and Midzi (Sociology) argued that not everybody understands what quality is about, even the university management. For him, the nature of quality implemented at Msasa University is control, with elements of coercion which emphasises evaluation. He stated:

> *As part of the sociology of work, we have read theories like Taylorism, which are quite coercive and contradictory to the idea of quality. I think there needs to be an emphasis on the difference between QA and quality inspection and control. There is need to ensure that people actively pursue quality rather than inspection and coercion. I think it's counterproductive. When people feel that they contribute to the production of quality education then I think it works.*

Contrary to Mpofu's (university representative) claim of consulting academics in crafting the new QA policy discussed in chapter five, this illustrates academics lack of ownership of the

QA system and possibly explains academic resistance. The invocation of Taylorism by Midzi also alludes to a straitjacketed approach to quality, precluding lecturers' agency and creativity.

As part of the top-down nature of the QA policy, Damba (NR) felt *"inadequate"* with her Masters qualification because of ZIMCHE's directive and emphasis on a PhD being the minimum qualification. She stated:

> *When I say I don't have a PhD it's as if I'm saying I'm not qualified to teach. While it's important for ZIMCHE but I don't think a PhD defines quality; some of my best lecturers didn't have PhD's. For me it's about the way they taught and dealt with the questions so a PhD shouldn't be their focal point, quality goes beyond PhD's.*

Another challenge cited by Midzi (Sociology), having been at the institution for 11 years, was the institution's dependence on part-time lecturers. Midzi stated that Msasa University had *"no will to employ competent staff, they are busy saving money"*. He had been the only permanent staff member in the Sociology unit *"for a long time"* and attributed the high staff turnover to the *"peanuts"* they are paid[29]. Although the appointment of part-time lecturers made up the numbers, Midzi noted that they *"just come to drop knowledge and go"*. This is discussed in detail as part of the challenges faced by students'.

On the quality of teaching, Damba (NR) highlighted the need for workshops or courses on *"how to be an effective lecturer"*. This is similar to the compulsory post graduate teaching diploma at Baobab University. While lecturers at Baobab University do not find it useful, Damba pointed to its potential benefits in assisting in teaching, setting exams and student assessment. She also highlighted the need for mentors, especially for young academics who outnumber the more experienced ones. She stated:

> *Lecturers don't really know which direction to move, they just operate whichever way they think is best and therefore cannot mentor students. It is the blind leading the blind.*

The idea of mentoring is based on a realisation that young academics need guidance as a Masters or PhD qualification is not synonymous with the ability to teach. The high levels of brain drain in Zimbabwe, especially of senior academics has resulted in a dominance of young

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[29] At the time of writing, a PhD holder at MU earns US$1 600- US$2 000 compared to approximately US$ 2 400 earned by state universities lecturers

academics and such requests illustrate the need to inculcate teaching capabilities. Especially for young lecturers such as Muti (Sociology), challenges related to teaching result in the perpetuation of the banking system of learning which restricts the T & L process from promoting human development. In the absence of an institutional QA unit and academic support services such as a T & L centre, the deans' guidance in providing quality teaching is inadequate. The new QA policy still falls short of promoting human development as it is seemingly focused on evaluating lecturers rather than QE, thus perpetuating academic resistance and perceptions of the bureaucratisation of QA.

7.4 Students perceptions on quality

As highlighted by deans and lecturers, students are the best placed to evaluate the teaching they receive. Two groups of four students were interviewed from the Natural resources and Sociology departments.

7.4.1 Students' conceptions of quality

The eight students interviewed gave varied understandings of quality including knowledge application, employability, T & L and resources such as lecturers, ICT and books.

Three NR students (Noku, Roy and Sean) commonly understood quality as knowledge application. For them, the ability to apply knowledge made learning relevant and improved employment opportunities. Noku also conceptualised quality as the availability of various educational resources such as books and ICT. Quality was understood by Sean as qualified lecturers who "*challenge you to grow*" while Roy believed it to be a conducive learning environment. Melissa's (NR) understanding of quality was "*individual attention from the lecturer*" and "*articulate*" lecturers. For the Sociology students, quality was mostly about getting a good job, the availability of lecturers and knowledge application. For Dan, Sandra and Anna, getting a job was "*an indication of good quality*". Quality as T & L was conceptualised by Sandra as the availability and accessibility of lecturers within and outside class and by Max as the "*application of theories and ideas to real life*".

Anna (Sociology) also understood quality as *"delivering to students what they want"*. She argued that because students knew their career path, they paid for the education to achieve those goals. The idea of quality as customer satisfaction and students as paying customers raises the spectre of negative lecturer evaluations as highlighted by Mpofu (university representative) and Midzi's (Sociology lecturer). Although what students want, may not necessarily be equivalent to quality learning, lecturers may still be expected to certify it. Because Anna *"knews"* her career path, she argued that *"no one should determine what they learn"*. To some extent, this corroborated Midzi's (Sociology lecturer) statement:

> *Freire had this idea that we shouldn't enslave students by teaching them what we want but of course the institution will tell you what to teach, it's already there and they expect you to teach that.*

Although students may not necessarily know what they should learn, this indicates the need for their involvement in determining their curriculum even if their ideas are not all included. The process of participation, if taken seriously, can build agency in making choices and ownership and inclusion in the learning process. It can also nurture the capabilities of voice and participation beyond HE.

Most of the students' ideas on quality are similar to those of the deans and lecturers. The intersection of the notions of quality such as knowledge application, employability, resources and T & L illustrates similarities in what students and lecturers value. However, this differs from ZIMCHE's standardisation and benchmarking of resources as it is more expansive.

7.4.2 Students perceptions of their role in assuring quality

The deans and lecturers identified students' participation through lecturer evaluations and class representation. The students corroborated that they evaluated lecturers in *"areas such as attendance, teaching methods, responses to questions and punctuality"* (Melissa, NR). However, all students stated that they never received feedback from these evaluations. Sandra (Sociology) commented *"There is no feedback; they don't even say we've heard or seen your comments about this lecturer, so we plan on doing this and this. They're just quiet"*. Despite this lack of feedback most of the students claimed to see changes in some of the lecturers they

had evaluated badly. Melissa (NR) gave an example of "*a lecturer who didn't return our work timeously last semester and we evaluated him badly, this semester he's returned most things on time*". This change may be attributed to the student evaluation and subsequent action by the dean. However, the lack of feedback to students excludes them from fully contributing to improving quality. There seems to be an implicit understanding that lecturers will implement the changes. Melissa (NR) also observed another limitation:

> *I don't think evaluations necessarily help us directly but are meant for the next group. We complete them at the end of the semester and may have a different lecturer the following semester.*

This raises the possibility of students progressing from first to final year without benefitting from their evaluations.

Another method of student participation in determining quality was through the class representatives. The students all agreed that it is an effective system. Noku (NR), a former class representative indicated that students "*talk as a class*" through a chosen representative with direct access to the assistant dean and dean to whom they can freely express any problems. She noted how "*all class representatives from first to final year sit down with faculty board members*" at the beginning and end of every semester and the dean encourages them to speak out if they have problems. Consequently, "*we could express our grievances*". This seems to be an effective system of communication; however it was dependent on having an active class representative as Noku explains, "*We've just had a class rep that wasn't very active so some issues were not easily resolved*". Similarly, two of the Sociology students also highlighted the importance of a "*pro-active and clever representative who can stand up for students*". Lecturer evaluations and student representation can be effective ways of ensuring student participation, voice and agency.

Teaching and Learning

An assessment of students' best and worst learning experiences provided a window to the oprtationalisation of quality T & L. All students indicated that their lecturers employed various teaching methods such as group work, lectures, individual and group presentations, discussions as well as two assignments and two tests every semester, which constituted 40 percent of the

final mark. The students' responses on their best and worst learning experiences can be grouped into three categories; lecturers' teaching style, knowledge application and relevance and language barriers.

The best learning experiences for three NR students were related to Mada's (dean FANR) concept of "*learning by doing*" and the lecturers' emphasis on practicals and student participation. The students cited the advantage of having resources available on campus such as the university farm, enabling them to practically experience what they were studying. For instance, Roy and Noku (NR) enjoyed courses for their relevance. Roy (NR) explained:

> *We did something on water pollution and we have a river and a dump site just off campus, so we went there and we could see how it's affecting the surrounding communities.*

From the DRC, Roy indicated that pollution and environmental degradation were "*related to what I always see back in my country*" and the course Environmental Economics gave him "*knowledge on how to mitigate and face those challenges*". After visiting a bee keeping community, Noku commented, "*It's nice to know that you are not just learning and it ends there, it really applies. People are actually benefitting from managing their natural resources*". For Sean, practical learning "*improves the quality of our work and learning because we are not just talking about things we read in books but about things we have actually seen and experienced*". Anna (Sociology) also enjoyed relevant learning. Discussing the application of theories, for example in Sociology of the family, she enjoyed discovering that Sociology "*is not just about abstract theories, you can actually use them to explain real life*".

To some extent, a lecturers' teaching style determined learning. Because some lecturers emphasise presentations and as Noku (NR) explained, they "*have evaluation tables on which they record marks as you present according to voice projection, content, quality, presentation and design*". Sandra (Sociology) cited her best learning experiences as being through presentations because "*you don't easily forget the things you present*". She added, "*it pushed me out of my comfort zones to research and present in front of everyone, something I wouldn't have volunteered for*". Melissa's (NR) favourite course was because the lecturer:

was so patient considering that we didn't know much about agriculture. It's one of those courses that I will never forget and if anyone asks me now, I can tell them from my head.

The lecturers' teaching style is an effective way of encouraging student learning as illustrated by students' use of words such as "*joyful", "exciting", "interesting*" while describing some of their lecturers. Dan and Max's (Sociology) best learning experience was doing their final year project. For Max, the research process was interesting "*from the formulation of research questions to the write-up. Knowing that this was a project from my head was fulfilling*". Dan enjoyed the independence of selecting a topic of his choice and conducting the research.

To get an overall sense of the learning experience it was also necessary to examine the students' worst learning experiences in order to identify potential pitfalls of teaching. Most of the students' worst learning experiences were in courses with part-time lecturers. The Sociology students indicated that most of their lecturers in the programmes four years were "*part-timers*" while the NR students mostly had them in their second year of study. Of a particular course, Dan (Sociology) complained:

There was no lecturer. He only came for two weeks and we had to understand everything within that time and during exams he was not available for consultation. It was more like we did it on our own.

This will be discussed in greater detail under challenges faced by students.

Another reason for bad learning experiences was the lecturer's teaching style and lack of student engagement. Noku (NR) commented that one lecturer "*was like a sleeping tablet*" while Sandra and Dan (Sociology) complained about lecturers who "*dictated notes very quickly and wouldn't go back to explain*". Because Sociology "*has so many theories, there is need for lecturers who can then apply the theories to things we understand*".

Roy (NR), a French-speaking national cited his worst learning experience as learning in a foreign language. He recalled, "*Coming across new words that we hadn't learnt in the English course was a bit difficult*". The English remedial course caters for students studying different

programmes and consequently does not use discipline specific language which makes it difficult for specialised subjects such as ANR. Similarly, Melissa's (NR) worst learning experience was learning French as part of the university's compulsory courses. She exclaimed:

> *I didn't see that one coming! I just thought I'm gonna do natural resources and that's it. Learning French and writing essays was so horrible and I just had to do it to pass the course".*

Melissa stated that two years later she does not remember any French so the learning was a "*waste*".

Lecturers teaching style, knowledge application and relevance all contributed to making learning enjoyable. This strongly correlates with the deans and lecturers' practical emphasis and efforts aimed at student understanding through for example, pedagogical methods such as presentations. The dean's and lecturers' ideas of student engagement and participation in learning were achieved, mostly in practical courses. This had the potential to develop agency, both individual and social as well as increase the chances of participation in issues beyond knowledge acquisition as is discussed below.

7.4.2 Quality outcomes and constraints

Because these students are in their final year of HE, it is not possible to evaluate educational outcomes through employment. The study therefore examines outcomes acquired through learning, including critical being and the capability for work.

Students' valued outcomes

These are the outcomes that students value as part of their HE and contribute to their development. Noku (NR) explained how she "*was really shy but today has become the loudest person on campus".* She stated:

> *The university experience was massive because I learnt to communicate and present in front of people. I didn't only get the school and class experience; I also got something else out of university.*

In order to gain confidence and voice, Noku exercised personal agency and *"put herself out there… making [her]self do things that gave [her] confidence to stand in front of people"*. These included joining clubs such as the choir, running for and being elected student leader and also giving class presentations. Her time as student leader increased her ability *"to talk to all sorts of students who could boo me down but I had to stand up and tell them I'm the leader"*.

Melissa (NR) indicated that she learnt tolerance and being more sociable through sharing a residence room with two different people while Roy (NR) learnt to be independent by being away from home and family. Max and Anna (Sociology) stated that they learnt to be team players. Through class activities Max can now *"work with anyone on anything"*. Sandra (Sociology) learnt communication skills and confidence. She highlighted:

> *I'm naturally a quiet person and always used to avoid interacting with many people. In class I'd keep quiet even if I knew the answer but through group and individual presentations and teamwork, my communication skills and confidence have improved.*

These capabilities illustrate that university learning should and does not only focus on employability. The capabilities and functionings achieved by students demonstrate that various pedagogical methods nurture different qualities which are as important to learning as skills and knowledge.

Critical being and capability for work

Similar to the other participants, the students' ideas of critical being were mostly confined to critical thinking. Although the students understood critical thinking, they stated that employing it *"depends on how liberal your lecturer is; because some want you to stick to what they teach you."* (Max, Sociology). Observing differences in course requirements, Sean (NR) commented, *"some courses are more scientific and structured while others are more open and you can give your own examples and meanings."* However, the students generally thought they have room to discuss and critically evaluate issues. Anna (Sociology) explained critical

thinking as "*digging deeper into issues, examining both good and bad parts and critically analysing the situation or what is said.*" She noted that they practised that when critiquing theories and their applicability to everyday situations.

For Melissa (NR), at university critical thinking was:

> *a new term for me because I had done sciences at school and in sciences there are no alternatives, it's either this or that...So having to debate situations or look at the other side and try to understand why, was new for me*.

Giving the example of a debate they had in class on the CAMPFIRE[30] project, Roy (NR) commented:

> *I now have to open my mind and think of alternatives I might not have thought about. I can now defend something from both sides, even if I don't necessarily agree with it*.

Melissa and Roy (NR) were members of the Friends of Biodiversity club who "*engage in community projects*". For Roy, this was after learning about issues such as, "*pollution and realising the need to enlighten surrounding communities about the dangers*". The students' initiative in joining the club may partly be regarded as the culmination of the quality learning proposed by the dean and lecturers characterised by active engagement and participation. Roy joined this club through his Intensive English class which facilitates students' inclusion in activities beyond academic proficiency, providing opportunities for student development beyond human capital.

There was a difference in how the groups viewed their employment opportunities when discussing the capability for work. Similar to their lecturers, the Sociology students were more pessimistic about their employment opportunities. For example, Anna commented that, "*employment chances are limited considering the number of Zimbabwean universities releasing graduates yearly, while companies are closing*". Also similar to their lecturers, the NR students were generally more optimistic about their chances. Sean felt there is "*a lot of*

The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is a Zimbabwean community-based natural resource management programme addressing the ownership of wildlife by indigenous peoples in and around conservation protected areas.

money" in NR while Melissa commented that their chances were "*better because our industry is not flooded like the humanities*". Noku (NR) qualified that they stood a "*great*" chance of employment if they were not selective and were willing to work their way up because "*everyone has to start somewhere*". Highlighting the discovery of oil in her home area in Rwanda, Noku claimed she "*stood a very good chance*" of getting employment while Roy (NR) stated the same about DRC where there was high demand and salaries for qualified people because of pollution problems. Because of few employment opportunities in Zimbabwe, Anna and Sandra (Sociology) indicated that they might proceed to Masters Level.

Despite the emphasis by Noku and Roy (NR) on a "good" job being "*all about the money*", the students also valued other characteristics. For Sandra and Max (Sociology), a good job would offer "*growth, a friendly environment and chances for participation*" as well as *"experience and a platform to do further research"* respectively. Noku and Sean (NR) identified the need for growth. Melissa (NR) highlighted that learning about resource management at community level made her realise that:

> *People don't know you can produce energy through bio gas from cow dung. Using the experience I have gained here, I can teach them instead of moving around offices looking for a job.*

This realisation of her potential to create employment for herself, corroborates Mada's (dean, FANR) emphasis on combining theoretical and practical learning with entrepreneurship.

As in the previous case study, Zimbabwe's high unemployment levels and limited options make the capability for work difficult to apply. The growing focus on entrepreneurship by students and academics illustrate an awareness of the country's limited options and possible ways of ameliorating the situation.

Constraints to achieving quality

The students identified two challenges to quality learning; the use of part-time lecturers and the university's emphasis on theoretical rather than practical learning. All eight students complained about part-time lecturers and the Sociology students claimed at one point to have had only one permanent lecturer, with the remaining three being part-time. While quality is not wholly about resources, they are an important enabler. Because part-time lecturers are not

allowed to teach during the normal working hours as they are engaged elsewhere, their lectures are held between 17:30 and 19:30 in the evening and Dan (Sociology) complained that by then:

> *your mind is tired and you are ready to shut down. Sometimes you end up missing supper because it is served between 5- 7 and you can't compromise your learning.*

Sean (NR) expressed that the teaching was "*rushed through*" and Sandra (Sociology) explained that sometimes, part-time lecturers reside in another city making consultation impossible. The students felt short-changed and Max (Sociology) argued that they were full-time students and therefore required full-time lecturers. He commented, "*We pay our money but we are not getting value for our money*". Given that part of the institution's conceptualisation of quality is ensuring value for money, such a statement means that the university is to some extent not living up to its own ideas of quality.

Similar to the dean and lecturers, the NR students cited the challenge of the university's focus on theoretical rather than practical learning. Sean (NR) highlighted:

> *some courses like Geographical Information Systems give us an added advantage. A number of organisations need that for geographical surveys and other things but we focus on the theory, there needs to be more emphasis on training us to have it as a skill rather than theoretical understanding.*

Similarly, Melissa (NR) argued that instead of "*making me do African studies and French which do not apply to my field, I need more courses related to natural resources*". While the university regarded the knowledge of a foreign language as a "key strength" meant to "break barriers set up by colonialism" by enabling students to communicate across boundaries (Herald Business Newspaper, 21 March 2013), the students thought otherwise. Despite the institution's lack of emphasis on WRL, the students considered it integral to learning. Although at Msasa University it is referred to as "attachment", to maintain consistency with the previous chapter I will refer to it as WRL. The Msasa University students go on WRL in their first and second years for approximately three months and this is a source of discontent for students including Max (Sociology) who stated:

> *attachment is to establish yourself, get connections so that when you graduate you can apply for that job you were doing in that or in sister organisations. Being attached for just two to three months doesn't make you easy to remember.*

Max highlighted the need to maximise opportunities such as WRL because they provided "*some sort of specialised training and direction*" which is important given that Sociology is a "*non-specialist programme that does not have a specific job*". The other three students concurred, highlighting that with Sociology, "*you can be anything*" and Sandra adding that it is not "*such a good thing in today's specialised world*". This illustrates the students' desire to establish links with employers' and increase their chances of employment.

The students' perspectives largely corroborated the deans and lecturers beliefs making institutional conceptions of quality more relevant to them than ZIMCHE's policies.

7.5 Discussion

Msasa University's ideas of quality go beyond the confines of ZIMCHE's resource standardisation. Although the deans, one lecturer and some students highlighted the importance of resources in advancing quality, there was a general view that resources support the provision of quality rather than constituting quality. The study participants provide a multi-faceted understanding of quality as inputs, outputs and T & L, with an emphasis on the former. At the FANR the understanding and operationalisation of quality as student understanding and participation runs from the dean through the lecturers to the students. Despite the emphasis on knowledge application to enhance graduate employability, there is some understanding of quality as human development because of the acknowledged transformative potential of HE beyond skills acquisition and the recognition of both instrumental and intrinsic outcomes from HE. The students also demonstrate capabilities such as voice and confidence. For the FHSS the dean and the lecturers conceptualise quality similarly but differ in its operationalisation as the Sociology lecturers face challenges in initiating and sustaining student participation, possibly because of the theoretical nature of the subject. This was corroborated by students who highlighted the need for lecturers to translate theory into practice.

Rather than discussing critical being, all participants focused on critical thinking which despite being a valued graduate outcome, was identified by some as being difficult to engender. Despite challenges in fully nurturing critical being, there are instances, even if not fully developed, where NR students demonstrated critical thinking and agency. As a result of some student's understanding and engaging with their learning, they joined the club "Friends of

Biodiversity" to help the community by using their knowledge. However, the level of criticality is largely limited to the domain of knowledge, which in turn restricts the level of critical reflection to reflective practitioner. This is largely an instrumental application of knowledge rather than a deep form of self-reflection and action. It falls short of Barnett's (1997) conception of critical being as a combination of critical thinking, reflection and action.

Similar to Baobab University, there is difficulty in applying the capability for work. Its inapplicability to the Zimbabwean context is because of conditions limiting quality work to a narrow focus on employment opportunities, while side-lining the nature of the job. Given that enhancing employment options is one of the aims of HE, the high levels of graduate unemployment in Africa and Zimbabwe are worrying. Consequently, departments such as NRM have attempted to "transform" their curricula to be more practical and business oriented, teaching students not just how to be employees but employers as well. However, from the case study, this is easier for practical programmes such as NR and less so for more theory-based ones such as Sociology.

Quality is conceptualised differently as one moves into the university structures. For those in managerial positions, conceptions of quality are broader and more outward looking, positioning the university within national and global domains. Hence the use of words such as "excellence" and "international" which may be difficult to operationalise at institutional level. To some extent, the deans and to a greater extent lecturers and students understand quality within the confines of their institutional environment, conceptualising it more as T & L. The differences in the meso and micro levels illustrate the need to incorporate the views of all stakeholders for a more nuanced understanding. The case study shows that while academics are not averse to the idea of QA, they are against the managerialism and bureaucracy associated with QA. Given Msasa University's new QA policy's evaluative nature, it is likely to further alienate the academics and promote a "performative" culture rather than improve the quality of education.

While the quality of T & L is considered important by deans, lecturers and students its operationalization, especially in the absence of guiding policy is difficult. Although the deans may attempt to improve quality through orienting faculty lecturers in a particular way, ensuring its operationalisation is challenging especially in a university with a high staff turnover. Quality teaching may be improved when there is a shared understanding of what constitutes quality by all stakeholders as well as ownership of the objective. This would involve the participation of

all stakeholders in shaping the QA policy and specifically T & L. As the chapter illustrates, different people value different learning outcomes including practical and soft skills and capabilities such as confidence, agency and critical thinking. Therefore incorporating various stakeholder perspectives would assist in conceptualising quality in a rich and inclusive way which would also inform T & L.

While ZIMCHE's paper policy seems effectively rational in human capital terms, the case study has illustrated its shortfalls. The university representative and deans dismiss its efficacy in improving quality. While the university representative explicitly aspires to be like UCT, the deans and some lecturers implicitly aspire for a better level of quality by benchmarking against foreign institutions, broadening their conception of quality and individually identifying solutions to flaws within their system.

7.6 Conclusion

In the absence of institutional policy, stakeholders understand quality differently, with those at micro level being more micro-focused and emphasising T & L. While all stakeholders associate HE with its instrumental role of facilitating employment through learning practical and soft skills, not all of them emphasise its role in fostering capabilities such as critical thinking, voice, confidence and participation. From the case study, these are important constituents of university learning which can be cultivated through T & L and contribute to quality as transformation. The students demonstrate elements of transformation in acquiring discipline knowledge and the ability to apply it as well as agency which are important within and beyond university.

The case study also highlights challenges in applying my two theoretical indicators; critical being and the capability for work, especially the latter, in the Zimbabwean context. The following chapter will discuss the implications of this problem and offer a Zimbabwean specific re-interpretation.

Chapter Eight

Quality: A human development perspective

8.0 Introduction

As set out in the thesis, I argue for a human development informed conception of T & L quality, in line with HE's public good role. Ideally, universities as social institutions should be accountable to the public and foster both economic and human development. HE should enable students "realise their maximum possibilities and also realise useful or beneficial, and inventive lives in alignment with their valued necessities and well beings" (UNDP, 1990: 1). Universities can contribute towards this not just through teaching knowledge and skills but also through the inculcation of certain normative values. Santos (2006: 97) identifies the university as linking the present, medium and long term through the kind of knowledge it produces and "through the privileged public space it establishes dedicated to open and critical discussion". It is this normative public good role, foregrounding human development wellbeing and agency that I argue for, and not a "largely individualistic, technical and morally disinterested understanding of the purposes of higher education [separating] scholarship and the moral character" of the university (Arthur, 2005: 16).

The chapter draws on the perspectives of all the study participants. It illustrates differences and similarities in perceptions from macro to micro level, while locating the findings within broader debates on quality. The study findings echo some of the international and regional literature reviewed in Chapter two such as the dominance of the human capital approach in conceptualising quality, different definitions of quality, academics' negative perspectives on QA, HE funding, adoption of "best cases" and government involvement in QA. The first section examines multiple perceptions on how quality in Zimbabwe is conceptualised in terms of the human capital approach and its limitations. Section two provides an analysis of the study findings relating to quality as human development. The three sub-sections provide an in-depth analysis of the operationalisation of human development and the two selected ideal-theoretical indicators and their applicability. Finally, the chapter examines the valued capabilities and

functionings identified by the participants and how they can add to a theorisation of quality in HE, followed by a conclusion.

8.1 Human capital perspectives on quality

Conceptions of quality in Zimbabwe are heavily influenced by the human capital approach, with pockets of explicit attention to human development at the meso and micro levels. ZIMCHE's human capital approach emphasises resources, standardisation and benchmarking. Guided by a technical-rational approach, ZIMCHE's notion of quality implicitly assumes that quality management and any related challenges can be solved by availing a specific threshold of inputs and poor quality outcomes are a result of inadequate resources (Buckler, 2015). This perpetuates a resource oriented agenda. An emphasis on standardisation and benchmarking is not unique to Zimbabwe. Ramirez (2013: 127) questions, "Why, despite vast cultural and geographical differences, one can observe substantially similar quality practices? [with] a remarkable level of uniformity in the assumptions and approaches". This can be attributed to human capital influences on quality management systems and their emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency with the resultant focus on easily quantifiable inputs and outcomes. As quality management systems have evolved in the global North, they have gradually become dominated by human capital concerns.

These Northern quality management systems have, in many cases, been adopted by countries in the global South as "best practices". For example, the UZ Vice Chancellor, Levi Nyagura, also the current board chairperson of ZIMCHE, claims that UZ is becoming one of Africa's best universities by "adopting quality assurance measures in conformity with global best practices" (Murwira, The Herald, 14 September, 2013). El-Khawas (2013) also notes how networks such as the INQAAHE with over 250 members' offers platforms for the sharing of ideas and experiences to assist member agencies improve their QA practices. Although not a member of INQAAHE, ZIMCHE is a member of the AfriQAN which works in collaboration with INQAAHE and therefore has access to its "best practices". Arguing against the adoption of best cases, Hopkins (2004) and Mhlanga (2008) note that regional and international QAA's efforts to standardise practices overlook relevant contextual factors important in shaping policies and practices. Writing on Ethiopia's QA practices, Tadesse (2016) comments that the systems "have not been developed with Ethiopia's specific context in mind. They rely on

adherence to externally imposed definitions and structures" (23 February, 2016, https://theconversation.com/quality-assurance-must-be-reimagined-at-ethiopias-universities-54990). Therefore, despite differences in resources and location, the same practices prevail as examples of quality.

Although five universities highlighted the importance of learning from international best cases, two of them; U-F and U-A indicated the need to adapt these to local contexts or alternatively, disregard them. Choto (U-F) explained that a university has a responsibility to its local community and should make education relevant, rather than "*copying courses from elsewhere that we would not be able to apply*". Two Psychology students from Baobab University, three NR students, and one Sociology student from Msasa University had their best learning experiences in courses they consider relevant to their contexts. For example, Roy (Msasa University) enjoyed Environmental Economics because it addressed the problem of pollution and environmental degradation which are challenges in the DRC, his home country. Tikly and Barret (2011, 2013) make a similar argument for the relevance of education in developing country contexts. However, relevance to context does not mean an unawareness of other contexts and knowledge. Given the high volumes of knowledge transfer and student mobility, graduates should be versatile enough to apply their knowledge to different situations. In this way, there is an inter-connectedness between critical being and the capability for work.

Other than human capital influences, ZIMCHE's emphasis on resources may also be explained by the Zimbabwean context. With the economy's downturn from 2000, universities have increasingly suffered from lack of financial, human and infrastructural resources, basic inputs necessary to sustain a HE system. ZIMCHE's formation in 2006 and its consequent focus on resource thresholds may be a way of ensuring that HEI's attain and maintain a minimal operating standard. Despite the progress made in availing resources since then, the unstable political economy continuously renders universities vulnerable. Regardless of Baobab University meeting ZIMCHE's requirements, lecturers and students indicated a shortage of infrastructure, ICT and furniture. This may illustrate that while availing minimum operating standards, ZIMCHE's thresholds still fall short in facilitating quality learning, given the increasing enrolment levels.

Universities in Zimbabwe do not only conform to ZIMCHE's standards but to those of other organisations as well. These include churches, for example, the Seventh Day Adventist Church and its' Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities; non-governmental agencies such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology and international conventions for example, the Washington Accord. This highlights the need to assure Zimbabwean stakeholders such as the government, employers and parents/students as well as external stakeholders such as those mentioned above, that Zimbabwean HEI's provide quality teaching.

Most QA systems narrow focus on inputs and outputs lead Ramirez (2013: 132) to comment, "technical approaches to quality are useful and necessary but arguably insufficient". This inadequacy is evident in the exclusion of, for example, implicit power relations as explored by Morley's (2003) micro-political analysis of what constitutes quality and who determines it in a university set-up. The two case studies, especially Msasa University revealed tensions between lecturers and management over ownership of QA. Similarly, Walker (2002b: 45) acknowledges that while a technical approach to quality seems apolitical, "the politics of its agenda resides precisely in its disavowal of any connection between politics and university teaching and learning". This dissociation then "eschews teaching as an intellectual and moral activity" (Ibid.) reducing it to a technical skills development process. From the Zimbabwean context explained in chapter one and the discussion with ZIMCHE representatives in chapter five, government control and influence over the QA system is evident. For example, Ruwa's comment on ZIMCHE's inability to "*say no*" to government's wishes, even if they compromise quality standards. In addition, the benchmarking of a MBK for all universities is said by some university representatives, for example, Mpofu (Msasa University) to "*kill the academic spirit*" by standardising everything. The MBK identifies what constitutes knowledge and is limited to discipline specific information. When institutions go beyond the MBK, for example, the university reported by Ruwa as having a "*regime change agenda*", the government attempts to shut it down. These are examples of nuances related QA that a technical approach overlooks.

At national policy level, quality in Zimbabwe is also seemingly used as a measure of state control. Neave (1994) makes a similar argument for the effect of political agendas on the monitoring of quality. The expectation that HEI's will be compliant with set standards is often used as a means of control, diverting attention from broader socio-political issues to easily measurable variables such as resources, graduate output and employment. Consequently, to

demonstrate their compliance, HEI's end up designing systems with traceable paper trails and no real attempt at QE, reducing quality to "dramaturgical compliance" (Barrow, 1999). This is when quality management is employed as an "instrument of governmentality developed to ensure the surveillance of the work of academic staff in an educational institution" (Barrow, 1999: 27). Such need for compliance is evident in the shutting down of institutions failing to meet set standards. Given the degree of political involvement in ZIMCHE, Sando's (U-C) claim that the closure of some of his institution's programmes was for political reasons is not entirely unwarranted. It also points to the realisation of fears expressed in 2006 when the ZIMCHE Act was promulgated. Eldred Masunungure, a political scientist at the UZ commented that the Act could "see education becoming an extension of the [ZANU PF] party" (Manyukwe, 6 July, 2008, University World News). Mushawatu (15 October, 2016, University World News) highlights that quality learning is compromised by lack of institutional autonomy and academic freedom because "few lecturers in the country are prepared to air sentiments that present the government in a negative light even if such views are crucial for imparting academic knowledge to their students".

From the research findings, there is a strong influence of human capital at policy level which permeates to the meso and micro levels, especially in Baobab University. ZIMCHE erroneously considers resources to be the end, rather than a means to achieve quality. Resources such as infrastructure, books, computers and lecturer qualifications are among those emphasised by ZIMCHE and some HEI's as being synonymous with quality. Using the example of lecturer qualifications, where a PhD degree is increasingly being considered the minimum qualification expected of at least 60 percent of the academic staff, ZIMCHE does not go beyond the qualification to assess and improve the PhD holders' pedagogic practices. The assumption is that quality is synonymous with having the qualification. However, as Damba (Msasa University lecturer) highlights, there are many competent lecturers without PhD's. While a PhD develops research and scholarly expertise in a certain field, it does not necessarily teach how to communicate this knowledge, especially to undergraduate students. Similarly, Teferra's (2016: 1735) study on early career academics and teaching notes that PhD prepares one to undertake research and "is not typically a teacher training endeavour and holding a PhD does not guarantee, contrary to the popular perception, the requisite skills and abilities to teach". This is one of the challenges highlighted by students, lecturers' pedagogical prowess. Hence Tikly and Barret's (2011: 9) comment that learning materials "do not work in isolation

to enhance learning outcomes but rather are dependent on and need to be compatible with teachers' pedagogic practices, professional values and language proficiency(ies)".

Given Zimbabwe's economic environment, HE is considered as an engine for economic development. This is exemplified by Nyagura's (UZ, vice chancellor) explanation that HE has to "create a critical mass of well-trained citizens who would be the engine for economic growth" (Musarurwa, 15 February 2002, The Herald). This idea of HE as a driver of economic growth is common among the 10 university participants interviewed, especially the three S & T universities mandated to produce human capital. At least four of the ten participating HEI's conceptualise quality as fitness for the purpose of achieving national goals under the auspices of the Zim Asset policy. The Zim Asset policy is explicit in areas where universities can contribute towards economic development through human capital production. For example, the production of at least 200 Masters and PhD graduates per year in Geo-Sciences to enable the exploitation of natural resources such as diamonds (Government of Zimbabwe, Zim Asset, 2013). Similar to countries such as Britain, USA and China, Zimbabwe is increasingly emphasising STEM subjects to cater for the global demand for these subjects and in support of Zim Asset (http://nehandaradio.com/2016/02/07/no-olevel-maths). Zimbabwe's emphasis on STEM subjects in a situation with very limited industrial capacity is possibly influenced by the labour export agreements (explained in chapter one). Although exporting graduate labour may be economically beneficial, migration may not promote human development in Zimbabwe. Additionally, the government hopes to revive domestic industrial and economic capacity through focusing on STEM subjects, which is a seemingly difficult exercise, given the prevailing political and economic environment which encourages capital flight. Also, an over-emphasis on STEM subjects undermines humanities and arts subjects which, when perceived as having no economic benefits, reduces universities to little more than skills training institutions. Because of similar calls by the Chinese government to either close or reform humanities courses so they "actively serve the needs of society" Vickers (29 January 2016, University World News) notes that society's needs are not limited to economic utility but "include citizens capable of engaging in reasoned political and ethical debate" to which the arts and humanities add. This illustrates HE's potential contribution beyond economic development.

The case studies reveal limited academic participation in deciding what constitutes quality and its measurement. Despite ZIMCHE's and university representatives' claims to consult

academics in the process of drafting QA policies, seven out of the eight lecturers from the two case study universities stated otherwise. The findings largely support Buckler's (2015: 151) argument that despite the international community's commitment to develop more contextually relevant and participatory educational governance systems, these are:

> driven by a top-down human capital paradigm, written to meet the aspirations of global agendas, and have their outcome evaluated through national and international quality metrics. As a result… these policies have little resonance with what is going on in the classroom.

This reveals the extent of human capital influences as well as the dissonance between quality policy from above and academic perceptions, which include classroom practices. It is buttressed by findings from both case studies where deans and lecturers reveal a diverse understanding of quality including "*standardisation, resources, quality of graduates, T & L*, *transformation*, *knowledge application* and more commonly *student understanding*". This varies from ZIMCHE's singular focus on resources, standardisation and compliance.

While ZIMCHE does not include T & L in its' understanding of quality, the deans, lecturers and students consider it an integral component of quality. This typifies Ramirez's (2013: 127) comment that "the definitions of quality explicit or implied in policies seldom coincide with the notions that practitioners hold on the ground". While ZIMCHE and most universities have no T & L policy, it is an important constituent of quality at micro level. Through T & L, lecturers ought to equip students with knowledge and skills to make them versatile employers and employees as well as furnish them with capabilities that potentially enable them to be social and democratic citizens with confidence, voice and participation capabilities. The two case study universities do not have independent institutional QA units or T & L policies, making quality of T & L an individual interpretation, sometimes with the deans' assistance as the case at Msasa University. Because lecturers and to some extent, deans have their own interpretation of quality, while complying with ZIMCHE's expectations, they implement their own ideas as part of T & L such as ensuring student understanding.

The two case studies illustrate that while lecturers are not averse to QA, they are resistant to the bureaucracy and managerialism associated with a human capital oriented system. Hence Barrow's (1999: 33) comment that "ownership of the system, let alone its stated outcomes, is unlikely to be achieved when the development of the system is carried out at a distance from

the academic to whom, and by whom, the system is applied". This dissonance in the understanding of quality is illustrated by Zimbabwe's macro and meso and micro levels. While there is the erosion of academic authority in deciding what constitutes quality and its subsequent relocation in government (ZIMCHE) at national level, the micro level analysis to some extent reveals otherwise. Although some academics support and comply with the policy (Shawu and Midzi- Msasa University and Hata- Baobab University), others just "*tick the boxes*" illustrating the performativity associated with the system (Muti- Msasa University; Shoko, Gondo and Tsotso- Baobab University), and a few slip through the cracks, avoiding any sort of evaluation (Damba- Msasa University). To a great extent, while complying with the system, lecturers implement their own understanding of quality, albeit with human capital influences. Despite acknowledged government control, six out of the eight lecturers and one out of the four deans interviewed believe academics to be the most influential in determining quality.

Ramirez's (2013: 137) argument, "that quality in higher education is not exclusively an endeavour of rationality" provides a platform for an alternative conceptualisation of quality. Given the subjectivity of knowledge, an assessment of quality has to take into account such nuances. Although universities should be accountable to stakeholders such as government and employers, "the accountability imperative must address the role of HE in ways that encompass and transcend the needs of economic development understood in the narrowest self-interested fashion" (Singh, 2001: 12). This means the inclusion of academics and students' notions of quality to broaden understanding in a way that is beneficial to not just one group, but others as well.

8.2 Human development perspectives on quality

Quality as human development includes aspects of human capital because in any form of development, the economic aspect matters. For one to talk about GDP and resource distribution, there needs to be resources. As the Zimbabwean case shows, capability formation is reliant on the availability of economic resources. The findings illustrate that in a country such as Zimbabwe with little or no economic development, there is a need for a human capital basis. However, the greater goal of human development is still an ideal to strive for, through building upon human capital formation, especially for HEI's. This thesis argues for human

development as a framework to think about quality of T & L rather than a singular focus on human capital. As Arthur (2005: 8) highlights, HE:

> should not simply be about the acquisition of academic and social skills, for it is ultimately about the kind of person a student becomes…having a purpose that is beyond an instrument or tool in social [and economic] processes.

Although the study participants generally understood quality in terms of human capital, there were instances where attempts were made to foster human development.

At macro level, quality policy is predominantly human capital, however, as it filters down to meso and micro levels, there are instances of human development. The claims for including human development values were mostly from church-run institutions such as U-D, U-B and Msasa University, stemming from the desire to inculcate moral and ethical values in addition to knowledge and skills. However, some of the state-run universities also made similar claims for the need to foster capabilities beyond skills. For example, U-F's niche area of "Culture and Heritage studies" was seen as encouraging "*Africanness*" and "*Zimbabweaness*" as part of its philosophy of Ubuntu which encourages graduates who are:

> *sensitive to diversity, have respect, integrity, loyalty, discipline and ethics; there is too much corruption in Africa, it's all over the world but it's more pronounced in poor countries and continents like Africa.*

Other examples of fostering human development include Gumbo's (dean FSS- Baobab University) desire to educate a "*total person*" by not just concentrating on the academic component. Similarly, the two deans at Msasa University explained the importance of the student advisory and counselling services in assisting with academic and non-academic issues. While the Msasa University students acknowledged these efforts, some highlighted the limited range of services offered because they are staffed by academics and not professionals such as counsellors. Despite these limitations, which can be attributed to financial and resource constraints, the universities efforts are laudable. However, more can be done as fostering human development values may not always require resources for teaching, for example, respect, integrity and ethical dispositions. Although the universities may not successfully foster the capabilities they claim to nurture, their realisation of these capabilities' importance as part

of quality HE, is noteworthy. This illustrates the potential of the human development paradigm in thinking about quality. Boni and Gasper (2012: 457) highlight:

> Human development thinking contains thus a concern not only for increasing people's skills ("human resource development") or the so-called "human sectors'" (e.g. nutrition, health, education). It rests on a broad conception of human well-being, and sees development as the promotion and advance of well-being.

A university which foregrounds human development would understand quality as a process of student transformation through skills and knowledge acquisition, as well as capabilities, enabling them to realise valued ends. Rather than just economic development, the focus of education would be graduates' and society's overall wellbeing.

8.2.1 Quality as transformation

To foster human development, quality T & L should engender a positive transformation in students. Although highly subjective and not all change is attributable to HE, quality as transformation ascribes a normative value to education. According to Harvey and Green (1993: 24), "The transformative value system of quality is rooted in the notion of "qualitative change", a fundamental change of form". As highlighted in chapter three, the idea of transformation is related to transformative learning, meaning that T & L has the potential to engender positive changes among graduates. In human capital terms, quality is more of a management practice and but quality as transformation is "an enabling and developmental process" (Cheng, 2014: 28).

Although Ruwa, one of the ZIMCHE representatives understood quality as transformation, albeit in human capital terms, three university representatives; Khumalo (U-H), Mpofu (Msasa University) and Choto (U-F) had a more nuanced understanding. This was echoed by both deans Mada and Zuze at Msasa University. Transformation as explained by these participants was through students' understanding their subject thus enabling its practical application for employment purposes as well as social development. At Msasa University, an example of a level of transformation was illustrated by the activities of the "Friends of Biodiversity" club members in organising a clean-up campaign for the surrounding community. The students'

initiative in organising the clean-up campaign reveals both individual and social agency. Walker (2006: 56) makes a similar argument for education being "to change students in some positive, life-enhancing way". Education should therefore equip learners with capabilities to achieve wellbeing, that is, attain achievements and freedom to make alternative choices.

While quality was not popularly understood as transformation by the participants, especially university representatives, possibly because of macro-level expectations, this conceptualisation is "a value to be pursued" (Harvey and Green, 1993: 31). It is an iterative process in search of improvement. Underscoring the subjectivity of transformation, Rowan (2003) and Harvey (2006) highlight the diverse range of transformation, given the complications associated with learning. This led me to focus on two ideal-theoretical indicators, the capability for work and critical being, which I consider as central to a transformative learning experience. These are also a proxy for quality as human development. However, in conducting the empirical research which is reported in chapters five, six and seven, the two ideal-theoretical indicators do not hold up and are only partially realised necessitating the need to re-interpret them in the Zimbabwean context. Given various economic and socio-political constraints, these two indicators are ideal-aspirational in the Zimbabwean context.

8.2.2 Critical being

The foregoing chapters reveal a thin understanding of critical thinking which falls short of the proposed thick notion of critical being. In an ideal setting, critical being consists of critically thinking about knowledge, reflexivity, and positioning oneself as an agent who can act in the world. However, the Zimbabwean case has proven to be a non-ideal setting for critical being. Critical being is arguably an expected public-good capability from the HE experience. For instance, in a newspaper opinion piece, Martin Stobart commented that "[i]f the economic situation in this country is bad, and if democracy has disappeared, then it is incumbent upon our educated class, the intelligentsia, to change things for the better." (The Herald, 21 June, 1992). This illustrates the social role that graduates are expected to play, beyond their role as employees/ employers. Interlinked in the graduates' role are ideas of agency and democratic participation. However, such change is dependent on the nature of graduates and the availability of space for democratic participation.

At national policy level, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development's expectation of QA is to ensure "the production of patriotic and competent high level manpower" (http://www.mhtestd.gov.zw/). The meaning of patriotism in Zimbabwe has negative implications for critical thinking. Patriotic citizenship is narrowly understood as loyalty to the ruling ZANU PF and, given prevailing political repression, critical thinking is equated to political opposition. Huni, (Baobab University representative) alluded to this negative perception of critical thinking as being a *"negative thinker, or opposition"*. To circumvent the normative value of critical thinking, the state combines ideas of citizenship with its narrow version of patriotism. For instance, the then ZANU PF national secretary for education Dr S. Ndlovu stated that, "graduates must leave the university with a clear understanding of their country's sovereignty and national patriotic aspirations" (The Sunday Mail, 6 October, 2013). This kind of learning is akin to Walker's (2006: 56) "training or indoctrination" rather than education. It encourages the production of myopic, unquestioning graduates instead of critical citizens who uphold their rights, participation and identity (Delanty, 2001).

Related ideas of critical thinking and citizenship are built upon by Nussbaum (1997, 2002), Crosbie (2014) and Walker and Loots (2016) including others. One of Nussbaum's (2002: x) reasons for education for cosmopolitan citizenship rather than patriotism is that it counteracts problems such as partisanship resulting in people's "imaginations remain[ing] oriented to the local" which in turn, "subverts, ultimately, even the values that hold a nation together, because it substitutes a colourful idol for the substantive universal values of justice and right" (Ibid: 5). This can be exemplified by the creation of compulsory national youth service programmes such as Border Gezi[31], that have been "conducted on a brazenly partisan basis…The content of the curricula taught to them was clearly biased and recruits were brainwashed to become party foot-soldiers" (Bogaert, The Zimbabwean, 4 March, 2015). Negating ideas of patriotism, Kudzi, a Baobab University Psychology student questioned how *"a nation that watched [him] suffer?"* as he worked through university expects him to be patriotic. The construction of critical thinking in Zimbabwe around ideas of sovereignty and patriotism focuses on the challenges being faced with little space for discussion of an alternative future and how people,

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[31] The National Youth Service is a compulsory programme for Zimbabweans aged 10 to 30 meant to instill a sense of national identity and patriotism. It is named after Border Gezi, the Minister for Gender, Youth and Employment, who was in charge of recruitment and organisation.

especially graduates, can contribute. In terms of contributing towards development, most of the study participants' limited themselves to the economic role, with only a few recognising how their education could benefit local communities. For example, psychologists helping families and children and Agriculture graduates practising farming to feed the country. This economic reductionism falls short of the idea of critical being because there is little engagement with wider social justice issues and democratic wellbeing reflecting a low level of critical self-reflection and critical action.

While the ZIMCHE representatives mentioned the importance of critical thinking, there was an assumption that it is the responsibility of the HEI's. At policy level, the emphasis is on students learning the MBK. Though the university representatives, deans and lecturers all claimed to value critical thinking as an integral part of student learning, they admitted to challenges in understanding and teaching it. While McLean envisions "an analytic, critical and imaginative thinker who is committed to working with others for the public good," (2006: 79) most of the study participants narrowly constructed critical thinking as a skills-based conception, with little depth in terms of self-reflection or action. Despite differences between the disciplines in understanding critical thinking, the level of criticality was in the domain of knowledge, that is, it was limited to knowledge application.

Despite discipline differences in ideas of critical thinking, Walker (2006: 99) indicates that universities are not just places to learn "mathematics, or philosophy or history; we also learn ways of being, whether to be open minded or fair or generous spirited, or none of these things". However, from the findings, there was an emphasis on knowledge acquisition without normative values. In understanding and operationalising critical thinking, discipline differences were noticeable at Baobab University between the Mathematics students and staff and those from the Psychology department. In the latter, critical thinking was conceptualised as the questioning of knowledge and sources, knowledge application and the need to be aware of inter-personal differences which influence people's perceptions. Those from Mathematics understood it as logical thinking and knowledge application. For instance, Charumbira, (lecturer- Baobab University) explained the need to show logical thinking as an example of critical thinking. Similarly, giving the example of a course "Real analysis", Morris (Maths student- Baobab University) noted:

It's quite an abstract module, for example it has all the definitions of mathematics and such things as why do we say 1 plus 1 is 2. It's more of proofs but it's mainly to help us reason better and understand things more.

The Social Science and Science disciplines have different knowledge structures with the latter having a "vertical discourse", is more hierarchical and knowledge develops through successive knowledge advances (McLean, Abbas and Ashwin, 2011). The Social Sciences have a more horizontal structure which is not dependent upon successive knowledge advances. The different knowledge structures and how they influence ideas of critical thinking are not explored in this thesis but could be a focus for further research. Briefly, the mathematics students' understanding of critical thinking was based on logical thought and how it relates to the world. This was shown by the students' examples of using the mathematical modelling of Ebola to prevent further infections. The Psychology students also gave examples of the application of theories to explain social problems such as domestic violence. To some extent, the students' awareness of the need to use their educational knowledge for the good of society illustrates glimpses of critical thinking and self-reflection as they see themselves as active agents in the world. From the study, critical being is not fully realised as Barnett's "tripartite synergy" is not applied. In this instance, criticality has been narrowly interpreted to mean a desirable set of accomplishments in the domain of formal knowledge.

Using Barnett's idea of the three domains of critical thinking and their associated forms of criticality in Table 3.1, I have used the empirical findings to illustrate the critical thinking domains found in the study. All three forms of criticality were in the domains of knowledge. Although one student at Baobab University in acknowledging interpersonal differences, expressed elements of self-reflection, this was not followed up by critical action outside the domain of knowledge.

Table 8.1: Critical thinking domains

Critical thinking		
Forms of criticality	Domains	Quotes
Critical reason	Knowledge	*Before accepting knowledge, you have to be sceptical and question. You need to know the sources, the reliability of the sources and how valid the issues are. That allows you to critique whatever you are given and not just take information as it is.*
Critical self-reflection	Knowledge	*I now have to open my mind and think of alternatives I might not have thought about. I can now defend something from both sides, even if I don't necessarily agree with it.*
	Self	*Even the way we look at ourselves; we have developed this ability to distance ourselves and reflect on how our actions impact on others. Even if I mean something, it may be interpreted differently by the next person and I should take that into consideration. We might see things differently.*
Critical action	World	*I decided to join the club "Friends of Biodiversity" after learning about pollution and realising the need to enlighten surrounding communities about the dangers".*

Barnett (1997: 75) understands criticality in the domain of knowledge as "only the first step in construing and practising an adequate form of critical HE". He argues:

> The critical component is arrested at the instrumental level. It is a critical action that accepts the world largely as given and seeks to produce more effective operations within it. Transformations are entirely acceptable *providing* that they produce greater profitability, power and security (Ibid: 79).

While the use of logic to solve problems reveals a level of criticality, "simple logic or formulas are not adequate for solving the kinds of problematic situations that are truly controversial (Dunne, 2015: 91) and central to human development. Hence Barnett (1997: 68) notes that within HE, "problem-solving within narrowly defined situations is the normal range of permitted critical moves". To fully practice critical being, one has to move beyond the discipline. Barnett (Ibid) notes:

critical thinking becomes critical action when it is taken outside the propositional discourse and is subject to other discourses of the wider world (of political action and power, of economic interests and of instrumental reason).

Similarly, in explaining the complexity of critical being, Dunne 2015: 93) highlights that criticality is not just discipline or content specific. Critical being means repositioning "the totality of the self… at the centre of education, life and learning experience". This means drawing from all three forms of criticality, which was mostly absent in the findings.

Although the lecturers claimed that critical thinking is central to learning, some acknowledged difficulty in implementing it during teaching. For instance, Muti, (Sociology lecturer- Msasa University) admitted that despite teaching for more than eleven years, criticality is difficult to practice because of the dominant banking system of education which continuously "*imposes itself*". As Buckler (2015) points out, teaching experience does not automatically improve a lecturer's pedagogical competencies especially in a changing educational environment. This was highlighted by three lecturers Damba, Muti and Mudzi (Msasa University) and confirmed by George, a student from Baobab University. Although Baobab University provided compulsory pedagogical training for academics, two of the four lecturers considered it irrelevant and unnecessarily increasing their workload. While this training has the potential to improve pedagogical practices, in some cases, it can also be ineffective in improving teaching.

Despite the problems related to the banking system of education, Muti's explanation that "*uncritical education is still very much alive…our students are coming from backgrounds where they sit and take notes*" indicates the challenges faced by universities in nurturing the capability to think independently and critically. Conceptualising quality as critical being would result in universities prioritising students' capacities to critically think and question, not just knowledge but also the status quo. It would inculcate the capacity to reflect on how they can contribute to improving the situation and taking necessary action. Some students also acknowledged that they only encountered the term critical thinking at university, as well as learning that required them to "*question, argue, defend and discuss*" their views with the lecturer. Melissa (Msasa University student), remarked that at high school if you attempted to "*disagree or argue with the teacher*" you were considered a "*bad*" student. This gives credence to Nussbaum's (2006) belief that "Through primary and secondary education, young citizens

form, at a crucial age, habits of mind that will be with them all through their lives". Pedagogical practices from primary level should foster critical thinking capacities and enable university students to nurture that capability. This is especially important in the context of developing countries such as Zimbabwe with mounting political, economic and social challenges. In teaching "not to question", education implicitly upholds the status quo. It maintains inequalities related to, in the case of Zimbabwe, constrained democratic participation and space as will be discussed below. Hence Freire (2007: 22) argues against the banking approach whose "humanism" "masks the effort to turn men and women into automatons- the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human".

In contrast to the banking system, a human development approach emphasises participation as a way of fostering social justice and wellbeing. HEI's therefore ought to develop the students' capacities for participation through for example, involvement in determining institutional conceptions of quality, evaluating existing quality practices and improving pedagogical approaches. In such a scenario, lecturers should employ pedagogical practices that encourage student participation in constructing and giving meaning to knowledge. This is highlighted by Zuze's (dean, FHSS- Msasa University) analogy of lecturers being the *"engine driver"* and treating students as *"passengers on the train"*. Walker (2006: 53) makes a similar argument:

> where a lecturer presents him or herself as *the* authority about some aspect of the subject being studied and is dismissive of student attempts to discuss or offer alternative views, it becomes difficult for undergraduate students to see themselves as co-constructors of knowledge, or to find and use a critical voice in relation to this knowledge. They might then become mimics, ventriloquists and reproducers of what they feel the lecturer wants from them.

The idea of reproducing what lecturers say was reiterated by some students in their discussion of critical thinking, citing it as what was expected of them. For example, Max, (Sociology student- Msasa University) declared that it *"depends on how liberal your lecturer is"*. Again attesting to differences within the disciplines, the students indicated that some courses were more scientific and structured, with less room for debate; *"there are no alternatives, it's either this or that"* while others are more open.

As Walker (2006: 82) points out, the gaining of critical knowledge and self-reflection relies on "having opportunities for active and participatory learning and for expressive voices – the

conditions of respect and recognition that enable speaking". At micro level, the lecturers from the two case studies attempted to provide opportunities for participatory learning through group-work, presentations, discussions, and assignments. Also, as part of the institutional QA policy, students evaluate their lecturer's teaching and have the opportunity to voice problems through students' representatives. However, this space for participation is mostly limited to the university and does not extend to the broader socio-political environment over which the university has no control. This could possibly account for the students' criticality extending only to the domain of knowledge and not beyond. If critical being and wellbeing are the achievement of valued functionings and the freedom to pursue alternative options, the limited opportunities to practice agency and participation in Zimbabwe hinder their achievement. The Zimbabwean context and its effect on critical being and the capability for work are discussed in section 8.2.4 as both indicators are freedom-based notions and are similarly affected by the external environment.

8.2.3 Capability for work

Because the students were, at the time of research, in their final year of study, I focused on their wellbeing freedom (the opportunities they had or would have to achieve valued ends relating to work) and wellbeing achievement (the functionings they had achieved through HE). My understanding of work is best explained by the 2015 Human Development Report (HDR) although it was published after the incvrgitial conceptualisation and fieldwork had been done. The HDR is therefore used in this chapter to assist in understanding the capability for work and its determinants, and the challenge posed by the empirical, contextual data. While work can narrowly be understood as enabling people to earn a living and realise economic security, from a human development perspective, work should be a capability enhancer, fostering skills and knowledge as well as expanding economic and social opportunities. According to the HDR (2015: 30):

> work is any activity that not only leads to the production and consumption of goods or services, but also goes beyond production for economic value. Work thus includes activities that may result in broader human well-being, both for the present and for the future.

The definition of work subsumes that of a 'job' to include care and voluntary work and expression. Work is also about, "the degree of freedom individuals have in making choices

about the work they do" (Ibid.). It is about expanding people's choices and ensuring that adequate and quality paid work opportunities are available and accessible. This includes work safety, job satisfaction, security, opportunities for growth or progression, dignity or sense of pride, participation and voice as well as upholding workers and human rights (HDR, 2015: 34). It is within this understanding of work that I locate the capability for work. Bonvin (2012) views this capability as the real freedom to choose the job or activity a person has reason to value. In Zimbabwe with extremely high youth and graduate unemployment, financial volatility and economic instability, quality job creation is critical, but possibly, any job creation in the short term might also be needed.

My study discusses the well-being perspectives of the capability for work, which includes material and non-material aspects of work and its impact on agency. Limited agency means wellbeing is narrowly understood in material terms with emphasis on well-paying jobs. Unlimited agency means wellbeing involves material and non-material aspects such as social values related to work and political participation. From my findings, given the scarcity of work opportunities in the country, the former notion of wellbeing prevailed, with participants unanimously emphasising the need to get any job related to their qualifications. Similarly, the students were realistic about their work prospects. For example, Morris (Maths student- Baobab University) stated, "*I think it's better to do what comes along while waiting for what you want rather than saying that you don't want anything else*" while Noku and Melissa (NR students- Msasa University) indicated the need for graduates to "*work their way up the ladder*". Thus, well-being was mostly understood in material terms with limited agency in pursuing valued goals.

As with the limited understanding of work, quality of work was narrowly understood in terms of earnings. For instance, U-D representative Banda explained that when looking at the quality of the job, "*we consider the level of the graduate's qualification and the kind of job they're doing, the post they hold and the salary scale*". While the students acknowledge the importance of the instrumental value of education in securing economic opportunities, they are the only group that identified non-monetary aspects contributing to the quality of work. These included "*happiness, satisfaction, friendly environment, chances for further development, time to pursue other interests, voice and participation*". To some extent, this illustrates the students' idealism, aspirations and lack of experience in the Zimbabwean job market as expressed by Tsotso's (Mathematics lecturer- Baobab University) comment that, "*realistically, a job is the important*

thing, you are dealing with bread and butter issues - nothing more". This largely reveals the lecturer's pragmatism and to some extent, adaptive preferences given the reality of the Zimbabwean situation.

The foundation of the capability for work on the presence of "valuable alternatives" such as another job or financial compensation through unemployment benefits and a supportive welfare system limits its applicability to developing countries such as Zimbabwe with weak or non-existent social safety nets. This makes it an aspirational capability for Zimbabwe where it is not currently nor in the immediate future, possible to provide such safety-nets. Moreover, only 27 percent of the world's population is covered by a comprehensive social protection system (HDR, 2015: 165). Most developing countries cannot afford a welfare system making the possibility of Bonvin's "valuable exit option" untenable. This then undermines the basis of negotiation for better working conditions, resulting in workers accepting conditions imposed by the employer. Wood and Gough (2006: 1697- 1698) argue that:

> Outside the West… the formal institutional frameworks for the provision of security are so precarious and fragile, if not altogether absent… people have to engage in wider strategies of security provision, risk avoidance and uncertainty management… The outcome is a vicious circle of insecurity, vulnerability and suffering for all but a small elite and their enforcers and clients.

In Zimbabwe, such insecurity exists in both the formal and informal sectors. Despite the highest world returns to tertiary education being in Sub-Saharan Africa, 21 percent compared to the global average of 14.6 percent, (Cloete, 2016: 6), it is difficult to measure such indices in countries such as Zimbabwe because of lack of statistics and the high levels of graduate unemployment. Khumalo (U-H), noted:

> *we have graduates who are doing nothing. We just train people who will end up in the streets doing things that they didn't train for; some graduates are driving taxis or accounting graduates farming in the rural areas.*

Because of high unemployment, the freedom to choose what one values is constrained and there is competition for work regardless of its quality. According to the HDR (2015), globally, 84.6 percent of those employed in the formal and informal sector combined live on less than

$2/day. This illustrates the susceptibility of people, employed and unemployed to poverty. In applying the CA to the Chilean Labour market, Sehnbruch (2004: 57) notes:

> Once the population of a developing country is fed, healthy and literate, employment should form the central and most important focus of its development strategy as the conditions associated with employment determine the capabilities and well-being of individuals more than any other variable.

These basic conditions have not been met in the Zimbabwean context and need to be addressed before the capability for work as Bonvin describes it, can be considered. Similarly, while noting that universities have a mission to increase opportunities, cultivate creative understanding and contribute to society, Gutmann (2015: 9) acknowledges that although the economic benefits of a university education do not supersede other benefits:

> gainful employment itself is likely to be the most basic *economic* advantage of a college degree because the benefits of creative understanding are far harder to enjoy without basic economic security.

Hence, Trust and Kudzi (Psychology students- Baobab University) stated: *"You cannot survive with an empty stomach. Even if you've got the passion and all of the motivation it will be lost"* and, *"you have got to eat"*.

Given the challenges in finding gainful employment, the problem of adaptive preference is evident from the findings. Bridges (2006) identified four possible reasons for adaptive preferences: limitations arising from socio-economic distribution of opportunity and political prohibition, lack of knowledge, societal expectations, and the individual's own perception and self-construction. My findings point to the first as the dominating influence. The idea of *"making do"* (Jones, 2010) with what is available comes out strongly, especially among the academics, attesting to the scarcity of jobs in Zimbabwe. While the students also indicated that employment was a problem, some of them, especially from Msasa University were generally more positive about their chances of employment after graduation. This was possibly because the students included foreign citizens whose chances of employment in their home countries were high. For example, Noku (NR student- Msasa University) from Uganda indicated that *"I know I stand a very good chance of getting a good job if I go back home after my degree"*. However, in most instances, discussions around work were centred on students securing

employment and not necessarily the quality of that employment. Thus Bridges (2006: 21) notes:

> people come to adjust their aspirations, preferences and choices to the circumstances in which they find themselves, to the realistic possibilities which are open to them, to learned expectations about what their role and place is in society and what they may expect from life. Such a match and the attendant resignation risks locking people into deprivation and subjugation.

Exhibiting a level of resignation, Kudzi, (Psychology student- Baobab University) stated:

> *We can always come back to our dreams later on. This is what we are forced to do right now, suspend our dreams and pursue survival or try and juggle both.*

Although some of the students exhibited signs of adaptive preference, for example, Trust's opinion that, "*considering the current situation in Zimbabwe, I can be in any department doing anything*", there are instances where "the individual is aware of as external constraints and which remain a focus of discontent [but] are not internalised" (Bridges, 2006: 22). In such cases there is no adaptive preference because "the individual has not made the adaptation" (Ibid). This is exemplified by Sean, (NR student- Msasa University) who stated, *"I think getting a job is more about opportunities, does the opportunity you want presents itself? You should be able to look for opportunities, they are there"*. While challenges in finding work and the quality of work are likely to impact on the graduates' immediate wellbeing, according to the HDR (2015) young people who are unemployed for extended periods will suffer financially and lose their skills thus reducing their future work potential and generating a loss of self-esteem which impacts on their and their families' wellbeing.

Given Zimbabwe's context where basic capabilities are absent for many people, the emphasis on the economic and private value of HE is not surprising. However, while HE should yield economic returns, this does not mean that it should be commodified, ignoring its intrinsic value. Employment should not only be understood in terms of economic returns. Making a similar argument, Tomlinson (2010: 76) notes that employment should not narrowly confine the graduate to "their skills, knowledge and credentials" in relation to the labour market while disregarding their agency and context. Attention is usually focused on graduate unemployment, emphasising the mismatch between graduate skills and market requirements whilst neglecting

an examination of the market conditions (Arora, 2015). An assessment of available resources and an individual's ability to convert those resources into functionings necessitates an examination of the existing conversion factors. As Bonvin and Farvaque (2006: 11) highlight, "cash benefits are necessary to open up capability-friendly avenues, but agency may still be impeded if individual, social and environmental social factors are not duly taken into account". Arguing for a holistic perspective of work, the capability for work illustrates that "employability without employment does not make sense" and one should consider process and opportunity freedoms as factors shaping individuals choices (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 7).

Because of the importance of process and opportunity freedoms in realising critical being and the capability for work, the discussion now turns to how the Zimbabwean environment impacts on the realisation of the capabilities.

8.2.4 Critical being and the capability for work in a developing country context

As highlighted by Barnett (1997) and Bonvin (2012), my two ideal-aspirational indicators are freedom based. That is, freedom in the form of democratic spaces for public deliberation and participation as well as freedom to choose valued jobs enabling students to exercise their agency and achieve wellbeing. These freedoms are best understood through Sen's (1999) instrumental freedoms. Sen's five instrumental freedoms comprise political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security in understanding how resources are converted to functionings. Political freedoms include freedom of expression and all political entitlements associated with democracies. Economic facilities refer to the opportunities available for people to utilise economic resources. A country's wealth is reflected in the corresponding improvement of people's entitlements. Social opportunities refer to society's ability to employ social services such as education and health for the development of the population and society. Transparency guarantees represent the need for openness especially in promoting financial responsibility and preventing corruption. The last freedom relates to availing social security to vulnerable members and preventing them being reduced to poverty. Because the two capabilities do not automatically develop, Sen's instrumental freedoms provide contextual, intersecting conversion factors that may be used in

exploring the opportunities that graduates have to pursue valued beings and doings after HE. Given the Zimbabwean context explained in chapter one, there is limited freedom to achieve wellbeing through the realisation of critical being and the capability for work. However, I still believe that Barnett's (1997)critical being and Bonvin's (2012) capability for work provide a good measure of quality in an ideal situation (democratic and welfarist state) and in developing countries, these are ideals to strive for, thus aspirational capabilities.

While I emphasise the importance of critical being, there needs to be prerequisite resources in place to provide a basic platform, as well as a conducive environment for democratic deliberation. At institutional level, conditions determining the quality of teaching include personal preference (motivation), technique/skill and conditions allowing "rational discussion" (McLean, 2006: 42). From the two case studies, there is limited motivation as lecturers face challenges such as late payment of salaries, heavy workloads and limited opportunities for personal development. While academics are generally not averse to "rational discussion" as illustrated by the case studies, universities work within the confines of the socio-political environment as shown in figure 8.1. Their autonomy to determine what constitutes "valuable" knowledge is therefore severely circumscribed.

Figure 8.1: Relationship between higher education and society
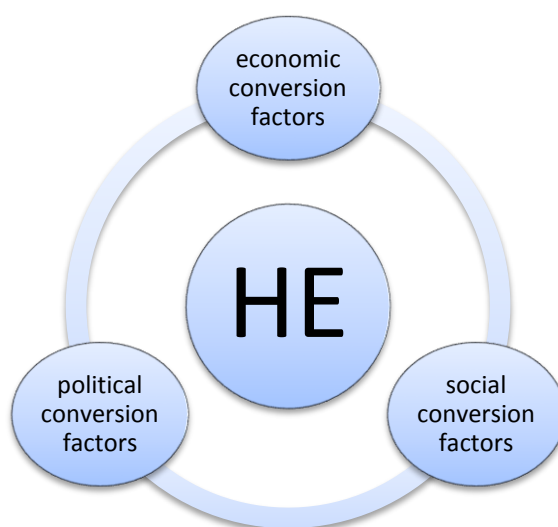
Helpfully, Marovah (2016) analyses the constraining economic, social and political factors in the formation of democratic citizens in Zimbabwe. He points to the limited democratic space and freedom to nurture "patriotic, critical, responsible, ethical, moral and humane citizens" (2016: 1). Using Sen's (1999) instrumental freedoms, Marovah notes how the removal of "unfreedoms" may effectively advance critical democratic citizenship. Pointing to the lack of these central freedoms in Zimbabwe, Marovah argues for "a framework that supports agency and a multifaceted HD-oriented values system…[enabling graduates] to be active and critical, rather than passive" (p. 207). The combined effect of reductionist citizenship education, compulsory national youth programmes and ZIMCHE's technical-rational approach to HE produces a docile and dependent citizenry. The situation prevailing in Zimbabwe is not conducive to student agency as political activists. Understanding the external environment through Sen's instrumental freedoms, my thesis acknowledges the unfavourable context within which HEI's have to operate as illustrated in Figure 8.1 but proposes that encouraging critical thinking and an engaged and active citizenry is likely to foster human development. From the data, universities were to some extent, able to engender critical thinking among students, partially realising critical being as illustrated in Table 8.1. Despite Zimbabwe's political context constructing teaching as "technical-rational rather than practical and moral" (Ibid.), the study revealed glimpses of HEI's concerns with human development. Although emphasis on human capital is understandable in this context, human development notions of quality would begin to address both economic and socio-political developments without giving primacy to one over the other. I remain convinced that critical being is therefore crucial in conceptualising quality. In light of the above, I agree with Walker and Unterhalter (2007) that capabilities such as critical being are indispensable for both young and mature democracies but even more so for the former.

Being a "freedom-based notion" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 7), the capability for work relies on the availability of conversion factors that enable wellbeing. In Bonvin's idea of means to achieve, freedom to achieve and achievement (Fig. 3.1) one sees similarities with Sen's (1999) five instrumental freedoms. All five freedoms must be present in order for capabilities to be realised. In Zimbabwe, they are compromised; there is increasing political repression with no transparency guarantees and protective security, a shrinking formal economy with a growing informal sector characterised by "low and variable earnings, poor working conditions, inadequate voice and limited scope for collective action, fostering insecurity and dependence

…insufficient social protection and an absence of social dialogue" (HDR, 2015: 112), deteriorating social opportunities and a very limited welfare system. These conditions make the conversion of resources into capabilities and functionings difficult, if not impossible. Using Nussbaum's (2000) idea of "combined capabilities" which incorporates "internal capabilities" and "external conditions" Walker and Fongwa (2017: 263) point out that due to a favourable or constraining environment:

> students may develop (or not develop) internal powers or capabilities (knowledge, voice, and so on) but will be more or less constrained in further strengthening these capabilities and choosing and exercising the associated functionings depending on external conditions.

This points to a partial but constrained contextual possibility for capability formation and even more constraints on the realisation of actual functionings as is illustrated by the case studies. Consequently, graduates are unable to put the knowledge they have learnt into practice, select the kind of work they value or take the exit option. This acknowledges the effect of the socio-economic and political environment contextual and intersecting conversion factors within which HEI's operate as illustrated in Figure 8.1. In terms of Sen's (1999) instrumental freedoms, Zimbabwe provides a constrained environment where the socio-economic and political factors largely act as negative conversion factors which limit's HE's realisation of human development through, for example, the capability for work.

In discussing valuable HE quality outcomes, Walker and Fongwa (2017: 263) underline the need to "take(s) into account both education arrangements inside universities and external conditions which influence but do not wholly determine opportunities and outcomes for individuals and groups of students". This shows that, while the capability for work is not fully realised because of external conditions, universities are not powerless spectators in developing students' capabilities. Despite limited democratic spaces, as illustrated by Walker and McLean (2013) and Walker and Fongwa (2017) HEI's also have the potential to influence knowledge and practices within and outside the universities. By employing transformative pedagogies and allowing student participation in determining the quality of their education and in campus life, universities have the potential to foster capabilities beyond skills and knowledge, despite the restrictive external environment.

Although there are challenges in applying the capability for work as Bonvin conceptualises it, in a developing country with political and socio-economic challenges, this indicator provides a plurality of values and is central to understanding work. The inapplicability of this capability to Zimbabwe highlights the gaps in a reductionist approach to work, making it more essential to re-imagine how HE can best prepare young people for both the world of work and social good. Until the Zimbabwean crisis is resolved, decent opportunities will continue to shrink, a situation beyond the universities' control. Given the highly aspirational nature of this capability in a developing country context, it is only partially realised as there is no possibility of exit from work or freedom to choose what one values. Zimbabwe provides a non-ideal setting and represents several developing countries in similar situations. It is therefore important to assess the applicability of quality indicators to such contexts. Leibowitz (2012: xviii) makes a similar argument for "a view from the South" given that much work on higher educations' public good role is from a global North perspective which "provides a distorted vision of what higher education for the public good might entail" as it neglects contextual variations. Similarly, the capability for work was developed and is mostly applied in the global North where conditions vary from those in the global South. Leibowitz (Ibid.) argues:

> Contributions from the South have a particular value – conditions are different and the particular experience of struggle against injustice and for equality and human flourishing takes on forms which may differ in terms of both content and intensity, from forms in the developed world.

An assessment of the capability for work from a Zimbabwean or developing country perspective illustrates that HE is mostly about economic opportunities.

In availing economic opportunities, there is emphasis on inculcating knowledge, skills and capabilities enabling graduates to participate in formal employment or create their own economic opportunities through entrepreneurship activities. In such a context, the capability for work is limited to the university's role in preparing graduates for the world of work without considering the external social-economic and political conversion factors. Consequently, institutions are not judged "according to whether or not they enable human beings – in all of their complexity and diversity- to flourish" (Alkire, 2002: 17). Rather than the capability for work relying on the "social and institutional environment and its ability to listen to the concerns voiced by the persons involved" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005: 16), in the Zimbabwean context it will focus on HEI's availing economic opportunities for graduates. This means that the

wellbeing perspective will be focused on the students' material wellbeing and agency limited to economic participation. Figure 8.2 illustrates the factors determining the capability for work as an outcome. As highlighted by the empirical findings, especially the case studies, valued outcomes in terms of T & L are largely determined by the lecturers and institutional arrangements. However, these institutional arrangements are also to some extent shaped by the national environment which acts as a conversion factor, negatively or positively influencing the initial formation of capabilities as well as the conversion of capabilities into functionings. An evaluation of the findings reveals that universities to some extent were able to avail economic opportunities to their students, equipping them with capacities to achieve material wellbeing albeit with limited agency.

Figure 8.2: Economic opportunities and the capability for work

T &L

Higher education
(economic
opportunities)

Social, economic
and
envoronmental
conversion factors

capability for work
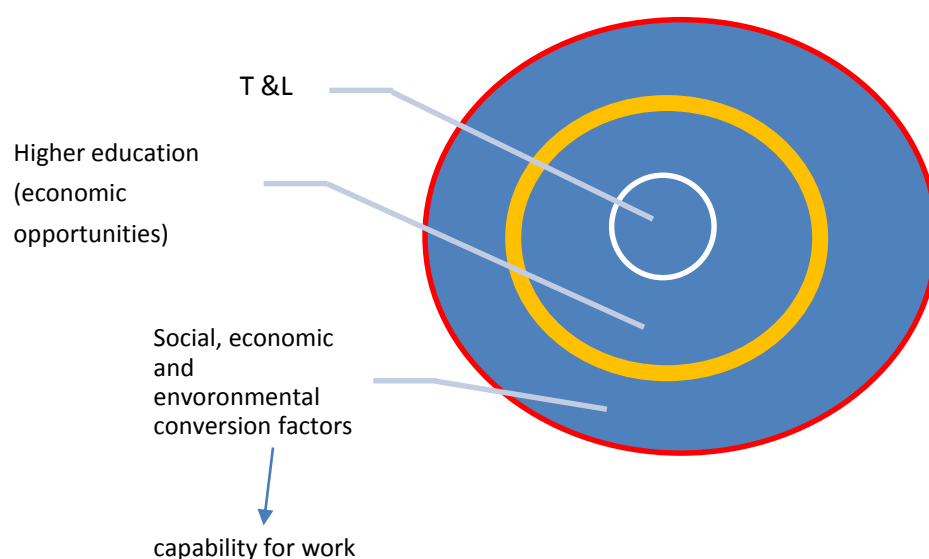
One could argue that the Natural Resources students from Msasa University have been availed economic opportunities partly as a result of quality being conceptualised as student transformation operationalised through "*learning by doing*". Because of the emphasis placed on "*learning by doing*", it can be argued that the students have the requisite knowledge and know their role as graduates (economically and socially) but given the external conversion factors, they may struggle to find work. Similarly, Baobab University offers a compulsory course on Entrepreneurship which, despite its limitations, indicates an awareness of the

constraining social conversion factors and the university's subsequent efforts to expand the possible economic opportunities for students. In this case, the capability for work is partly realised because the university has to a great extent fulfilled its role in preparing the graduates for the world of work.

Given that universities cannot control the external environment, employability may be the realisable goal as HEI's can ensure that graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to better position them for jobs. It is difficult for universities to prepare students for decent jobs and exit options in constrained environments such as Zimbabwe. Although Zimbabwean universities may sufficiently equip students for work, the country's shrinking formal economy and company closures still results in graduate unemployment. Therefore, while, for example, the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Jonathan Moyo argues that high graduate unemployment is a result of a lack of "requisite skills needed by industry and commerce" (Local News Bulawayo Bureau, August 5, 2016) there is need to examine this in relation to the prevailing situation. Zimbabwe provides an example of the intersection of conversion factors such as students' circumstances, conditions in the universities and those in the labour market. In this case, most of these conversion factors negatively impact on students' conversion of capabilities into functionings. However from the study, there is evidence that universities are trying to facilitate this conversion, for example, through WRL and entrepreneurship studies. Therefore, emphasising what universities can do in availing economic opportunities would "in the case of the troubled economic environment, [avoid a] dominant discourse [that] represents the higher education as a weak link in the chain" (Arora, 2015: 645) of graduate employment. The limited instrumental freedoms make the full realisation of diverse capabilities difficult. Focusing on the role of HE in developing country contexts enables an examination of the capabilities and functionings fostered through HE and possible areas of improvement. Although Sen's instrumental freedoms still hold in cases where there is a reasonably well-functioning democracy, Zimbabwe does not fit this profile. Were the prevailing conditions different, there might be room to develop reflexivity, critical being and the capability for work among graduates. However, given the limited environment, these capabilities are partially developed as critical thinking and the availing of economic opportunities. Nonetheless, critical being and the capability for work continue being ideal-aspirational capabilities for HE.

Although the study focused on the two indicators above, the participants also had other capabilities they valued.

8.2.5 Valued capabilities and functionings

While ZIMCHE's specified output was employable graduates, the university representatives and lecturers pointed to other attributes that they considered important. These were both for human capital "*entrepreneurship, expert or technologist, knowledge application, versatility in meeting needs and expectations, someone who is hands on, time management, communication skills, writing skills, willingness to learn, ability to research, works efficiently, commitment, team work*" and human development formation "*confidence, participation, lifelong learning, ethical, leadership qualities, critical thinker and different outlook*". The most common among these were those soft skills enhancing graduate employability more aligned to human capital development. While it was possible to ascertain whether some of these, for example, "*time management, communication skills, and team-work*" were realised, for others such as "*expert or technologist, versatility in meeting needs and expectations*" it was not possible because the students were still to finish their studies.

Some of the students' valued functionings were similar to those cited by the deans and lecturers. "*Knowledge application*" was the most common functioning, cited by two Baobab University and five Msasa University students. Three Msasa University students mentioned "*confidence and participation*" and one Baobab University student indicated "*confidence*". The levels of confidence varied; Chipo (Psychology student- Baobab University) explained that her confidence came from realising that she can help people using her knowledge of Psychology. Noku (NR student- Msasa University) expressed that her confidence stems from her classroom experience and through exercising her agency by joining the choir and running for the student representative. Unlike Melissa, Noku's confidence goes beyond her discipline specific knowledge to "*standing up for what I believe in*" as she did when she was a student representative. Confidence and participation are some of the capabilities engendered by meta-indicators such as critical being. Despite critical being not being fully realised in the universities, Noku's explanation of confidence as a multi-level functioning illustrates some depth of transformation, beyond knowledge application.

Another functioning was *"teamwork"* cited by one Baobab University and two Msasa University students. The students indicated that because they are constantly doing group-work they have to work together and have thus developed the ability to cooperate, and contribute to the group effort. Two Baobab University students noted *"problem-solving skills"*. The other functionings mentioned by students were *"time management, good grades, leadership abilities, communication skills,* and *ability to research"*. This indicates that some of the capabilities valued by lecturers are considered relevant for their personal and professional life by the students. Other students spoke about the value of the overall university experience. Two Baobab University students cited *"resilience"* as a functioning. Albert explained:

> *We have faced a difficult and challenging situation… You may have last had a meal at breakfast and you get home in the evening and there is no electricity and you don't have money. You just have to keep going, it makes you grow and be more responsible in what you do.*

Additional functionings included *"independence"* by being away from home, *"tolerance"* as a result of sharing a living space, *"respect, supporting each other"* and *"ability to relax",* not being a workaholic.

As did the academics, the range of functionings reported by students reflect both human capital and human development tendencies. This demonstrates the difficulty in classifying either case study university as completely focusing on human capital production and illustrates the two approaches as a continuum rather than extremes. Parallels in some of the capabilities valued by both academics and students indicate, to some extent, similarities in understanding quality and demonstrate the effectiveness of T & L in fostering these capabilities. While these valued functionings are important and contribute to quality as human development, I believe that for my study, critical being and the capability for economic opportunities are the primary meta-capabilities illustrating the transformative nature of HE in the direction of sustainable lives and societies.

8.3 Conclusion

This study has offered a glimpse into the complex interactions of factors, such as context, socio-political and economic to inform and affect policy. It illustrates the limitations of a top-down

approach in conceptualising quality and highlights the need for more people centred bottom-up approaches based on what people value. Quality in terms of well-being should be "assessed with an enlarged 'informational basis' not reduced to monetary assets or commodities, nor subjective utility or satisfaction" (Bonvin, 2012: 10-11). While human development provides a comprehensive way of assessing quality, in instances of economic and political instability the "enlarged informational basis" may prove difficult to include or to respond to. In the light of Sen's five instrumental freedoms I believe that HE should equip graduates to be active members of society. In this context, quality would be understood as valued student learning outcomes and the resultant opportunities available to them. However, given a constraining environment, I reassess quality to include a plurality of valued student learning outcomes and positioning HE as a transformative experience. Although it is difficult to include everyone's views when deciding what constitutes quality, attempts should be made to make it as inclusive as possible through a participative process, thereby reducing the prescriptive nature of QA systems and the adoption of "best cases" from elsewhere. Thus, education would be contextually relevant and graduates better equipped to address the needs of society.

In illustrating the importance of context in shaping perceptions of quality, the study demonstrates the limitations of a narrow human capital informed conceptualisation of quality. This highlights potential areas where a human development perspective can contribute to thinking about quality and the role of universities. Despite challenges in applying critical being and the capability for work as indicators, my study shows the need to go beyond HE's utilitarian value and reposition universities as social institutions with an ethical obligation to society. Human development is thus an aspirational goal to strive towards, even in difficult times.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.0 Introduction

This thesis has examined the conceptualisation and operationalization of quality in Zimbabwean HE through the perspectives of selected stakeholders, namely, ZIMCHE officials, university representatives, deans, lecturers and students. The QA system was found to be influenced mostly by the human capital approach, conceptualising quality as an evaluative and quantitative system rather than a process of QE. Through the use of the two theoretical indicators; critical being and the capability for work, the thesis illustrated ways of alternatively conceptualising quality as human development. This chapter gives an overview of the thesis conceptualisation, findings and conclusion.

The chapter comprises six sections. The first section summarises the study findings, highlighting major points. Because the study is guided by the research questions, an overview of each of the four questions is provided in the second section. Section three highlights the argument of the thesis and its contribution to knowledge while the fourth section discusses the study limitations and areas of further research. This is followed in section five by recommendations based on the study findings and the conclusion in section six.

9.1 Summary of findings

Conceptions of quality in HE are context specific and stakeholder dependent. This ascribes quality with a plurality of values which although important, is largely ignored. My research buttresses findings that there is often a disjuncture between quality as policy and quality as practice. While at a macro level, quality has a unitary measure with a human capital emphasis, at the meso and micro levels this broadens to incorporate other facets, albeit retaining the emphasis on human capital. At macro level, perceptions of quality are mostly influenced by international and national concerns which although found at micro level, are tempered by considerations of specific institutional contexts. Policy is not implemented in a vacuum as the

context determines the nature of what constitutes quality. The thesis found that academics who operationalise quality are more inclined to conceptualise quality as T & L through which students acquire a mixture of graduate skills and normative values such as social responsibility. It also found that a top-down approach to quality results in HEI's compliance and academic performativity to fulfil expected duties in addition to their own interpretations of quality T & L. At macro level the students are largely relegated to being recipients of an education whose quality is pre-determined by those with the most authority. However, at micro-level there are attempts to foster student participation in determining the quality of the learning they receive. The thesis innovatively considers student perspectives on T & L and integrates them with the voices of policy makers and lecturers in a developing country context.

Similar to the work of critical theorists such as Apple (2004) and McLean (2006), the thesis concludes that education is not value-free. The Zimbabwean case provides an apt illustration of quality as a political tool. Through ZIMCHE, the government emphasises resources and standardisation, a technicist approach to quality which narrowly confines HE to skills based training, neglecting the wider role of universities as social institutions promoting the public good. While T & L seems rather apolitical, foregrounding discipline specific knowledge, it becomes a political project aimed at producing a technical and patriotic graduate. Equating critical being with political opposition restricts universities, most of which are public institutions dependent on State subsidies, to confining criticality to the domain of knowledge. Despite the universities acknowledgement of the importance of critical thinking as a central component of HE, criticality has been co-opted and narrowly confined to discipline knowledge as part of HEI's conformity with the human capital orientation of government, in addition to its political boundaries. This restricts students from getting a fully transformational learning experience.

The Zimbabwean case study also highlights the importance of basic necessities such as food, a stable economy, access to social services and jobs before one can fully realise the potential of HE regarding the capability for work. The capability for work is a multi-level capability dependent on conditions such as social welfare and job availability which although non-existent in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, are to be aspired for. Using human development informed indicators in evaluating the quality of T & L in HE in Zimbabwe, a

developing country bedevilled by problems provides an illustration of how things are, in contrast to how they ought to be. This highlights possible improvements and outcomes from an expanded perspective of HE including knowledge creation, dissemination, employment opportunities as well as normative values which transform how graduates think and act in the world.

9.2 Reflections on research questions

Research Question 1: How do conceptualisations of quality in teaching and learning influence policy and practice in universities?

This research question was answered in chapters two and three, which provided an overview of international discourse on quality and how the predominant human capital approach conceptualises quality as a technical and management practice. Chapter three particularly explained how a human development perspective can inform an understanding of quality and possible indicators, dependent on valued outcomes. The three empirical chapters, five, six and seven illustrated the factors influencing Zimbabwe's conceptualisation and operationalization of quality from policy to university level. Exhibiting a predominantly human capital approach, the two case studies revealed a mixture of internal and external factors in conceptualising quality.

Dominated by human capital influences, international considerations of quality predominantly focus on inputs and outputs as easily measurable indicators of quality. These quantifiable values have largely been adopted by nascent QA agencies in developing countries including Zimbabwe. At policy level, conceptions of quality in Zimbabwe are broadly defined in terms of resources, standardisation, benchmarking with the outcome being employable graduates. HE is considered to be instrumental in knowledge acquisition and creating graduates with the capacity to pursue economic development for individual and national advancement. Reflecting international and regional influences, this focus on effectiveness and efficiency does not include an examination of T & L. Although ZIMCHE may consider T & L to be an important component of quality, it is meant to ensure that students learn the MBK. The specificities of the learning process are left up to the individual HEI's discretion.

Although all the university representatives claimed T & L to be an integral element of quality, it was also not explicitly included in the institutions conceptualisations which tended to emphasise definitions such as fitness for purpose and stakeholder satisfaction. Because most universities have no specific T & L policy or as one case study illustrated, lecturers are unaware of it; quality is determined by individual faculties, departments or lecturers; making it fragmented. The lack of a unitary national and institutional T & L policy to guide practice means that valued outcomes may differ and students may not always get the best learning experience. Despite the lack of emphasis on T & L at national and institutional policy levels, the lecturers and students value it as an integral component of quality. Most lecturers conceptualise quality T & L as student understanding and consequently claim to have high levels of student engagement during learning. Some students also expressed that their best learning experiences were with lecturers who ensured their understanding of the subject. The differences in emphasis on T & L between the macro and micro levels indicate the need for a participatory process in the formulation of a T & L policy at national and institutional level. The inclusion of all stakeholders, including students, would contribute to an inclusive policy that would enable the realisation of valued outcomes.

Research Question 2

How does the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) conceptualise and enforce teaching quality in various universities and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?

This question was answered in chapter five. The ZIMCHE representatives emphasised students learning the MBK without "*tell*[ing] *the universities how to teach*". From ZIMCHE instruments such as the Criteria for programme accreditation for conventional institutions (ACCR 2A), the T & L strategy ought to be "appropriate to the institutional type and mission, modes of delivery (contact/distance/e-learning), and its student composition; (age, full-time, part-time, advantaged/disadvantaged)" (p. 6). The "appropriate" T & L strategy is therefore an institutional interpretation.

Informed by considerations which result in policy leaning towards human capital, ZIMCHE's perspective of quality is a resource based compliance approach emphasising standardisation

and benchmarking. HEI's have to meet set standards in resources such as infrastructure, ICT as well as adequate and qualified personnel and adhere to benchmarks relating to the MBK. Illustrating a technical rational approach, quality is equated with formal procedures and measurable inputs and outputs. Through institutional and programme accreditation, ZIMCHE claims to ensure that HEI's meet the minimum standards, failure of which, results in suspension of sub-standard programmes or institutions. As the national QAA, ZIMCHE expects all HEI's to establish institutional QA offices to oversee internal quality and ensure accountability. However, only four of the 15 universities have independent QA units and the remaining 11 operate through various committees from department to Senate level. Notwithstanding the limitations of ZIMCHE's understanding of quality, the absence of independent institutional QA units at most universities restricts the smooth translation of policy into practice. Although most university representatives cited the expenses associated with the establishment of these units as a prohibitive factor, the findings highlighted the need for a shared institutional conceptualisation of quality. This is especially the case given that the 15 universities have different mandates and institutional values.

ZIMCHE's focus on inputs and HE's instrumental value in human capital creation situates quality as an evaluative tool rather than a process. Evaluation emphasises accountability and efficiency which the thesis found provokes animosity among academics because of its perceived bureaucracy and managerialism. A human development perspective posits quality as a process which has as its valued end, people's wellbeing. Rather than inputs being synonymous with quality, the human development approach evaluates whether these are used to achieve valued ends, making inputs a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Quality would therefore be a continuous process of enhancement of systems and practices informed by multiple perspectives of valued ends rather than a top-down approach. Additionally, a focus on human capital precludes an examination of power relations implicit in the idea of quality and the university's social role which human development interrogates. Understanding quality as human development would mean recreating T & L from a technical exercise to a moral and ethical project which educates students for the greater good, beyond economic individual and national gain.

Research Question 3: How do the individual universities and the two case studies understand and operationalise teaching quality and how does this view of quality enhance or inhibit quality from a human development perspective?

This question was answered in chapters five, six and seven. At university level, perceptions of quality are mostly influenced by the human capital approach, with the intended outcome being employable graduates. To this end, all 10 universities have implemented practices such as WRL meant to expose students to the world of work and enable HEI's to get feedback on student performance from employers. At meso level, the quality of T & L was with one exception limited to resource provision, lecturer qualifications and outcomes such as graduate employability. The exception, U-D claimed to have a constructive alignment between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment practices hence paying more attention to T & L.

Due to the lack of a coherent T & L policy, most lecturers implement their own personal interpretation of quality with teaching philosophies ranging from student centred approaches to liberalism. This fragmentation of notions of quality at micro level at times renders the institutional QA policies ineffective. However, as the case of Msasa University illustrates, there are attempts at faculty and department level to have a common understanding of quality shared by the deans, lecturers and to some extent the students. Despite the general exclusion of T & L in conceptualising quality at university policy level, it is a central component for the lecturers and students as illustrated by the two case studies. For the lecturers, T & L is the process through which students engage, understand and learn to apply their knowledge.

The case studies revealed variances in T & L due to discipline differences between the Social and Natural Sciences and because of lecturers teaching. Learning for Mathematics students is vertically structured unlike Psychology and Sociology. Although all students emphasised knowledge application as part of their learning, the NR and Mathematics lecturers were more vocal on the need for education relevance and application as part of quality T & L, more so at Msasa University. For the students, the lecturers' pedagogical practices such as competently explaining the subject and practical learning determined their enjoyment and understanding of the subject while for example, practices such as dictating notes, inability to teach and having part-time lecturers made learning unpleasant.

For all 10 universities, the major aim of university learning was to promote graduate employability. In most instances, this resulted in an emphasis on HE's instrumental role at the expense of broader human development. Although at some institutions, human development

values such as Ubuntu and sensitivity to diversity were said to be encouraged. The private universities being church-run, seemingly promoted human development values in line with church doctrines more than the public institutions. Using the example of critical being, HE seems to focus on critical thinking as a skill in relation to knowledge rather than being a transformative process involving self-reflection and action. This illustrates the need to broaden the role of universities to include social as well as economic development, especially in Zimbabwe's case with its socio-political challenges.

Research Question 4

How can human development contribute to conceptualising and operationalising quality in teaching and learning in higher education?

This research question was answered in the three empirical chapters. The emphasis on human development does not mean that human capital is not important. Although economic development and HE's instrumental value are vital, these should not be the sole focus of university learning. The university's multi-purpose role should be emphasised with its social good role being awarded equal emphasis. Whereas a human capital conception of quality is concerned with effectiveness and efficiency, human development foregrounds wellbeing and human flourishing. Conceptualising quality in the latter terms would increase the informational basis used, beyond HE's utility value to include normative values such as critical being, a broad understanding of citizenship, and ethics. While human development is important in all contexts, it is more so in developing countries such as Zimbabwe facing economic and socio-political challenges. Graduates with an appreciation of values such as wellbeing and social justice are better equipped to address these problems and create spaces for participation and discussions on alternative futures.

Because human development is about expanding the range of people's capabilities and functionings, quality T & L should therefore be part of the process of removing obstacles such as lack of political and economic freedom as well as equipping graduates with not just skills and knowledge but also "cultivating humanity" (Nussbaum, 1998). An emphasis on graduates' human capital, at the expense of a wider range of capabilities, limits their freedom to be democratic citizens who can participate in society and bring about change to achieve wellbeing

and social justice. Quality HE ought to enhance graduates' personal and professional capabilities in order to capacitate them to advance theirs and other people's capabilities through employment and citizenship. An important measure of quality would therefore be concerned with how T & L equips students to use their skills and knowledge to promote wellbeing in its various forms. Unlike what is emphasised at policy level, T & L goes beyond resources, standardisation and benchmarking. In practice it is also about critical being, student engagement, understanding and knowledge application. This complexity needs to be reflected in policy rather than a reliance on a unitary measure of quality.

9.3 Argument of the thesis and contribution to knowledge

This thesis assesses quality in T & L from a human development perspective as an alternative imaginary to the dominant conceptualisation based on the human capital approach which foregrounds the role of HE in economic development. My main argument is that HE is for the public good and in a developing country with limited HE access and social and economic inequalities, it should foster both economic and human development. Because HEI's are social institutions, they should be relevant and contribute to the needs of society. Education is not value free and should therefore be ascribed a normative value, answering the questions: what kind of education do we want and what kind of human beings and society do we want? Human development is important because it includes critical aspects of wellbeing such as voice, participation and the freedom to choose what one values beyond economic development. This locates HE and universities as social institutions providing more than just technical training, with accountability to broader society.

The study focuses specifically on the quality of T & L, an aspect generally neglected because of the difficulty in measurement in any fine-grained way beyond input resources and graduate output numbers and employment. Yet, T & L is central to conceptualising quality. It is the process through which students learn both discipline specific knowledge, but crucially also, can develop capabilities such as critical thinking, participation, agency and critical action. They learn what to be and how to be (Barnet, 1997). While some students begin learning these values before enrolment at university, HE should create a space where they are expanded. Although HE has to prepare graduates for the current realities, it should also transform that reality rather than conform to it.

I identified two indicators as the basis of my analysis in order to focus on how quality is understood and practised in T & L. These are critical being (Barnet, 1997) and the capability for work (Bonvin, 2012), both chosen because they are capability generators that enhance wellbeing. Critical being involves critical thinking, critical self-reflection and critical action. It is not a form of individual action or mental state but has to be situated in relation to the self and the greater society thus promoting capabilities such as agency, voice and participation. These are values critical for social justice, wellbeing and a democratic society. Foregrounding freedoms, the capability for work is the 'real' freedom to choose the job or activity a person has reason to value. This means that work is important both instrumentally and intrinsically, with individuals choosing valued ends. Bonvin identifies three major influences in the capability for work; resources, personal conversion factors and social conversion factors which contribute to understanding the concept of "work". The capability for work emphasises the aspect of freedom which is also critical for wellbeing and human development. On the basis of these indicators, T & L means using student centred pedagogies and the participation of both academics and students to create an enabling environment to expand learners' capabilities. Incorporating these two indicators in quality frameworks would evaluate how students develop capabilities such as voice and participation to enable them to participate in broader economic and socio-political development.

While Zimbabwe is the case study, it has similarities with some developing countries experiencing socio-political and economic challenges such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan. The thesis examined the potential of human development to improve the learning processes and broaden the role of HEI's in contributing to national development in such countries. HE in Zimbabwe faces the challenge of producing graduates with capabilities to create opportunities for themselves both locally and abroad as well as inculcate democratic values and the ability to think critically so as to contribute to social justice, wellbeing and democratic citizenship. This is especially important in developing countries which are still developing their QA systems. Such a study provides alternative ways of conceptualising quality. This study also illuminates potential pitfalls of focusing on access to university without a concomitant commitment to improving quality. Given the current HE challenges being experienced in South Africa with the various #Mustfall movements, an in-depth assessment of issues relating to quality, access and the universities role in national development beyond an economic imperative is important in any context. As illustrated by the

South African context HEI's are not "ivory towers" divorced from their social context, and therefore must take a normative stance for the role of HE in development.

This thesis is innovative, significant and original in a number of ways. It operationalises the CA and attempts to identify two ideal-theoretical indicators which, at the end prove to be ideal-aspirational and provide something towards which universities can work while at the same time, recognising the limited conditions under which they are operating. However, that is not to say that universities cannot do anything to improve the quality of graduates. As far as I know, apart from Boni and Gasper's (2012) theoretical framework linking quality teaching to human development values such as wellbeing, participation and empowerment, equity and diversity and sustainability, there is no other study theoretical or empirical, examining quality in universities and T & L using such indicators, especially in a Zimbabwean context which is under-researched. Apart from the official perspective, little is known about quality and HE in Zimbabwe, or empirically researched ideas on T & L. This thesis begins to open up an examination of T & L in HE and provides an alternative innovative and imaginative way of thinking which provides some ideas on possible realistic changes and points to areas that universities can improve upon, even within the constrained environment they operate in. By examining how the broader socio-economic and political environment impacts on the quality of T & L, the thesis highlights the convergence of the various conversion factors in determining quality, thus deviating from the current emphasis on graduate employability being a result of students' lack of requisite skills. This illustrates the synergy involved in influencing the HE outcome and highlights other hitherto overlooked areas that impact on quality and the adaptive preference therein.

9.4 Study Limitations and potential research

Although the study provides a new lens to examine quality of T & L in Zimbabwean HE, it cannot make claims about quality in Zimbabwean HEI's in general, given that it is a qualitative study with an in-depth analysis of two out of 15 universities. From each of the two case study universities only 15 participants were interviewed, therefore my findings cannot be generalizable to the whole university. While more interviews with policymakers, students and possibly employers might have provided deeper insights into issues of quality in T & L, the challenges of access to universities and participants were restrictive. Conducting empirical HE research in a country such as Zimbabwe is difficult. As reported in chapter four, the process of

getting access, permission and participants is challenging and time consuming, especially given the limited time for PhD research.

Although economic opportunities can pragmatically and easily be narrowly measured by graduate tracer studies within the first two years after students graduate to assess employment levels, there is a need to go beyond that. Departing from a reliance on easily measurable human capital informed quantitative inputs and outputs, the study provides an alternative framework, the measurement of which can be developed over time through further research. By highlighting the importance of pedagogical processes and teaching assessment practices which enable an evaluation of the extent to which critical thinking and social responsibility are inculcated, this research offers a starting point for qualitatively investigating quality in HE. For instance, there is growing research on the measurement of critical thinking, exemplified by Schendel's (2013) assessment of critical thinking in Rwandan universities using the Collegiate Learning Assessment. A similar study in Zimbabwe or an evaluation of students' assignments and tests could provide an assessment of critical thinking practices and suggest possible alternatives. Another potential area of research arising from the study is an examination of how disciplines such as the Social Sciences and Natural Sciences understand and operationalise critical thinking. While the thesis highlighted potential differences, an in-depth study building on the work of McLean, Abbas and Ashwin (2011) would be informative. Overall, the thesis feeds into the development of QA and QE policies and practices in Zimbabwe and beyond. By highlighting the importance of context, the need to include varied stakeholder perspectives and the need for a qualitative assessment in understanding quality, this research underscores the importance of QE rather than QA practices in improving T & L. It also provides a practical example of how this can be done.

9.5 Recommendations

Given its multi-faceted nature and stakeholder dependency, conceptualising quality should be a process incorporating the voices of different stakeholders. As much as possible, the process should include public deliberation enabling a wide range of perspectives although not all ideas may ultimately be incorporated.

Rather than limiting quality to a technical practice informed by human capital concerns, it should broadly be concerned with human development. This means recasting the university in a social role beyond being technical training. While this may be difficult in countries such as Zimbabwe with high government involvement in HE, it can be achieved if the political will to foster human development exists. This will also give universities the democratic space to nurture socially responsible graduates beyond individual concerns with economic development.

In conceptualising quality, T & L should be foregrounded because it is the process through which students learn to know and to become. Given the centrality of T & L, lecturers are critical to notions of quality, making their ongoing professional development important. Lecturer training has to be a continuous process involving practical methods of teaching which incorporate ideas on student learning and effective evaluation methods. For lecturers to be more engaged, there is need for them to be motivated in various ways including adequate remuneration and conducive working conditions. Rather than equating quality with resources, it is important that resources and conducive environments be used to expand possible activities that foster student engagement rather than being equated with quality. However, that is not to say that resources are unimportant in providing quality, there needs to be a certain minimum resources in place.

Rather than conceptualising quality as a technical and managerial endeavour, quality should rather be understood as a continuous process of improvement that promotes aspects of human development such as critical being, citizenship and the capability for work.

9.6 Conclusion

Unarguably, economic considerations have to be made when determining the quality of T & L, however, these should not be the only concern. Universities have to maintain a balance between their private and public good roles without foregrounding human capital alone. While there is a convincing argument for a technicist approach to quality, there is also a normative argument to be made for human development; that of wellbeing. If quality HE is meant for all, it cannot be accomplished by using a unitary yardstick. A one size fits all approach to quality does not adequately cater for all stakeholders needs, as people value different things. In a world dominated by the knowledge economy, HE and universities have become conformist rather

than critical, passing this idea onto students through their learning. While the human capital approach seeks technical solutions to problems and improved efficiency, it largely maintains the status quo and reproduces inequality while the human development approach seeks to remove inequalities and promote growth, especially of those previously marginalised. Quality cannot be achieved through standardisation and benchmarking alone. University students and HEI's themselves are not homogenous, which points to the need to collectively establish what is valued as quality and then ensuring that students learn to think, understand and apply their knowledge through the T & L process. It is during the learning process that students learn to be actors in the world and not just thinkers. Their actions should be a result of critical reflection in an attempt to promote wellbeing, not only for themselves but for others as well.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1: Universities in Zimbabwe

Appendix 2: Information letter and consent form

Appendix 3: ZIMCHE representative Interview Schedule

Appendix 4: University QA representatives Interview Schedule

Appendix 5: Lecturers' in- depth interview guide (BU and MU)

Appendix 6: Student focus group questions

Appendix 7: Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (19/01/11 Criteria for programme accreditation (conventional institutions) ACCR 2A

Appendix 8: BU Multi-purpose hall

Appendix 1: Table 1: Universities in Zimbabwe

University name	Year Established	Independent QA Office	2015 No. of Students	Public/ Private	Faculties
University of Zimbabwe (UZ)	1955	Yes	13 000	Public	Agriculture, Arts, Commerce, Law, Engineering, Education, Science, Social Studies, Veterinary Sciences and Health Sciences
National University of Science and Technology (NUST)	1991	No	4 000 – 4 999	Public	Applied Sciences, Commerce, Communication and Information Science, Built Environment, Medicine and Industrial Technology.
Africa University (AU)	1992	No	1 000 – 1 999	Private- church based (United Methodist)	Agriculture and Natural Resources, Health Sciences, Theology, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Management and Administration and Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance.
Solusi university (SU)	1994	Yes	4 518	Private-church based. (Seventh Day Adventist)	Business, Arts, Science and Technology, Education and Theology.
Bindura University of Science and Education (BUSE)	1996	No	1 000 -1 999	Public	Agriculture and Environmental Science, Science, Science Education and Commerce.
Catholic University (CU)	1999	No	1 000	Private- church based (Roman Catholic)	Business Management and Information Technology and Humanities.
Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)	1999	Yes	14 000	Public- Distance education	Science and Technology, Applied Social Science, Arts and Education and Commerce and Law.
Midlands State University (MSU)	2000	No	18 000	Public	Social Science, Natural Resources Management and Agriculture, Commerce, Arts, Education, Law and Science and Technology.

Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)	2001	Yes	3 000 - 3 999	Public	Engineering Science and Technology, Agricultural Science and Technology, Business Science and Management and Hospitality and Tourism.
Women's University in Africa (WUA)	2002	No	3 000 – 3 999	Private	Agriculture, Management and Entrepreneurial Development Studies and Social Sciences and Gender Development Studies.
Great Zimbabwe University (GZU)	2002	No	13 400	Public	Arts, Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Culture and Heritage Studies, Education, Commerce, Law and Social Sciences.
Harare Institute of Technology (HIT)	2005	No	2 000 - 2099	Public	Technology centre, Technology Education centre and Technopreneurial development centre.
Lupane State University (LSU)	2005	No	2 929	Public	Agriculture, Commerce and Humanities and Social Sciences.
Reformed Church University (RCU)	2010	No	330	Private church-based (Reformed Church in Zimbabwe)	Education, Commerce and Theology and Religious Studies.
Zimbabwe Ezeliel Guti University (ZEGU)	2012	No	100	Private- church-run (Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa- (ZAOGA)	Arts, Education and Commerce

Appendix 2: Introduction and Informed consent

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

Room 114 Benito Khotseng Building

University of the Free State

Telephone: 0726716506

Email: pmukwambo@gmail.com

20 September 2014

INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant

I am a doctoral student at the Centre for Research in Higher Education and Development (CRHED) at the University of the Free State. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project entitled: **Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.**

The study will examine conceptualisations of quality, specifically of teaching in universities, and the perceptions of quality by diverse stakeholders in Zimbabwe, notably, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), university quality assurance representatives, lecturers and students. The study focuses on teaching and learning at undergraduate level as this stage provides a platform for job opportunities and future choices, it can also inform the kind of lives that people value, as well as contribute to human development. I believe that you will be able to provide valuable insights into the conceptualisation of quality and how it is understood and implemented in relation to teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.

Study procedures: Interviews will be conducted with ZIMCHE representatives involved in quality assurance, representatives from all universities, and finally, Deans, lecturers and students from two specific departments in two case study universities. Upon agreement, interviews will be conducted with all participants, while focus group discussions will be held with students. The questions to be asked relate to quality in teaching and learning and general perceptions on quality and universities' contributions to development. During the discussion, I will take notes as well as record the conversation so as capture your views accurately. The discussions will take between 30- 90 minutes.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for participating in this study, however the information that you provide might contribute towards an understanding of quality and quality enhancement and development internationally and in Zimbabwean universities.

Confidentiality: The information that I will obtain from you will be stored safely, although it will be shared with my supervisor and co-supervisor who are involved in this study. Excerpts from the interview may be included in the final dissertation and may also be published in journals. The interview will be conducted in a private place and your name will not be written down or recorded anywhere. Furthermore, the study does not require you to disclose or name any specific individuals and you do not have to discuss any personal information that you do not feel comfortable talking about.

Risks: There is no major anticipated risk that will be encountered by your participating in this study.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to conduct the interview. If you have any concerns with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact and discuss it with my supervisor, whose contact details are given below.

Please feel free to ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you.

Yours sincerely,

Patience Mukwambo

Supervisor: Professor M. Walker

Email: walkermj@ufs.ac.za

Telephone: (051) 401 7020

Study: Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

By signing below, I agree to the following statements:

1) I have read and understood the attached information sheet giving details of the project.
2) I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that I had about the project and my involvement in it, and I understand my role in the project.
3) My decision to consent is entirely voluntary, and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
4) I understand that data gathered in this project may form the basis of a report or other form of publication or presentation.
5) I have given the researcher permission to audio record the interview.
6) I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's name _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please fill in and return this page. Keep the letter above for future reference.

Please only sign this form if you agree to participate in the study.

Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee member

Study: Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

- Introduction and explanation of the study
- Obtain consent

(Questions may not necessarily follow the order in which they appear but will be guided by the discussion).

Theme	Guiding questions
Understanding of quality	- How does ZIMCHE understand quality in higher education? - What entails quality in teaching and learning? - How did ZIMCHE conceptualise this notion of quality? - Where any stakeholders (employers, academics, students) involved in this conceptualisation? - Is ZIMCHE a registered member of any regional and or international organisation? - If yes, why?
Implementation of quality	- How does ZIMCHE determine 'excellent' or 'acceptable' standards? - How does ZIMCHE assist universities achieve and maintain standards? - How does ZIMCHE ensure that universities understand the conceptualisation of quality? - What role does the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee play in improving quality? - How does the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee assist or work with the Directorates of Registration and Accreditation and Academic and institutional audit to improve quality?
Teaching and learning	- How is quality assurance used to improve teaching and learning? - What guidelines does ZIMCHE provide in T & L to universities? - Does this directorate get any feed-back from institutions regarding quality assurance polices? - Are there differences in the role played by the Quality assurance committee in private and public universities?

Intrinsic and extrinsic development	• (Explain about critical being) Does the QA policy encourage this kind of learning? If yes, how? • What knowledge, skills and values does ZIMCHE consider to be important attributes for university education? • Is critical thinking considered an important part of university education? If yes, how do they encourage it? • What role do you think graduates should play in society?
	• Is there anything else you would like to say about quality in teaching and learning?

Appendix 4: University's Quality Assurance representative Interview guide (All universities)

Study: Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

- Introduction and explanation of the study
- Obtain consent

(Questions may not necessarily follow the order in which they appear but will be guided by the discussion).

Theme	Guiding questions
Understanding of quality	- How does the University of --------- understand quality in higher education? - Does the notion of quality feature in the university's mission and vision? - What entails quality in teaching and learning for this university? - How could quality teaching contribute to accomplishing this institutions mission? - Where any stakeholders (employers, students) involved in this conceptualisation? - Is the university's interpretation of quality in teaching and learning the same as ZIMCHE's?
Implementation of quality	- How does ZIMCHE ensure quality in teaching and learning in this institution? - Do you think that the requirements of ZIMCHE's quality assurance system are suitable to your institution? - Are they easily put into practice? - What system do you have in your university to ensure quality?
Teaching and learning	- How is quality assurance used to improve teaching and learning? - What teaching and learning practices are encouraged to improve quality in this institution? - Does ZIMCHE offer any assistance to this institution in improving quality in teaching and learning? - Do you have an institutional T & L policy? - Is there a specific unit dedicated to teaching and learning with a mandate and resources that offers academic and student support? - Do you have any international, regional and national collaborations in terms of quality assurance in teaching and learning?

	• How do you facilitate the transfer of the interpretation of quality from the university administrators to lecturers and students?
Intrinsic and extrinsic development	• What knowledge, skills and values do this institution intend to foster in its graduates? • Can you explain in greater detail how you address the issue of quality enhancement in teaching (pedagogy, use of IT etc) • Do you follow up on students after they graduate to see the kind work they are engaged in? • What role, if any, do students play in the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning (feedback mechanisms)? • (explain critical being) Are there any opportunities to develop critical being among students and how is this promoted? • Are there any opportunities to develop life-long learning among students and how is this promoted?
	At this university, which department in the natural sciences do you think is the 'best case' in providing quality teaching and learning? Why? At this university, which department in the humanities do you think is the 'best case' in providing quality teaching and learning? Why? Is there anything else you would like to say about quality in teaching and learning?

Study: Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.

Aim: To evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities through a human development and capabilities approach lens.

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

- Introduction and explanation of the study
- Obtain consent

(Questions may not necessarily follow the order in which they appear but will be guided by the discussion).

Background information

1. Gender: Male / Female
2. What is your educational qualification?
3. What position do you hold in the university?
4. How long have you been a lecturer (at this university and at any other)?
5.

Theme	Guiding questions
Understanding of quality	- How do you understand quality in higher education? - What does quality mean in relation to teaching and learning? - What do you think this university values as quality in teaching and learning (teaching, student learning experience, graduate employment, student progression)? - Who do you think have the most influence in determining quality in teaching and learning (government, employers, academics, students)? - Do you think there is a difference between quality assurance and enhancement?
Implementation of quality	- Does this university provide support to both students and staff in enhancing the quality of teaching? - How are policies related to teaching and learning communicated to the staff and students? - What are you as a lecturer expected to do in order to ensure quality control and improve the quality of your teaching? - What is your teaching philosophy? - Do you think that the learning environment in this institution is well adapted to effective teaching and learning?

	• •
Teaching and learning	• Do you think that the quality assurance system improves the quality of teaching and learning? How • Is quality teaching a clearly defined strategic objective in this institution? • Do you use any material in order to enhance the learning process? • Can you explain to me how the quality of teaching and learning is assessed in this university (peer evaluation, student assessment, external review)? • How often is this done? • Do you think that these assessments enhance the quality of the learning process? How? • How do you think your students differ and how do you cater for those differences? •
Intrinsic and extrinsic development	• What knowledge, skills and values do you value as part of student learning? • What role, if any, do students play in the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning (feedback mechanisms)? • Are there any opportunities to develop critical engagement among students and how is this promoted? • Are there any opportunities to develop life-long learning among students and how is this promoted? • How do you think that the quality assurance system in place affects student learning? (motivation to learn, self-confidence, academic competence, critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving and relevance of study for later career)? • What role do you think graduates should play in society?
	From your point of view what facilitates the implementation of quality assurance in your institution? (Government intervention, political instability, external quality assurance regulation, institutional processes). From your point of view what hinders the implementation of quality assurance in your institution? (Government intervention, political instability, external quality assurance regulation, institutional processes). What do you think can be done to enhance the quality of teaching and learning? Is there anything else you would like to say about quality in teaching and learning?

Appendix 6: Students FGD guide: 4 students (Baobab University and Msasa University)

Study: Quality as human development: A case study of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities.

Aim: To evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in Zimbabwean universities through a human development and capabilities approach lens.

Researcher: Patience Mukwambo

- Introduction and explanation of the study
- Obtain consent

(Questions may not necessarily follow the order in which they appear but will be guided by the discussion).

Sex	Number
Male	
Female	

Theme	Guiding questions
Understanding of quality	• What do you understand as quality in higher education? • What does quality mean in relation to teaching and learning?
Implementation of quality	• Do your lecturers encourage you to ask questions in class • Can you easily consult your lecturers about academic work in and out of class? • Do you think that your lecturers' assessments assist you in improving your work (assignments and tests)? • Is it easy for you as students, to communicate your complaints relating to the learning process to the department and or faculty? • Are you involved in any way in improving quality in your department or faculty (curriculum, teaching and learning)? • Do lecturers use any materials to enhance the teaching process?
Teaching and learning	• What have been your best teaching experiences? Why? • What have been your worst teaching experiences? Why?
Intrinsic and extrinsic development	• Why did you choose to do a degree in-----------------? • What knowledge, skills and values do you consider important as part of student learning? • (Explain about critical being)

| | • Can you tell me if your lecturers encourage this kind of thinking and action? How
• What are you hoping to do after you graduate?
• What do you think are your chances of employment after graduation?
• Do you think that your learning experience here will assist you in getting a job? How?
• What do you consider to be a good job? (probe for intrinsic value)
• What role do you think the government should play in providing work opportunities?
• What kind of graduate is required by the labour market?
• What kind of graduate do you think this university would like to produce?
• Apart from getting a job, do you think that what you learnt here at university will help you in any way after you graduate? How?
• What role do you think graduates should play in society? |
| | • What challenges do you think this university faces in providing quality education?
• Is there anything else you would like to say about quality in teaching and learning? |

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION (CONVENTIONAL INSTITUTIONS)

PREAMBLE

The Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education is introducing a system of accreditation of programmes in all registered universities in Zimbabwe. Accreditation will be assessed at regular intervals of five years. This is meant to encourage institutions to maintain standards above a certain minimum in their operations. Institutions will be expected to continuously review their operations against the suggested accreditation criteria. The institutions are, therefore, expected to create internal quality assurance systems that will continuously monitor their adherence to the suggested accreditation criteria in all departments and programmes.

The criteria below are meant to indicate to institutions the minimum benchmarks that they are expected to meet. The criteria address three areas of inputs, processes and outputs of each programme. Each institution will monitor its own programmes using these criteria. The guidelines should assist the institutions in preparing for the accreditation exercise.

PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

A university should ensure that it has all the necessary material and human resources for each programme that it offers. It should also have a sustainable budget to ensure availability of consumable resources.

Provisions

i)   Normally, every subject unit should be coordinated by a tenured lecturer with at least a Masters degree in the subject.

ii)   Every Teaching Assistant should work under the direct guidance and supervision of a lecturer qualified in the subject.

iii)   Where a subject area remains without a qualified expert, the university is advised to hire the part time services of a qualified academic from another university or retired experts.

Teaching Assistants particularly need guidance in planning the course, designing and

marking assignments, and in examining the course.

   iv)   A lecturer should not be assigned more than three courses/modules in one semester.

   v)   Where a program is so popular that a large number of students have to be enrolled, the numbers of lecturers should be increased proportionately

1.   PROGRAMME INPUT CRITERIA

These input criteria pertain to the inputs that have to be provided to facilitate the programme. These criteria (1-9) pertain to programme design, student recruitment, staffing, teaching and learning strategy, student assessment, infrastructure and library resources, programme administration and postgraduate policies.

1.1.   Area: Programme Design

Criterion 1: *Ensure that the programme is consistent with the institution's mission, forms part of institutional planning and resource allocation, meets national requirements, the needs of students and other stakeholders, and is intellectually credible. It is designed coherently and articulates well with other relevant programmes, where possible.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Relation to institution's mission and plans	The programme is consonant with the mission and goals of the institution and was approved by the institutional structures including Senate. It is included in the institutional plans and resource allocation projections.
ii) Needs of students, the nation and other stakeholders	The programme addresses national manpower and academic requirements. It prepares students for employment. Relevant stakeholders and experts have been consulted. Necessary work-related experience is incorporated.
iii) Intellectual credibility	The program adequately covers theory, skills and practice of the discipline. The breadth and depth of content is adequate for the degree level. The program is designed by qualified and experienced academic staff. Junior or part-time tutors act as facilitators of learning and are supervised.
iv) Coherence and articulation	The programme modules/courses articulate with other courses that the students take in the institution. The demands of specific occupational skills and understanding of related occupations and professions are met.

v) Learning materials	Adequate learning materials, equipment and other resources are provided. The programme is well resourced and funded enough to offer quality education.

1.2 Area: Student recruitment, admission and selection

Criterion 2: *Ensure that potential students are accurately and adequately informed about the nature, content and outcomes of the program. Admission and selection criteria are consistent with the demands of the programme. Student numbers do not exceed the capacity of the programme to offer good quality education as well as the manpower requirements of the profession.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Student recruitment	The programme is adequately and accurately advertised with regard to admission policies, completion requirements and academic standards.
ii) Admission	Admission policies are realistic, fair and consistent with the legal framework.
iii) Assumptions of learning	Relevant prior learning, where applicable, is taken account of.
iv) Widening of access	Students from varied backgrounds and qualification routes are being considered for admission.
v) Equity	Affirmative Action policies are justified.
vi) Professional needs	The programme responds to the manpower and professional needs of stakeholders and the nation.

1.3 Area: Staffing of Programme

Criterion 3: *Ensure that academic staff responsible for the programme are suitably qualified and have sufficient relevant experience and teaching competence, and their assessment competences and research profiles are adequate for the nature and level of the programme. The institution and/or other recognized agencies contracted by the institution provide opportunities for academic staff to enhance their competences to support their professional growth and development.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Qualifications	Academic staff for the programme has relevant academic qualifications higher than the exit level of the programme. For a Postgraduate programme academic staff must have qualifications at least on the same level as the exit level of the programme. At least 50% of the academic staff for a Postgraduate programme have academic qualifications higher that the exit level of the programme.
ii) Teaching experience	The majority of fulltime academic staff have two or more years of teaching experience at higher education level and in areas pertinent to the programme. In the case of professional programmes a sufficient number of the academic staff members also have relevant professional experience. The programme is coordinated by a full-time qualified and experienced member of staff.
iii) Assessment competence	Academic staff are competent to assess the programme. There is on going professional development and training of staff as assessors of the programme.
iv) Research Experience	Academic staff members have proved research experience relevant to the programme. New academic staff are availed orientation and induction opportunities. There are regular staff development opportunities.

1.4   Area : Staff Complement

Criterion 4: *Ensure that the academic and support staff complement is of sufficient size and seniority for the nature and field of the programme and the size of the student body to ensure that activities related to the programme can be carried out effectively. The ratio of full-time staff is appropriate. The recruitment and employment of staff follows relevant legislation and appropriate administrative procedures, including redress and equity considerations. Support staff are adequately qualified and their knowledge and skills are regularly updated.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Staff size and seniority	The staff/ student ratio expressed as full time equivalents is suitable for the nature and field of the programme and the number of enrolled students. The programme has an appropriate full-time/ part-time staff ratio to ensure working conditions

	conducive to teaching and learning as well as research. Part-time and junior staff and tutors are trained, where necessary, and monitored by full-time staff.
ii) Recruitment of staff	Staff are recruited, employed and paid in a legal manner. Redress and equity considerations are duly considered. The academic staff complement is such that it ensures that students are exposed to a diversity of ideas, styles and approaches.
iii) Staff Administration	Contractual arrangements relating to the hours and workload of staff ensure that all programme quality assurance, teaching, research, learning support, materials development, assessment, monitoring of part-time staff and teaching assistants (where applicable), counseling and administrative activities take place.
iv) Support staff	Administrative, technical and academic development support staff are adequately qualified for their duties, and opportunities exist for staff development.
v) Distance Education Programme	For distance learning programmes, sufficient administrative and technical staff are employed to handled the specialized tasks of registry, dispatch, management of assignments, record-keeping, and other issues in relation to student needs.

1.5   Area : Teaching and Learning Strategy

Criterion 5: *Ensure that the teaching and learning strategy is appropriate for the institutional type (as reflected in its mission), mode(s) of delivery and student composition; contains mechanisms to ensure the appropriateness of teaching and learning methods and makes provision for staff to upgrade their teaching methods. The strategy sets targets, plans for implementation and mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate impact and effect improvement.*

ASPECT	**MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that**
i) Promotion of student learning	Policies and procedures, including resource allocation, provision of support services and appointments recognize the importance of student learning.
ii) Institution type, modes of delivery and student composition	The teaching and learning strategy is appropriate to the institutional type and mission, modes of delivery (contact/distance/e-learning), and its student composition; (age, full-time, part-time, advantaged/disadvantaged.

iii) Appropriate teaching and learning methods	The strategy accommodates the design and use of learning materials and instructional learning technology.
Upgrading of teaching methods	There are opportunities where staff can upgrade their teaching methods.
iv) Targets, implementation plans and ways to monitor, evaluate impact and effect improvement	The teaching and learning strategy contains targets, plans for implementation, ways of monitoring progress and evaluating impact and mechanisms for feedback and improvement.

1.6 Area : Student Assessment, policies and procedures

Criterion 6: *Ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures for internal assessment; internal and external moderation; monitoring of student progress, clarity, validity, and reliability of assessment practices, recording of assessment results, settling of disputes and security of the assessment system, as well as the development of staff competence in assessment.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Internal Assessment	The programme has policies and procedures for internal assessment of student achievement by academic staff who teach each course/module.
ii) Internal and External moderation	Internal and external moderation is effected in line with clear criteria and guidelines.
iii) Monitoring of student progress	Student progress is monitored in line with clear guidelines.
iv) Validity and reliability of assessment	There are policies to ensure the validity and reliability of assessment practices.
Recording of results	Results of assessment are accurately recorded and their security is assured. Disputes regarding assessment results are settled in line with clear policy guidelines.
v) Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	There are clear policies, instruments and procedures for recognition of prior learning (RPL), including the identification, documentation, assessment, evaluation and transcription of prior learning against specified learning outcomes so that it can articulate with current programmes and qualifications.

1.7 Area : Infrastructure and resources

Criterion 7: *Ensure that there are suitable and sufficient venues, IT infrastructure and*

library resources for students and staff in the programme. Policies ensure the proper management and maintenance of library resources, including support and access for students and staff. Library staff are regularly staff developed.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Venues	Suitable and sufficient venues are available at all official sites of learning where the programme is offered, including teaching and learning venues, laboratories and clinical facilities where appropriate. Venues are carefully allocated and timetabled to accommodate the needs of the students.
ii) IT infrastructure and training	There is suitable and sufficient I/T infrastructure for the programme. The infrastructure is properly maintained and upgraded with adequate funds set for this purpose. Students and staff are trained for the use of technology required for the programme.
iii) Size and scope of library resources	There are suitable and sufficient library resources which complement the curriculum and meet the needs of staff and students.
iv) Management and maintenance of library resource	There are policies for the proper management, maintenance, renewal and expansion of library resources and these are reflected in the institutional financial plan.
v) Library support and access to students	The library research and computing facilities are freely accessible to both on-and off-campus students.
vi) Library staff development	Library staff is regularly staff developed to update their knowledge and skills.

1.8 Area : Programme administrative services

Criterion 8: *Ensure that the programme has effective administrative services for*

providing information, managing the programme information system, dealing with a diverse student population, and ensuring the integrity of processes leading to certification of the qualification obtained through the programme.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Provision of information	There is enough information on venues, timetables, access to library and IT facilities, student consultations and support services. Students in remote areas have efficient communication systems with the programme personnel. Information on admission, progression, marks schedules, fees and graduation of students is clearly recorded and securely kept.
i) Non-active and risk students	Academically non-active students (particularly in distance education) are identified monitored and advised. There are rules for readmission to the programme which are applied.
ii) Ensuring the integrity of certification	There are clear and efficient arrangements to ensure the integrity of the certification processes for the qualifications obtained through the programme. There are security measures to prevent fraud and illegal issuing of certificates.

1.9 Area : Postgraduate policies, procedures and regulations

Criterion9: *Ensure that the postgraduate programmes have appropriate policies, procedures and regulations for the admission and selection of students, the selection and appointment of supervisors, and the definition of the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students, etc.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Policies, regulations and procedures	There are clear regulations, policies and procedures for student admission, selection and assessment communicated to all students and staff and implemented consistently in the institution.
ii) Supervisors	Supervisors have qualifications in the relevant fields of study higher than or at least at the same level as the exit level of the postgraduate programmes they supervise. Each supervisor has a research track record, experience, expertise and peer recognition in his/her field of study. Inexperienced supervisors are staff developed and supported with joint supervision.
iii) The supervision process	There are clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students and other matters relevant to the performance of research. These include the nature, format and expected turnaround time for work submitted to the supervisor and the forms of assessment and communication of feedback to the student. The contact between student and supervisor and the

	submission of progress reports and written work is timetabled. Research ethics, code of conduct and regulations on plagiarism and intellectual property rights are spelt out. Examination and qualification requirements are clearly explained.

2.   PROGRAM PROCESS CRITERIA

These criteria (10-16) pertain to the processes and activities of the delivery of the programme. They address programme coordination, student development, teaching and learning interactions, student assessment practices, coordination of work-based learning and the delivery of postgraduate programmes.

2.1   Area : Programme coordination

Criterion 10: *Ensure that the programme is effectively coordinated in order to facilitate*

the attainment of its intended purposes and outcomes.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Mandate and responsibilities of programme coordinators	An academic is appointed as programme coordinator and operates within an agreed upon mandate and defined procedures and responsibilities. The coordinator ensures the academic coherence and integrity of the programme and all conditions of the delivery of the programme are met. He/she is responsible for the logistics of the programme, its day to day delivery, the quality management system, provision of resources, review and feedback, as well as the monitoring of expenditure.
ii) Student development and participation	There are opportunities for student input and participation in the programme processes.
iii) Implementation of policies for ensuring the integrity of certification	There is effective implementation of the policies for ensuring the integrity of certification processes for the programme, including monitoring the eligibility of candidates for the award of certificates, quality assuring of the process and prevention of fraud.

2.2 Area : Academic development for student success

Criterion 11: *Ensure that there are academic development initiatives to promote student, staff*

> *as well as curriculum development and to offer academic support for students when necessary.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Student and staff development	Staff responsible for academic development are adequately qualified and experienced for their task and their knowledge and skills are regularly updated. Students and staff development initiatives are responsive to the foundational and skills needs of the students and staff.
ii) Curriculum development	Curriculum development at programme and course/module levels includes strategies for developing language, numeracy and cognitive skills which enhance the use of disciplinary discourse and skills by students.
iii) Additional student academic support	Additional student academic support is offered where necessary.
iv) Monitoring	The effectiveness of academic development initiatives is regularly monitored and feedback is used for improvement.

2.3 Area : Teaching and learning interactions

Criterion 12: *Ensure that there are effective teaching and learning methods, suitable learning*

> *materials and opportunities to facilitate achievement of the purposes and outcomes of the programme.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that
i) Guidance to students on programme integration and outcomes	Students are clearly guided on how the components of the programme (subjects, courses/modules) contribute to the learning outcomes of the programmes.
ii) Teaching and learning methods	There is an appropriate balance between, and mix of different teaching and learning methods. The methods are appropriate to the design and use of the learning materials and instructional and learning technology.

iii) Learning opportunities	There are suitable learning opportunities to facilitate the acquisition of the knowledge and skills specified in the programme outcomes within the stipulated time. The staff have opportunities to upgrade their teaching methods.
iv) Students involvement in teaching and learning	Students actively participate in the teaching and learning process.
v) Monitoring	The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is regularly monitored and results are used for improvement.

2.4   Area : Student assessment practices

Criterion 13: *Ensure that the programme is using effective internal and external assessment*

practices which include internal and external moderation.

. ASPECT	**MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:**
i) Internal assessment integrated with teaching and learning	Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and is used to provide feedback to inform teaching and learning and to improve the curriculum. Learning achievements of students are internally assessed and moderated by staff who teach on the programme and students are given feedback. Procedures are in place and strictly followed to receive, record, process and turn around assignments within a time frame that allows students to benefit from feedback before submitting further assignments.
ii) External assessment	The achievement of students on the exit level of a qualification is externally moderated by duly appointed qualified and experienced academics in the area. Their qualifications are at least on the same level as the qualifications being examined. The external moderators are approved by Senate and changed regularly. They are not appointed as part of reciprocal arrangements.
iii) The process of external moderation	The external examiners are provided with all the necessary information for their work. At the exit level, external moderators mark fully at least 10% of the examination scripts for each paper and do random checks of at least 20% of the scripts for each paper. External examiners' reports are given to the lecturer concerned, the programme coordinator and head of department. Problems are discussed with the lecturer concerned

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
	and the programme coordinator monitors the implementation of agreed improvements. External moderators approve the final mark lists for the qualification.
iv) Reliability of assessment	External moderators comment on the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance and the standards of student attainment, the reliability of the marking process, and the compliance of the assessment with institutional regulations. A system is in operation for maximizing the accuracy, consistency and credibility of results including consistency of marking and concurrence between assessors and external examiners. Students' assessments records are reliable, secure, and accessible to academic coordinators, administrators, teaching staff and students as appropriate.
v) Conformity of assessment criteria with learning outcomes	Assessment practices are effective and reliable in measuring and recording student attainment of the intended learning outcomes. They are commensurate with the level of the qualification and, where appropriate, the requirement s of professional bodies. They are made explicit to staff and students. The learning activities and assessment performances are both aligned with the learning outcomes of the programme or module and these are clearly communicated to the students.
vi) Assessment of purpose of the programme	There is at least one integrated assessment procedure for each qualification which is a valid test of the key purposes of the programme.
vii) Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	Recognition of prior learning is implemented in a reliable and consistent manner.

2.5   Area : Rigour and security of assessment the system

Criterion 14: *Ensure that the programme has taken measures to ensure the rigour and security*

> *of the assessment system.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Rigour and security	Breaches of assessment regulations are dealt with effectively and timeously. Students are provided with information on their rights and responsibilities regarding assessment (for example, plagiarism, penalties, terms of appeal and supplementary examinations. Student appeals procedures are explicit, fair and effective. There are clear and consistent published guidelines

	for marking and grading of results, aggregation of marks and grades, progression and final awards, as well as credit allocation.

2.6   Area :   Coordination of work-based learning

Criterion 15: *Ensure that work-based learning is coordinated effectively in all components*

applicable to the programme, ensuring adequate infrastructure, effective communication, recording of progress made, as well as monitoring and mentoring.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Communication	The student, the Higher Education Institution and the employer negotiate, provide and assess the objectives and outcomes of the work-based learning process. All parties adhere to the agreement on their roles and responsibilities. There is regular and effective communication between the institution, students, mentors and employers involved in the work-based learning and good working relations are maintained.
ii) Recording systems and monitoring	The progress of the student's learning experience is recorded and monitored systematically both at the institution and at the work place.
iii) Mentoring	There is a mentoring system that enables the student to recognize the strengths and weaknesses in his/her work, to develop existing and new skills and to gain knowledge of the work practices.

2.7   Area :   Delivery of Postgraduate programmes

Criterion 16: *Ensure that the postgraduate programmes are managed properly, offer*

opportunities for students to develop research competence, and ensure that research is properly assessed. Also ensure that policies for student admission and selection, criteria for the selection and appointment of supervisors, and guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students are effectively implemented.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Management	The Postgraduate programmes are managed properly and offer students opportunities to develop research competence. Research programmes as well as Masters and Doctoral programmes and their assessment procedures are coordinated by a senior academic with postgraduate supervision experience. Training is provided in research skills, language, writing and numeral skills.
ii) Monitoring	The Postgraduate programmes are monitored and reviewed regularly and feedback provided.
iii) Assessment	Research is properly assessed with at least one external examiner appointed per dissertation. Assessment decisions are transparent and students are provided access to information. There are opportunities for students to defend their theses through an oral defense. Higher Degrees Committees consider examiners' reports and make decisions about examination outcomes.
iv) Implementation of admission and supervision policies	Admission policies are effectively implemented. Policies for selection of supervisors are adhered to and their roles effectively executed.

3. CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMME OUTPUT AND IMPACT

These criteria (17-18) pertain to what is delivered and attained by the programme. Programmes have to be effective with regard to student retention and throughput. They also should enhance the employability of the students and alleviate the shortages of expertise in relevant areas.

3.1 Area : Student retention and throughput rates

Criterion 17: *Ensure that student retention and throughput rates in the programme are*

monitored and remedial measures are taken where necessary.

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Monitoring of information	The programme coordinator monitors the information on retention and throughput rates for the programme.
ii) Remedial action	Remedial action is taken were necessary.

iii) Profiles of entering and qualifying classes	The population balance of the qualifying class resembles that of the entering class.

3.2   Area :   PROGRAM IMPACT CRITERION

Criterion 18: *Ensure that the programme has taken steps to enhance the employability of the*

> *students and to alleviate shortages of expertise in relevant fields where necessary.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:
i) Employability of students	There is evidence that the programme attempted to have an impact on the employability of the students where these are the desired outcomes of the programme.
ii) External acknowledgement of the programme	Efforts are made to get the programme acknowledged in the workplace, community and by other institutions. An improvement plan is put into operation where necessary.

4.   CRITERION FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

This criterion refers to the review of the impact of the programme.   The effectiveness of the programme should be evaluated using user surveys which gather and analyze information from different stakeholders.   Student satisfaction surveys, graduate tracking surveys, employer satisfaction surveys and impact studies should be used.

4.1   Area :   Program Review Criterion

Criterion 19: *Ensure that user surveys, reviews and impact studies on the effectiveness of the*

> *programme are undertaken at regular intervals and results are used to improve the programme's design, delivery and resourcing and also for staff development and student support where necessary.*

ASPECT	MINIMUM PREREQUISITES: Ensure that:

i) User surveys	User surveys are regularly undertaken to obtain feedback from academics involved in the programme, graduates, peers, external moderators, professional bodies and employers where applicable to ascertain whether the programme is attaining its intended outcomes.
ii) Reviews	There are regular reviews of the effectiveness of the proramme judged against national and international standards. Student throughput and retention rates are reviewed with regards to national requirements.
iii) Impact studies	Impact studies are regularly undertaken to measure and evaluate the impact of the programme on the employability of the students and that of its graduates and in alleviating shortages of expertise in relevant fields. Impact studies on the degree of acknowledgement of the programme in the community, the workplace, and by other institutions should also be carried out.
iv) Use of results	Results of surveys reviews and impact studies are used as a regular evaluation of all aspects of the programme and for development of improvement plans.

Appendix 8: Baobab University Multi-purpose hall