



**University of Fort Hare**  
*Together in Excellence*

**Stakeholder participation in strategic planning processes at three colleges of education in Zimbabwe: Towards the development of a participatory process in strategic planning.**

By

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## Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.



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Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Dedication**

The study is dedicated to my late father who passed away when I was in my final year of this study. His wish was to see me go through the study. The study is also dedicated to my mother, my wife and my children Qhelile Ntombikayise, and Qholile Sanda.

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## Abstract

This study investigated stakeholder participation in strategic planning processes in three teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. The study was conducted within the qualitative research methodology. Three colleges of education were purposively sampled. All principals in the sampled sites took part in the study. Two Heads of Departments (HODs), two Lecturers in Charge (LICs) two Students Representative Council (SRC) members as well as College Advisory Council Board Members (CACBM) participated in this study. A total of 18 informants participated through interviews. Documents such as strategic planning minutes were scrutinized. Strategic planning meetings were also observed at two sites.

The findings were that the practice of strategic planning still appears to be rigid and bureaucratic for organizations that operate in rapidly changing environments such as those in Zimbabwe. Secondly, participation in strategic planning is not all inclusive; only a select few individuals do take part in the planning exercise. Colleges of education and the Ministry focus on the *product activities*, that is, crafting the strategic plan. They seem to ignore the *process activities* such as reviewing plans periodically and taking note of key performance indicators which promote continuous improvement. The study also found that participants received no formal training in strategic planning and that the planning process was skewed towards control and compliance; and exhibited managerial accountability tendencies which lie within central bureaucratic approaches.

The main recommendations were that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and the Department of Teacher Education, at the University of Zimbabwe, in consultation with relevant stakeholders should, develop norms and standards for teacher education to align Zimbabwe's stakeholder participation in strategic planning to the global trends. Colleges should supplement their understanding of operational contexts by exploring possible future trends and circumstances. The criteria for reviewing strategic plans should be developed by peers, and practitioners in the field, in consultation with national norms and standards for teacher education.

## **Acronyms**

CACBM.....	College Advisory Council Board Member
CCSPM.....	Curriculum Centre Strategic Planning Model
ECD.....	Early Childhood Development
HOD.....	Head of Department
LCCF.....	Learner Central Curriculum Framework
LIC.....	Lecturer in Charge
MBA.....	Masters in Business Administration
MOHTE.....	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education
OECD.....	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
P5F.....	Porter's Five Forces Model
PA.....	Principal A
PB.....	Principal B
PC.....	Principal C
PDM.....	Participative Decision Making
SPPM.....	Strategic Planning Process Model
SRC.....	Student Representative Council
ZIMDEF.....	Zimbabwe Main power Development Fund

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Acronyms.....	vi
CHAPTER 1 .....	1
1 Background to the study .....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.0.1 <i>Perspectives on stakeholder participation in Southern Africa.</i> .....	3
1.0.2 <i>Perspectives on stakeholder participation in Zimbabwe</i> .....	8
1.1 Statement of the problem .....	12
1.1.1 <i>The Main Research Question</i> .....	13
1.1.2 <i>Research Sub-Questions</i> .....	13
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	14
1.3 Assumptions.....	14
1.4 Motivation for the study.....	15
1.5 Delimitations of the study.....	16
1.6 The operationalization of central concepts .....	16
1.6.1 <i>Strategic planning</i> .....	16
1.6.2 <i>Stakeholder</i> .....	16
1.6.3 <i>Participation</i> .....	17
1.7 Chapter outline.....	17
CHAPTER 2 .....	19
2 Theoretical framework.....	19
2.0 Introduction.....	19
2.1 Lewin’s (1939) Planned Change Theory .....	19
2.1.1 <i>Field Theory</i> .....	20
2.1.2 <i>Group Dynamic</i> .....	22
2.1.3 <i>Action Research</i> .....	24
2.1.4 <i>The Three-Step Model</i> .....	26
2.2 Arnstein’s ladder of participation .....	29
2.3 Conclusion .....	34
CHAPTER 3 .....	35

3	Conceptualizing strategic planning and processes.....	35
3.0	Introduction.....	35
3.1	Conceptualising strategic planning.....	35
3.1.1	<i>The rationale of strategic planning in higher education</i> .....	46
3.2	Conceptualizing strategic planning processes .....	56
3.2.1	<i>Engaging the people</i> .....	57
3.2.2	<i>Articulating strategic plans</i> .....	58
3.2.3	<i>Alignment in the strategic planning process</i> .....	60
3.2.4	<i>Vision and Mission</i> .....	61
3.2.5	<i>Environmental Scanning</i> .....	61
3.2.6	<i>Gap analysis</i> .....	65
3.3	Strategic Planning Models .....	66
3.3.1	<i>Porter’s Five Forces Model</i> .....	68
3.3.2	<i>The Systemic Strategic Planning Model</i> .....	71
3.3.3	<i>Implications of SWOT analysis in the two models</i> .....	77
3.4	Conceptualizing stakeholder participation.....	80
3.4.1	<i>Rationale for stakeholder participation</i> .....	87
3.5	Conclusion .....	90
CHAPTER 4	.....	92
4	Research Methodology .....	92
4.0	Introduction.....	92
4.0.1	<i>The Main Research Question</i> .....	92
4.0.1	<i>Research Sub-Questions</i> .....	92
4.1	Orientation of the research.....	93
4.1.1	<i>Interpretive Paradigm</i> .....	93
4.1.2	<i>Limitations of the interpretive research</i> .....	96
4.1.3	<i>The qualitative research methodology</i> .....	97
4.2	The case study design .....	100
4.3	Research Instruments .....	104
4.3.1	<i>Interviews</i> .....	105
4.3.2	<i>Documentary analysis</i> .....	109
4.3.3	<i>Observation</i> .....	112
4.4	Sample and Sampling .....	113
4.4.1	<i>Sampling the research sites</i> .....	114

4.5	Negotiation of entry .....	115
4.6	Data Analysis .....	116
4.7	Reducing Bias .....	117
4.8	Measures to ensure trustworthiness .....	119
4.8.1	<i>Standards of rigour</i> .....	120
4.8.2	<i>Credibility</i> .....	121
4.8.3	<i>Member Checking</i> .....	122
4.9	Ethical Considerations .....	122
4.10	Informed consent .....	123
4.11	Conclusion .....	125
CHAPTER 5	.....	126
5	Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation.....	126
5.0	Introduction.....	126
5.0.1	<i>The Main Research Question</i> .....	126
5.0.2	<i>Research Sub-Questions</i> .....	126
5.1	Profile and structure of Institutions under study.....	127
5.2	Profile of internal stakeholders .....	129
5.2.1	<i>Internal respondents</i> .....	131
5.2.2	<i>Age range of participants</i> .....	131
5.2.3	<i>Length of service of lecturers</i> .....	131
5.2.4	<i>Professional and academic qualifications of lecturing respondents</i> .....	132
5.2.5	<i>Lecturer experience in strategic planning</i> .....	132
5.3	External stakeholders .....	133
5.3.1	<i>Advisory board member academic qualification</i> .....	133
5.3.2	<i>Length of service as an advisory board member</i> .....	134
5.4	Data Presentation .....	135
5.4.1	<i>Principals views on strategic planning</i> .....	135
5.5	Nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning.....	137
5.5.1	<i>Lecturer participation</i> .....	141
5.5.2	<i>Middle and senior management participation</i> .....	144
5.5.3	<i>College Advisory Council Board Member participation</i> .....	152
5.5.4	<i>Student participation</i> .....	159
5.5.5	<i>Role interpretation in strategic planning</i> .....	163
5.5.6	<i>Areas of participant contribution</i> .....	166

5.5.7	<i>Information dissemination</i> .....	169
5.5.8	<i>Strategic planning meetings</i> .....	173
5.5.9	<i>Chairing and minute taking</i> .....	177
5.5.10	<i>Strategic planning preparations</i> .....	179
5.6	Inadequately resourced strategic planning process.....	186
5.6.1	<i>Aligning resources to strategic plans</i> .....	192
5.7	Strategic planning model(s) followed by the colleges .....	194
5.8	Challenges encountered in strategic planning process.....	197
5.9	Conclusion .....	199
CHAPTER 6	.....	202
6	Discussion of findings.....	202
6.0	Introduction.....	202
6.1	Participation in strategic planning .....	202
6.2	Restricted participation in the strategic planning process.....	203
6.2.1	Senior and middle management participation.....	208
6.2.2	<i>College Advisory Council Board Member participation</i> .....	210
6.2.3	<i>Lecturer participation (Restricted participation)</i> .....	211
6.2.4	<i>Student participation (Pseudo participation)</i> .....	213
6.3	Improving participation in strategic planning .....	213
6.3.1	<i>Resources</i> .....	215
6.3.2	<i>Strategic planning and the curricula</i> .....	219
6.3.3	<i>Strategic planning and performance measures</i> .....	220
6.3.4	<i>Benefits of strategic planning</i> .....	220
6.3.5	<i>Limitations in the strategic planning process</i> .....	221
6.4	Role interpretation in the strategic planning process.....	225
6.4.1	<i>Information dissemination</i> .....	228
6.5	Strategic planning model followed by colleges .....	229
6.6	Major findings of the study.....	230
6.7	Conclusion .....	232
CHAPTER 7	.....	233
7	Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.....	233
7.0	Introduction.....	233
7.1	Summary of main findings.....	233
7.1.1	<i>Understanding strategic planning in colleges of education</i> .....	235

7.1.2	<i>Internal strategic planning practices</i> .....	236
7.1.3	<i>External strategic planning practices</i> .....	237
7.2	Recommendations .....	237
7.2.1	<i>Major contribution of the study</i> .....	238
(a)	<i>Towards the new model</i> .....	238
7.2.2	<i>For improving stakeholder involvement in strategic planning</i> .....	243
7.2.3	<i>For further research</i> .....	244
7.3	Conclusion .....	244

## List of Figures

Figure 2-1: Graphical interpretation of Porter’s five forces model .....	68
Figure 2-2: Systemic Strategic planning Model .....	72
Figure 2-4: Davies approach ‘strategic planning & stakeholder participation’ ....	56
Figure 4-1: Hierarchical structure within colleges of education .....	128
Figure 4-2: Profile of all lecturing staff respondents .....	130
Figure 4-3: Profile of College Advisory Council Board Members.....	133
Figure 6-1: Cummings and Wilson’s systemic model .....	239

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **1 Background to the study**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In their quest for systematic and logical means to improve operations, administrators of higher education institutions have utilized strategic and academic assessment plans as a tool for institutional and individual development. Both strategic and assessment plans are meant to be measurable, to validate success and identify areas that need improvement (Bush, 2003). The need for the utilization of strategic and assessment plans has led to the concept of strategic planning. The perceived benefit of strategic planning as noted by Glaister and Falshaw (1999) are that it improves the performance of the institution. Thus it is a critical element that both shapes and gives direction to line ministry and institution operations. The other benefit is that it leads to indirect improvements in performance by improving the effectiveness of management throughout the process of strategic planning (Bryson, 2011). For example the participation of stakeholders in the planning process aids management to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders. However despite the noted benefits, strategic planning has its critics.

Critics of strategic planning argue that there is no evidence that strategic planning actually improves educational performance within colleges of education (Kaufman and Herman, 1991). The reason advanced is that it has become a ritual in many

organizations; in that, once the planning process is over and a bound copy of the plan is delivered to the board, management and all other stakeholders in an institution forget about it. ([http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Abhijit\\_Bhattacharjee](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Abhijit_Bhattacharjee)). However, despite this observation from critics, there has been a continuous development of strategic planning theories for profit and non-profit organizations (Bryson, 2011). The public education system, which can be seen to be in a continuous state of flux, has morphed, to also embrace strategic planning.

The development of theories in strategic planning in education largely involved the application of industrial models to educational settings. Historically, as strategic planning became established as a discipline in its own right; its theorists and practitioners began to develop alternative models based on their observation and experience in schools and colleges (Bush, 2011). Theories that have been developed have, in a way, made inroads into reducing the role of central governance in planning and providing education. The developments of these theories have, in a way, led to a shift in leadership styles, whereby participative methods have received much attention (Bryson, 2011; Lane, 2005). The introduction of the participative leadership style has also seen ideological shifts in the planning processes. However, there are some countries and institutions that are still bureaucratic and centralized. Some still have pockets of centralized planning in their institutions (Lauglo, 2005). However, some educational functions are decentralized even within centralized systems, and others are centralized even within decentralized systems (Lumby, 2003; Kariwo, 2007). In this light, whether decentralized or centralized, the strategic planning process faces various challenges (Richards, 2010).

According to Richards (2010:1) “strategic planners face a number of challenges that they need to be alert to and be prepared to overcome. These include engaging the right people in the planning process”. In referring to the engagement of the right people, Mintzberg (1994) contends that they must be the analytic and convergent type of thinker and also be dedicated to bringing order to the organisation. Lumby (2003) asserts that the other challenge that strategic planners face is the need to get people with different backgrounds, interests and perspectives agree on the direction the organization should take. Perhaps the greatest challenge for strategic planners in any environment is the execution, which means the actual initiation of the plan in highly centralised and bureaucratic organisations (Lauglo, 2005).

### ***1.0.1 Perspectives on stakeholder participation in Southern Africa.***

Southern African countries, such as Botswana, South Africa and Zambia placed high priority on education as a key to individual and national development (Karlsson, 2002; Lomosky and Lazarus, 2001; Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda, 1992). This study makes reference to South Africa and Botswana mainly because unlike Zambia and Mozambique, they appear to be more stable economically and politically but still appear to have very similar educational policies to those of most Southern African countries. Like many public sector innovations of the past, strategic planning in these countries was greeted with a high level of enthusiasm (Berry and Wechsler, 1995). However, there has been little research measuring the extent to which strategic planning is actually used by governments, the nature of approaches, and stakeholder participation

in different educational institutions, or the outcomes they believe they have achieved (Sayed, 2002; Eacott, 2012).

Despite gaps noted in the literature, large percentages of government budgets were and are still allocated to education (Southern African Economist, 1992). Upon attaining independence, African nations, such as South Africa and Botswana, made monumental improvements in education in spite of enormous limitations of economic, human, technological and material resources. Countries such as Zambia and Botswana introduced free education at primary school level, and subsidized tuition at the secondary levels of schooling (Graham-Brown, 1991; Kaluba, 1986; Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda, 1992). These expansions were geared towards national development and at the same time they were responding to historical colonial imbalances (Lamosky and Lazarus, 2001). Central to these national developments was stakeholder participation.

In spite of these achievements, and given the magnitude and complexity of educational development, a number of problems persist to the present day. In some instances, there are challenges that have, forced these countries to review their educational strategies (Karlsson, 2002). The challenges mentioned include disparities in socio-economic conditions, the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on managing schools, as well as policy overload and problems with policy implementation at school/college level (McLennan and Thurlow, 2003). In the case of South Africa, the challenge was to deal with the educational imbalances created by the Apartheid system. The new democracy had to

transform education into one unitary non-racial system (Lomsky and Lazarus, 2001). The upgrading of township and rural schools that had been marginalised was one of the challenges (ibid). Berge and Smith (2000) assert that dealing with these challenges required a new understanding of leadership and management roles together with the development of leadership and management competencies at all levels in education.

The changing education environment in South Africa as a result of the country attaining democracy in 1994, brought to the fore the need for management and leadership development in directing the complex new policy environment and realizing transformational goals (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008). These challenges are not unique to South Africa; countries such as Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique faced similar challenges upon attaining independence (ibid). In light of these challenges, stakeholder participation and management competencies were identified by Graham-Brown (1991), Kaluba (1986) Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda (1992) as a vital means in improving the quality of education. However the development of strategic planning in education still remains a crucial factor in overcoming the numerous constraints facing educational institutions (Ntsebenza, 2004).

Socio-economic and political problems as indicated earlier have in some instances provided challenges to education such as resource shortages, skills deficits and problems relating to educational access. In light of these challenges, Southern African countries were no exception when it came to mandating citizen participation as another way of transforming education. Mandates for public participation in these African

countries were designed to increase local government commitment to the principles of democratic governance. As highlighted by Arnstein (1969), Burke (1979), Fainstein and Fainstein (1985), Godschalk and Mills (1999), participation principles include the rights of individuals to be informed, to be consulted, and to have the opportunity to express their views on governmental and institutional decisions. These scholars also stress the need for better representation of the interests of disadvantaged and powerless groups in governmental decision making.

To further the concept of democratic governance, Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008) state that participative principles in democratic governance in education should be reflected at every level of the education and training system. Education in Southern Africa has not escaped the challenges associated with participation in the planning processes. These challenges have come with different principles that have translated into many significant changes including new norms and values in education (Naidu et al, 2008). Stakeholder participation in strategic planning is one of the principles that has seen education realizing a fundamental shift from leading colleges under colonial governments to leading higher education institutions under new democratic or majority rule government dispensation (Beudon, 2003; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006).

Stakeholder participation in Southern African countries is viewed as key to education development. These countries share a common view that as parents participate in modern education, they bring with them their intellectual property as well as financial

resources. However, in some Southern African countries, for example, South Africa and Zambia there appears to be a gap between policy rhetoric and policy practice in an attempt to institute stakeholder participation (Sayed, 2002; Kaluba, 1986). The policy practice of governing from the centre has in a way also impeded educational institutions in Southern Africa in fully involving stakeholders in the planning process (Kariwo, 2007). On the other hand, Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani (2002) indicate that South Africa has created an enabling environment for stakeholder participation in education through the setting up of governing bodies comprising teachers, learners, parents and other relevant stakeholders. On the contrary, Mattes (2002) argues that South Africa has one of the most passive citizenry in Southern Africa. Naidoo (2003) also observes that although governments advocate for wider participation in education, major beneficiaries of tertiary education continue to be middle class. Although chances of entry have improved for low income families, the gap in opportunity between different social classes has actually widened (ibid). In light of the foregoing, Sayed (1999) avers that a careful examination of participation is necessary, so as to achieve the optimal balance between citizen participation and state regulation in the governance of education. In the main, Southern Africa has not yet fully achieved political power in which the principle of common citizen participation is widely practiced (Mtetwa and Thompson, 2000). Consequently, education in Southern Africa has not escaped the challenges of central approaches to education (Ntsebenza, 2004).

### ***1.0.2 Perspectives on stakeholder participation in Zimbabwe***

During the first and second decade of independence, tertiary institutions (universities and colleges) in Zimbabwe received a lot of assistance from the government (Kariwo, 2007). However, the same cannot be said now, given the ideological changes as well as the political and economic problems the country is facing. In the first and the second decade post- independence, tertiary institutions were given money as subsidy for every student, while students were also given grants for their educational requirements (UNESCO International Report, 2001). In that way the government totally controlled these institutions. Curricular and administrative matters became issues for the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (MoHTE), including the principle of redressing the colonial government inherited inequalities and imbalances in education (Ministry of Higher an Tertiary Education National Strategic Plan, 1990-1995). By the end of the first decade, issues concerning how educational institutions can be reformed were being hotly debated in both government and within the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Central to the debate were issues of stakeholder participation, decentralization and also strategic planning in colleges of education (Nziramasanga, 1999).

The debate on higher education institutions in Zimbabwe was mainly concerned with how the education system would move towards involving stakeholders in the planning process (Nziramasanga, 1999). The transfer of decision making and resource management from centralized control towards the institution where education was taking place was the core of the debate (Kaluba, 1986; Kariwo, 2007). The intended

outcome was to create the decentralization of decision making; thus, paving the way for stakeholder participation. However, the democratization of decision making in Zimbabwe left open the question of who should participate and in which decisions? (Mtetwa and Thompson, 2000).

In Zimbabwe it was argued that for these institutions to produce teachers who would respond to the demands of the reformed education system, they had to follow relevant professional operational pathways. These pathways had to be those that were technically and ideologically suited to the overall proposed political and socio-economic system (Nziramasinga, 1999). In a way there was a common view that strategic planning would be more effective if stakeholders were to be participants in decision making in the planning process (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992; Davies and Ellison, 2003).

The process of educational reform in Zimbabwe has had its problems with participative management, which emphasizes stakeholder participation in the process of strategic planning (Kariwo, 2007; Nziramasinga, 1999). These problems include rapid educational expansion, the brain drain as a result of the poor economy and the ever changing political environment. There were remarkable expansions in the number of primary and secondary schools. In fact, the magnitude of the expansion of primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe was described as a modern day miracle (Mackenzie, 1988). There has also been an increase in the number of universities and colleges in the last decade. However, these educational expansions and reforms in Zimbabwe have not been adequately resourced (Kariwo, 2007). By way of comparison, when the

United Kingdom moved towards mass higher education there were radical changes that were made to the funding of higher education (Eacott, 2011; Kariwo, 2007).

While educational expansion has its own problems, the process of strategic planning in education carries one inherent contradiction, that is, increased devolution of decision making and resource management versus greater central ministry control (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). The fact that resources are inadequate in Zimbabwe further complicates the strategic planning process. Control from the Ministry appears to be inevitable in Zimbabwe since the main source of funding has been the government (Kariwo, 2007). Such contradictions may affect the process of strategic planning in colleges of education (Bush and Coleman, 2000). Prescription, caused by funding control, means that colleges' strategies and strategic plans operate within defined limits and may have tightly constrained and uniform requirements imposed on them (Mtetwa and Thompson, 2000; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004).

The participation of stakeholders in strategic planning for their institutions appears to involve the crafting of plans from what is produced by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education as the national strategic plan (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, National Strategic Plan 2005-2009). In a way, the colleges are forced to follow what is centrally planned and, as such, appear to be constrained in ensuring the full participation of students, lecturers, college advisory board members and other stakeholders in developing as unique institutions of excellence in teacher education (Kariwo, 2007). In a related study, Middlewood and Lumby, (2004) aver that such an

environment might further constrain these institutions in independently scanning their environment in the strategic planning process. Such an environment might further constrain improved quality, internal efficiency and the capacity to maintain a competitive edge (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992; Abu-Duhou, 1999; Bush, 2003). The significance of this is that it shows the reversal of the flow from an input-driven model to a centrally determined output-driven and centrally controlled model of education (Davies and Ellison, 2004). This may result in considerable tensions about what should constitute stakeholder participation, strategic planning and local management (Davies, 2006).

In light of the foregoing, the strategic planning process in teacher training institutions appears to have constraints. As a result there is need to investigate the emerging trends and particular realities confronting managers and leaders of higher educational institutions not only in Zimbabwe but in the whole of Southern Africa (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008). Invariably, principals and a few select members craft the vision and mission statements, which means that there might be challenges in the participatory processes. There could still be challenges in strategic planning that do not seem to encourage participatory or collaborative strategic thinking. It is in this context that this study aims to look at strategic planning approaches with the view of developing participatory leadership strategies. In the absence of participation by, for example, lecturers, it is likely that there will be tension between compliance and performance (Bush, 2003; Davies, 2006). In any context, excessive compliance reduces the scope for creativity and limits performance (Davies and Ellison, 2004). This also puts undue emphasis on outcomes, with processes having to be ignored.

Therefore, the need seems to exist for research to be carried out on stakeholder (lecturers, students and college advisory board members) participation in the strategic planning process. It is important for the colleges of education to design strategic plans that not only build capacity to deliver professional and academic programmes suited to their circumstances but are understood and implemented fully by those involved (Bush and Coleman, 2000; Davies and Ellison, 2003).

Zimbabwe lays emphasis on stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process. However, the World Bank (2000) reveals that the participation rates at tertiary level in Zimbabwe is 7%, which remains low compared to the high income countries where the average rate is 59%. In light of the foregoing, this study focuses on the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in Zimbabwe's colleges of education with the aim of establishing ways of improving stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Stakeholder participation is viewed as another way of encouraging individuals within the organization to engage with each other to build strategic understanding and enhance the strategic capability of the organization (Davies, 2006). The benefits of participation in strategic planning are that it helps facilitate communication and judgement. Furthermore, it helps to accommodate divergent interests and values and foster wise decision making informed by reasonable analysis thereby improving the performance of institutions (Glaister and Falshaw 1999; Bryson, 2011). However, in Zimbabwe, despite

the reforms that seek to move education from centralized planning characterized by bureaucratic tendencies to decentralization, but the process of strategic planning appears to be still rooted in centralized bureaucratic models (Kariwo, 2007). As such, there is need for research on the nature of participation of lecturers and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process, with the view of recommending intervention measures that promote participatory institutional autonomy as well as encourage full participation by these actors. Operating in the absence of participation by these actors signifies that teacher training institutions might not be fully utilising the expertise of stakeholders in the planning process. This therefore prompted an investigation of how their participation levels could be established and promoted.

### ***1.1.1 The Main Research Question***

1.2.1.1 What is the level and nature of the participation by senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe's colleges of education?

### ***1.1.2 Research Sub-Questions***

1.2.2.1 How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?

1.2.2.2 How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?

1.2.2.3 What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?

1.2.2.4 What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in teacher education in Zimbabwe. The realisation that there has been little research measuring the extent to which strategic planning is actually done in colleges of education (Eacott, 2011), prompted the researcher to look at the nature of strategic planning processes and stakeholder participation at three selected education sites in Zimbabwe. The study paid special attention to the nature of the participation of internal stakeholders (lecturers, students, senior and middle managers) and external stakeholders (college advisory board members), with a view to establishing how the teacher education system could move towards involving these actors in strategic planning. The study further looked at how these institutions could move towards the development of participatory leadership strategies.

## **1.3 Assumptions**

The study assumes that:

1.3.1. The current approach to strategic planning by colleges of education is negatively affecting stakeholder participation levels and collegial interaction among stakeholders.

1.3.2. Greater stakeholder (lecturer, advisory board members and student) participation can help improve the relevance and quality of service delivery in colleges of education in Zimbabwe

#### **1.4 Motivation for the study**

This study was motivated by the need to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning processes in colleges of education. The theoretical findings underpinning this study would further help educational planners develop new ways of improving stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process. There was also a need to undertake this research since time and resources continue to be expended in strategic planning approaches that seem not to afford these institutions the relevant democratic planning processes. It was also hoped that this study would help policy formulators realize the need for full participation of all stakeholders in the design of strategic plans, thereby creating a greater potential to challenge positively the entrenched central approach in strategic planning. The results of the study could therefore be used by policy makers to re-examine the current domesticating approach leading to the total liberation of colleges of education with regards to the approaches and processes followed in the planning and implementation of their strategic plans.

This study was motivated by the notion that, in most instances, studies have tended to ignore considerations and questions that relate to the underlying factors that influence the composition of participating stakeholders in the planning processes, as well as the nature of their participation, which this study aims to examine.

## **1.5 Delimitations of the study**

The study focused on strategic planning, with regard to the level and nature of stakeholder participation and strategic planning processes in colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The study was limited to three teacher training colleges, all of which occupy a manageable geographical area in terms of location and spread. This study focused mainly on the strategic planning processes and the nature of participation of College Advisory Council Board Members, lecturers and students in the strategic planning process.

## **1.6 The operationalization of central concepts**

### ***1.6.1 Strategic planning***

Strategic planning refers to a cross-functional direction setting approach over the medium to long term that enables an organization to achieve its objectives (Davies, 2006). It is in essence the company's good 'plan' to have a chance for success and it results from tough managerial choices among numerous good alternatives and signals good commitment to policies, procedures and operations in lieu of other 'less desirable' course of action (David, 2005).

### ***1.6.2 Stakeholder***

In this study a stakeholder refers to any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's attention, resources, or output or is affected by that output (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). Stakeholder participation will in turn refer to the participation of both external and internal actors such as lecturers, college advisory board members and students in the strategic planning process (Lumby, 2003).

### **1.6.3 Participation**

Participation refers to the operational process that focuses on stakeholder participation during the planning process. It also refers to the sharing of decisions which affect the life of the community in which one lives (Bennett, Glatter and Levacic 1994). Vroom and Jago (1988) opine that participation refers to taking part. They go on to suggest that one participates when one has contributed to something.

## **1.7 Chapter outline**

The proposed outline of the study is as indicated below:

**Chapter 1:** This is the introductory chapter that highlights the background and context of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and purpose of the study, assumptions, significance of the study, rationale of the study, delimitations of the study and definitions of key terms.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter covers various views from different authorities on stakeholder participation and the nature of their participation in strategic planning in education is explored.

**Chapter 3:** In this chapter the methodology followed in the study is discussed. The research paradigm, the research design, population sample, data collection, data analysis method, instruments and ethical considerations are outlined.

Chapter **4**: This chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings. Data are presented, analysed and interpreted in order to make meaning out of it.

Chapter **5**: In this chapter the findings of the study are discussed and comparisons with relevant reviewed literature are made.

Chapter **6**: This chapter summarizes the study in relation to the problem under study; draws conclusions and advances recommendations for possible use by policy makers and other researchers.

# CHAPTER 2

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.0 Introduction

This section presents the lenses which premise and guide this study. The section discusses Lewin's (1939) Planned Change Theory and Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of participation. While Lewin focuses on planned change strategies, Arnstein focuses on public participation strategies in the planning processes. It is the researcher's contention that such a combination can bring about a new way of improving public participation in the strategic planning processes.

### 2.1 Lewin's (1939) Planned Change Theory

Kurt Lewin's (1939) planned change theory offers a framework for studying forces that, apart from influencing collaboration in teamwork, also analyse social constructs. Lewin's change management model provides a holistic approach to examining the barrage of issues associated with strategic planning. In addition, Lewin's framework provides guiding principles rooted in group dynamics, which are lacking in other models (Vega-Rodriguez, 2001). Vega-Rodriguez continues that Lewin's planned approach to change can be used to explore leadership, participatory management, work environments, and conflict resolution. Vega-Rodriguez concludes that Lewin's framework is valuable in investigating, in the case of this study, the institutional change caused by stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process as well as the integration of strategic plans in colleges of education.

A unifying theme of much of Lewin's work is the group to which an individual belongs is the ground for his perceptions, feelings and actions (Burnes 2004). Lewin's planned approach to change is based on four mutually reinforcing concepts; namely, Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research, and the 3-Step model, which are used in combination to bring about effective change.

Though Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research and the 3-Step model of change are often treated as separate themes of his work, Lewin saw them as a unified whole, with each element supporting and reinforcing the others, and all of them necessary in understanding and bringing about planned change, whether it be at the level of the individual, group, organization or even society (Burnes, 2004). All of Lewin's concepts, whatever root-metaphor they employ, comprise a single well intergrated system which can be seen by examining these four aspects of his work.

### ***2.1.1 Field Theory***

Lewin's field theory is viewed as an approach to understanding group behavior by trying to map out the totality and complexity of the field in which the behavior takes place (Burnes, 2004). Lewin maintained that to understand any situation it was necessary that one view the present situation. Field theory suggests that each situation under review is being maintained by certain conditions that maintain the status quo. Lewin postulated that group behaviour is an intricate set of interactions that do not only affect group structures but modify individual behaviour (Burnes, 2004). Therefore, individual behaviour is a function of the group environment or field.

Beginning at an early age, the individual's behavior is moulded in every respect by his social situation. Morale, religion, and political values are determined by being a part of, and reacting to, the environment in which one lives (Lewin, 1939). Therefore, an individual participating in group activities brings to the table the ideology from his personal environment. It has been shown, too, that the goal-setting depends upon certain ideal goals; upon what sociologists call the ideology of the person (Lewin, 1939).

Experiments have shown that a person's emotional reaction can be altered by his or her environment (Lewin, 1939). Therefore, the environment of a leader can dictate the response of that leader to failure or success. The decision-making process a leader employs is greatly dependent upon his or her culture or social influences (Lewin, 1939). Burnes (2004) concurs by stating that individual behaviour is a function of the group environment or field, consequently, any changes in behaviour stem from changes in the forces in the field.

Burnes (2004) also noted that a field was in a continuous state of adaptation fluctuating constantly to changes in the forces or circumstances that impinge on the group. Lewin cited in Burnes (2004) describes the field theory change process as slow but it can move quickly if the forces in the field shift. Burnes (2004:981) further states that field theory might probably be the "least understood element of Lewin's work, yet, because of its potential to map the forces impinging on an individual, group or organization. It underpinned the other elements of his work."

As a team is put together to develop an integrated assessment or strategic plan, the individual contribution to the team may be determined or associated with the environment or field (group) in which the members operate. Each team member's environment (group) may influence his/her decision, whether the environment is the organization or the group (Lewin, 1939). Lewin concludes that the more a person feels included (stable in the field or environment) the more cohesive the group tends to become. Through the use of the field theory, college leadership may be able to map out issues impinging on the strategic planning process, and at the same time, bring the stakeholders together, so that they work as a cohesive unit but with the understanding of each member's environment.

### **2.1.2 Group Dynamic**

Cartwright (1951:382) asserts that

*...the word 'dynamics'...comes from a Greek word meaning force...'group dynamics' refers to the forces operating in groups...it is a study of these forces: what gives rise to them, what conditions modify them, what consequences they have, etc.*

Lewin (1939:165) in referring to group dynamics postulated that "it is not the similarity or dissimilarity of individuals that constitutes a group but the interdependence of fate." Thus Lewin believed that change should focus on group behaviour. Group dynamics stresses that group behaviour, rather than that of individuals should be the main focus of change. Change should concentrate on factors such as group norms, roles, interaction and socialization (Burnes, 2004). Every aspect of group life is involved: power politics and individual needs for security, religion and education, love and

economic dependence, leadership and obedience, character and skills, group relations and production requirements (Lewin, 1945). For the process of strategic planning, college leadership can look at the dynamics of the team that has been assembled to develop the new plan. The dynamics of the team can help determine the success of the project (Lewin, 1945).

One by one, such topics as goal setting and level of productivity became accessible to systematic experimentation and to the gradually sharpening conceptualization of groups (Lewin, 1945). More and more, social aspects (i.e., friendship, leadership, social atmosphere, social reality, and group standards) became involved in the individual's behaviour in groups. Consequently, as the management of an institution puts together a team or group certain leadership patterns, group morale and productivity need to be considered. These patterns will affect the efficiency of the group and how well the members of the group work together. In developing these groups, management cannot look at one factor such as economics but must consider the total culture and all aspects of group life (Lewin, 1945).

Lewin had looked to the nature of the group task in an attempt to understand the uniformity of some groups' behavior. He was able to argue that people may come to a group with very different dispositions, but if they share a common objective, they are likely to act together to achieve it (Lewin, 1947). This links to Lewin's field theory. Lewin also realized that an intrinsic state of tension within group members stimulates or motivates movement toward the achievement of desired common goals. The

development of action research and the 3-Step model of change came about after the realization of the need to provide a process, whereby the members could be engaged in and committed to changing their behaviour. (Burnes, 2004)

### ***2.1.3 Action Research***

The term Action Research was coined by (Lewin, 1946) in an article entitled 'Action research and minority problems'. Lewin (1946) defined action research as comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Action research, according to Burnes (2004), emphasizes the following three components:

Firstly, it emphasizes that change requires action, and is directed at achieving this. Secondly, it recognizes that successful action is based on analysing the situation correctly; identifying all the possible alternative solutions and choosing the one most appropriate to the situation at hand (Bennett, 1983). Thirdly, to be successful, there has to be a felt-need. In the context of the study, the felt-need refers to an individual's inner realization that change is necessary (Burnes, 2004).

To this end, action research involves field theory to identify the forces that focus on the group to which individuals belong. It also draws on group dynamics to understand why group members behave the way they do when subjected to particular forces (Lewin, 1947). In the field of group dynamics, action research is theory and practice linked

methodologically in a way which, if properly handled, could provide answers to theoretical problems and at the same time strengthen that rational approach to our practical social problems which is one of the basic requirements for their solution (Burnes, 2004)

For action research to occur, it must be done at group level and must be a participative and collaborative process that involves all stakeholders. According to Lewin (1947), all action research embodies two stages: (1) A diagnostic stage in which the problem is being analysed and hypotheses are being developed; and, (2) A therapeutic stage in which the hypotheses are tested by a consciously directed change experiment, preferably in a social life situation.

Action research in Zimbabwe has to a limited extent been used as a vehicle for encouraging reflective strategic planning among colleges of education. Furthermore, action research is viewed as a collaborative activity among stakeholders searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in colleges, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement (Ferrance, 2000; Rock and Levin, 2002). Ferrance continues that in education, action research promotes skills of inquiry and also allows a group of instructors to address problem areas and concerns over which they have influence and can make a change. This research was carried out within the context of the stakeholders' environment, that is, the college in which the stakeholders operate. In light of the foregoing, the action research component is critical

to the extent that it helps show where the gaps are in the system and how these can then be collaboratively plugged for the betterment of the institution.

Although there are many types of research that may be undertaken, action research specifically refers to a disciplined inquiry undertaken by an instructor with the intent that the research inform and/or change his or her practices in the future. Action research in education therefore, uses the spiral steps of Lewin's action research: planning, action and fact-finding. Instructors begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, analysing the data and then deciding on a course of action (Ferrance, 2000). Lewin (1939) said a group can be as small as two. Action research in education can have a group of two instructors or several instructors; one classroom, or several classrooms and even a district or region.

Action research can benefit any institution because the process can assess an institution's problems or issues. It can also be used as professional development for instructors and can impact change in the college at the grass-root level (Ferrance, 2000). These benefits can easily fit Lewin's (1947) spiral of steps to include planning, action and fact-finding.

#### ***2.1.4 The Three-Step Model***

A successful change addresses the elements outlined in Lewin's 3-step model, that is, unfreezing the present level, moving to the next level, and refreezing at a new level (Lewin, 1947). Unfreezing is destabilizing and discarding old or current behaviour.

Moving can be explained as taking action (planning, action and fact-finding) to move from a current set of behaviours to a new and more acceptable set of behaviours. Refreezing seeks to stabilize the group at a new level and prevent regression. In the integration of the assessment and strategic plans, the planning team needs to unfreeze its current planning process, research and re-establish a new process and then refreeze what the team has adopted.

In Lewin's research on planned change, if one succeeds in changing group standards, the same force field will tend to facilitate changing the individual and will tend to stabilize individual conduct on the new group level (Lewin, 1947). In changing the way a college develops, its strategic plan may involve unfreezing the old method and then the planning team and college will need to move to the proposed method for planning. Once the team has moved to the new level of planning, the new level must be repeated until the new process is learned.

The true artistry of change management lies in the tactics used by change agents to create a safe group environment (Schien, 1995). One should take into account all the forces at work in trying to unfreeze learned behaviour and make the group setting acceptable to change. Action research (planning, action and fact-finding) enables groups and individuals to move from a less acceptable to a more acceptable set of behaviors (Burnes, 2004). Burnes (2004) continues that without reinforcement, change could be short lived and the new behaviour must align with the individual's values, roles and norms. There are two reasons according to Lewin (1947) to facilitate change

through group decision. First, in case of group decisions, an individual preference or decision is not as important as acting as a group member and making the decision as a group. The second factor is the relationship between motivation and action. The group decision links motivation to action and at the same time has a freezing effect. This effect is partly due to the individual's tendency to stick to his/her decision and partly to the commitment to the group (Lewin, 1947). The 3-Step Model, unfreezing, moving, and refreezing, can be used for any group decision-making process. The analytical tools used are equally applicable to cultural, economic, sociological and psychological aspects of group life.

The planned approach to change as articulated by Kurt Lewin provided a solid framework for this research. The depth and breadth of Lewin's planned approach to change provides a solid foundation for studying the essential qualities of stakeholder participation; what it is, how it works and how it builds collaboration and cohesion in colleges (Vega-Rodriguez, 2001). Furthermore, as the strategic planning processes employed in the college of education are essentially institutional change strategies, the participative and collaborative foundation of Lewin's planned change theory aligns well with the anticipated outcomes of college institutional effectiveness initiatives. To sum up, if stakeholders own the strategic plans, the implementation process might be made easier. The next section looks at the ladder of participation.

## 2.2 Arnstein's ladder of participation

Figure 2.4 below illustrates Arnstein's ladder of participation.

8	Citizen control
7	Delegate Power
6	Partnership
5	Placation
4	Consultation
3	Informing
2	Therapy
1	Manipulation

Figure 2-4: ladder of participation

The seminal theoretical work on the subject of community participation was first done by Arnstein (1969). The particular importance of Arnstein's work stems from the explicit recognition that there are different levels of participation, from manipulation or therapy of citizens, through to consultation, and to what we might now view as genuine participation, i.e. the levels of partnership and citizen control. Bovaird (2007) asserts that while Arnstein famously pointed out the question of degrees of involvement many years ago, it remains a perplexing problem. Although, arguably somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Arnstein's Ladder continues to be cited by planners. This indicates that it resonates with planners as an effective way of characterizing levels of public participation.

Although it might be seen as an effective public participatory way, Callahan (2007) points out that those who express caution and concern about direct citizen participation raise the following concerns: it is inefficient, time-consuming, costly, politically naïve, unrealistic, and disruptive, and it lacks broad representation. In addition, critics argue that citizens lack expertise and knowledge; are motivated by their personal interest, not the public good; and citizens can be passive, selfish, and apathetic, as well as cynical (Callahan, 2007). A study on public participation by Bovaird (2007) states that the above differences reflect the competing perspectives on democratic and administrative theory, as well as some of the contradictions inherent in contemporary society. On the lower rungs of this ladder are *manipulation, therapy, and placation* of the public, then the more positive activities of *informing and consultation*; on the higher rungs, we find *partnership* and eventually even *delegated power* and *citizen control*. However, Bovaird (2007) argues that this ladder disguises the complexity of provider– user relationships

The rungs of the ladder according to Bailey and Grossardt (2006) measure the difference between where public participation in strategic planning is situated in the public eye, and where it should be in the eyes of the respondents. While it is clear that the situation is not ideal, it is interesting to note that actual public confidence in these processes is not in fact at rock bottom as indicated by the terminology manipulation and therapy. It falls somewhere between informing and consultation. One issue with public confidence in planning and design processes, is the very long timeframe over which trust is built, and the relatively short timeframe over which it can be eroded by unresponsive or poorly designed public involvement.

Lane (2005) argues that the limitations of Arnstein's framework are obvious. The argument centres on the fact that each of the steps represents a very broad category, within which there are likely to be a wide range of experiences. For example, at the level of 'informing' there could be significant differences in the type and quality of the information being conveyed. In the case of internal and external stakeholders, colleges might decide to withhold part of the information to students but share the whole information with other stakeholders. Realistically therefore, levels of participation are likely to reflect a more complex continuum than a simple series of steps. The use of a ladder also implies that more control is always better than less control. However, increased control may not always be desired by the community and increased control without the necessary support may result in failure or more complex situations (Collins and Ison, 2006). In this instance, stakeholder participation in strategic planning might mean decentralization and devolving of power thereby creating a need for the support of this innovation. On the other hand, Eskeland and Filmer, (2006) indicate that participation in strategic planning may play a role even if colleges are owned and operated by a far-away national or provincial government.

Since Arnstein (1969), increasingly complex theories of participation have been advanced and new terminology added. In particular, the newer intervention has been a shift towards understanding participation in terms of the empowerment of individuals and communities. This has stemmed from the growing prominence of the idea of the citizen as consumer, where choice among alternatives is seen as a means of access to power. Under this model, people are expected to be responsible for themselves and

should, therefore, be active in public service decision-making. In this context, Burns and Taylor (2000) modified Arnstein’s ladder of participation and proposed a ladder of citizen power.

<b>CITIZEN CONTROL</b>
12. Independent control
11. Entrusted control
<b>CITIZEN PARTICIPATION</b>
10. Delegated control
9. Partnership
8. Limited decentralised decision-making
7. Effective advisory boards
6. Genuine consultation
5. High quality information
<b>CITIZEN NON-PARTICIPATION</b>
4. Clientele care
3. Poor information
2. Cynical consultation
1. Civic hype

Figure 2-5: ladder of citizen empowerment.

Burns, Hambleton and Hogget (1994)’s ladder of citizen empowerment is perhaps more elaborate than Arnstein’s ladder, with a further more qualitative breakdown of some of the different levels. For example, there is a distinction that can be drawn between cynical and genuine consultation, and between entrusted and independent citizen control. However, on the same note Callahan (2007) opines that citizen participation is a contested concept and the biggest question surrounding it is that in government

decision making, how much participation is enough? The idea of civic hype, increasingly recognized during the 1990s by Wilcox (1994)'s work is incorporated at the bottom rung of the ladder. This essentially treats community participation as a marketing exercise, in which the desired end result is 'sold' to the community. This can be done by means community workshops and community involvement in all stages of planning.

Wilcox's (1994) work reflects a philosophical progression in participation. His argument is that different levels of participation are acceptable in differing contexts and settings. This progression recognizes that power is not always transferred in apparently participative processes, but that citizen participation still has value. As opposed to the common interpretation of Arnstein, (1969) that brings the thought that it is only acceptable to be striving towards citizen control. Within some contexts, this move in philosophy can be further developed to describe levels of participation as a continuum in colleges of education. Arnstein (1969) and Wilcox's (1994) frameworks provide a useful insight into the scope of experiences associated with community participation. These theorists talk of a progression from citizen non participation to citizen participation and lastly citizen control. By nature, they represent simplifications of a more complex reality.

The complexity of public participation is further heightened by the fact that, in all these steps of public participation, some theorists argue in favour of indirect participation while others favour direct and deliberate models of collaboration (Callahan, 2007). Indirect participation acknowledges that, in a representative democracy, elected members and

professional administrators should act on behalf of citizens and the best interest of the state. Direct democracy on the other hand suggests that citizens are the owners of public institutions as well as government and should therefore participate in all decision making processes (Arnstein, 1969; Callahan, 2007). However, in light of this it is still not clear as to how much entrusted or independent control the public has in the running of public institutions such as colleges of education.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the theoretical framework that provides the lens on which the study is premised and guided. The framework explores the concepts of planned change in strategic planning and stakeholder participation in higher education; unpacks the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study and within this context discusses the processes of strategic planning and stakeholder participation in higher education. The next discussion will focus on how stakeholder participation, strategic planning and its processes have been conceptualised.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3 Conceptualizing strategic planning and processes**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature in the field of strategic planning processes and stakeholder participation in educational institutions. The literature review explores the concepts of strategic planning and stakeholder participation; unpacks strategic planning models and within this context discusses strategic planning processes and stakeholder participation in education. An overview of studies done in stakeholder participation in strategic planning is also undertaken.

#### **3.1 Conceptualising strategic planning**

Strategic planning has been defined variously in the literature. Middlewood and Lumby (2004) defined the strategic planning process as a set of activities designed to identify the appropriate future direction of a college. Strategic planning is used to choose a path for the college in relation to the external environment, but may also simultaneously engineer internal change (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004; Davies and Ellison, 2003; Davies 2006). Internal change comes as a result of a situational analysis which considers the situation within the institution itself such as organisation culture, image, structure and operational efficiency among other factors. On the other hand, internal change, at times, involves challenges where there could be internal and external conflicts as a result of stakeholders not understanding the changes taking place.

However, if done well with all stakeholders on board, it can bring about positive change and good working relations. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008) assert that a strategic plan takes into account the interaction between people and an institution, the aim being that of guiding activities in a purposeful, co-ordinated and consistent manner in order to achieve a vision.

Strategic planning, as defined by Paris (2003), is a means of establishing major directions for the university, college/school or department. It is a complex participatory process designed to scan the environment and create mission, vision and strategies capable of enhancing institutional capacity and making colleges/universities and schools more attractive and competitive in the market (Lerner, 1999). Through strategic planning, resources are concentrated in a limited number of major directions in order to maximize benefits to stakeholders, that is, those we exist to serve and who are affected by the choices we make (Davies, 2006; Paris, 2003; Davies and Ellison, 2003). For example strategic planning will care more about traditions and programs offered by the college. In fact, it cares more about the institutional survival, so that it will continue to provide and even better the programs offered. The study carried out by Keller (1983) on American colleges/universities points out that strategic planning places the fate of the institution above all else.

In light of the foregoing, strategic planning as opined by Paris (2003), is a process whose usefulness public and non-profit organizations recognized during the 1980s, when the notion of marketing for public and non-profit organizations gained prominence.

Bryson (2004) buttresses this perception by highlighting that most well-known models of public and non-profit strategic planning have their roots in the Harvard policy model developed at the Harvard Business School. Bush (1998) adds another dimension and links strategic planning to the evolution of the culture of an organization. Another opinion is that strategic planning as a structured management discipline and practice is barely out of its infancy (Dooris and Kelly, 2004). In view of this, a number of books and articles are devoted to the history of strategic planning. According to Dooris, Kelly and Trainer (2004), the date on the birth certificate of strategic planning is smudged, but it seems safe to say that it emerged as a distinct methodology sometime between the 1950s and 1970s.

The planning of education is typically associated with multi-year plans formulated at the centre which tend to focus on the size, organization, curriculum and standards for the educational system (Adams, 2000). In the “business world, a” strategic planning model’s timeframe is 2 to 3 years; at Higher Education Institutions, it usually takes 5 or more years (Lerner, 1999). In some situations, often little attention, during plan preparation, is given to the capacity and motivation to carry out plans, and frequently plans are constructed with little input and with suspect statistics (Levin, Warner, Stump and Skelton, 2001; Adams, 2000). A further argument is that the multi-year plans, unless significantly revised annually, tend to have weak records of implementation and may serve primarily as visions of the preferred future rather than sets of explicit, feasible actions (Adams, 2000, Davies, 2006).

There is need for a value system approach to strategic planning. Differences in the value system require a different approach to strategic planning at colleges of education (Bush, 2003). These institutions do not have a clearly defined customer; students, employers, and the community may all be considered “customers” (Conway, Mackay and Yorke, 1994). As a result, defining goals and measuring effectiveness consistently with the college’s mission is often problematic (Lerner, 1999). The value-based approach, that a college has a responsibility, not only for the education of its students but also as a part of a local and regional education system and has wider responsibilities, is often brought into conflict if it finds itself in a competitive market environment for students (Davies, 2006). While strategic planning can provide a framework and the means to move colleges of education forward, change must be based on a clear value system that is understood and shared by all stakeholders. The study on Indian higher education institutes by Umashantar and Dutta (2007) highlights the value of strategic planning by stating that failure of colleges among a host of other problems can usually be traced to deficient strategic planning. However, whatever method is used, the organisations should be cognizant of the fact that the students and the communities they serve are the chief beneficiaries of the strategic planning process.

Bryson, Crosby, and Bryson (2009) argue that strategic planning was then and is still thought of as a way of knowing intended outcomes to help leaders and managers discern what to do, how to do it. Bryson (2011) further asserts that strategic planning became a pertinent system because it can help facilitate communication, participation and judgement. It can also accommodate divergent interests and values, foster wise

decision making informed by reasonable analysis; promote successful implementation and accountability as well as enhance on-going learning.

Strategic planning and the formulation of strategy are founded on the beliefs held by all those who have a stake in a particular educational organization (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). Effective strategic planning can accrue many benefits to the organization. First, it enables the organization to be proactive and to actively shape its own destiny. Strategic planning helps to build both internal and external enthusiasm and commitment to the organization and its strategies (Glanz, 2006; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006). It incorporates a level of objectivity into the process and because the process requires attention to trends and external developments, an educational institution or department is less likely to be taken by surprise by a new problem or development (Davies 2006, Glanz 2006, Bush and Bell, 2002). Stakeholders, those affected by the organization, are involved in the planning process. Thus, the institution or department receives valuable feedback both on successful efforts and on areas where improvements should be made. Strategic planning is supported by a systematic programme aimed at collecting data to inform decision making and to improve educational programming (Glanz, 2006; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006).

It is essential for leaders to lead in the strategic planning process but effective leadership should encompass the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in determining the vision for which the principals assume stewardship (Arslan and Dalluge, 2010; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). Representatives from faculty, academic staff, and

classified staff should be involved, as each group brings a unique perspective to the process. This participation throughout the process helps ensure that those who have major responsibilities to carry out the plan understand the plan and the reasons behind it (Maree and Frazer, 2008; Middlewood and Lumby 2004; Davies, 2006). In light of this research, participation in the planning process can contribute greatly to employees' commitment to mutual goals and a sense of organizational unity.

Active involvement of stakeholders in the planning process creates external advocacy for the organization. Employers, for example, are much more likely to support an educational initiative such as a new degree program or a revamped curriculum if they have a first-hand role in a well-designed planning process (Maree and Frazer, 2008; Bush and Bell, 2002). External stakeholders have traditionally served in advisory capacities to the educational enterprise. Involvement in strategic planning is much more substantive than the advisory role. Their involvement essentially lays the groundwork for continuing support and participation by those stakeholders and ensures that the informal data base reflects the needs and perceptions of internal individuals and external constituents (Glanz, 2006; Davies, 2006).

A major benefit of strategic planning in higher educational institutions is that it can lend stability to the organization in spite of increasingly frequent leadership changes. By pushing decision-making down, a system for strategic planning can help the organization maintain a core purpose during times of changing leadership (Davies, 2006). Strategic planning thus helps the organization to integrate the views of the

organization and assess how all of the functional areas and activities fit together to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives (Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2005).

The strategic planning process ought to include multiple stakeholders in decision making. Organizations will not be successful if they continually focus on a single stakeholder (Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2005; Miller and Evers, 2002). A broadly-based participative strategic planning process can actually make the most of the frequent leadership changes by coupling a new leader's external perspective with a stable core internal group that is committed to mutual goals and a shared vision of a successful future (Fieldman and Khademian, 2007; Vigoda, 2002).

Strategic planning creates a framework for determining the direction a college should take to achieve its desired future (Miller and Evers, 2002). Engaging in a strategic planning process can benefit higher education in a variety of ways. Strategic planning can help to,

- Provide a framework for achieving competitive advantage,
- Allow all college constituencies to participate and work together towards accomplishing goals. It helps the college to establish direction and goals for the future (Glanz, 2006);
- Strategic planning develops future working relationships and helps to raise the vision of all key participants, encouraging them to reflect creatively on the strategic direction of the college (Glanz, 2006);

- It incorporates a level of objectivity and allows dialogue between the participants improving understanding of the organization's vision, and fostering a sense of ownership of the strategic plan, and belonging to the organization (Davies, 2006; Glanz, 2006);
- Aim to align the university with its environment and develops uniformity of purpose among all stakeholders; and
- Allows the college to set priorities and establish a continual information exchange among staff, management, customers and other key stakeholders (Glanz, 2006).

In relation to strategic planning in higher education, Paris (2003) asserts that strategic planning is a means of establishing major directions for the university, college/school or department. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Masoge and Ngcobo (2008) also state that strategic planning is an essential organizational action that involves a process of conscious decision making and constant review. They further postulate that it is a systematic and analytic approach to reviewing an organization as a whole in relation to its environment. The foregoing views reflect on a systemic way of planning, which, if done with citizen participation, can maximize benefits to all beneficiaries. Paris (2003) further opines that, through strategic planning, resources are concentrated in a limited number of major directions in order to maximize benefits to stakeholders and to those that the institution/college exists to serve and who are affected by the choices that the college makes.

Bryson (2011) also postulates that strategic planning should promote wise strategic thought, action and learning on behalf of an organization and its key stakeholders. In

higher education, those stakeholders include students, employers of graduates, funding agencies, and society, as well as internal stakeholders such as faculty and staff (Bush, 2011; Davies and Ellison, 2003; Lerner, 1999). Strategic planning is a structured approach to anticipating the future and exploiting inevitable resources around and within the institution and it is also a process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit among the mission of the organization (Davies and Ellison, 2003). In addition to what is highlighted by Davies and Ellison (2003), Crosby and Bryson, cited in Bryson (2011) elucidate that while strategic planning is a structured approach, it should attend to the design and use of these settings within which constructive deliberation is most likely to occur. According to a strategic planning study by Moynihan and Landuyt (2009), these settings include formal and informal forums linking speakers and audiences in order to create and communicate meaning and foster learning. For example an all stakeholders meeting in a college can be used as a perfect setting for deliberations in the strategic planning process.

The strategic plan should be able to chart the broad course for the entire institution for the next five years (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008). Strategic planning is not just a plan for growth and expansion but can and often does guide educational institutions on curriculum development, staff development and resource allocation. Davies and Ellison (2003:161) further assert that;

*Strategic planning involves journey thinking in which we are extrapolating patterns from the past and projecting to the future. It takes the broader organizational view. By articulating the main features of the organization's development, it projects forward several years. As such it*

*can be considered to be a rational, predictable and, to a large degree, an incremental process.*

The foregoing assertion view strategic planning as a means of looking at the past, the present and making projections for the future. From the above citation, lessons that can be drawn are that strategy deals with fundamental key issues such as the articulation of the organisation's development and that strategic planning should be seen as a template against which current activities can be benchmarked (Davies and Ellison, 2004). Bryson (2011) accentuates this view by highlighting that strategic planning is a deliberative disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why. The essence of a strategy is differentiation (Paris, 2003). This pattern of increasing functional differentiation can also be observed in the higher education reforms of the United States, Australia, and Europe (Eacott, 2011). Consequently, the issue of structural differentiation has also found its way in higher education in other African states like Nigeria and South Africa (Fehnel, 2002). To this end, Davies and Ellison (2003) aver that differentiation is about what makes the university or college or department different from any other educational institutions. In this light, other service organizations, can differentiate themselves based on types of programs, delivery systems, student clientele, location, and the like (Eacott, 2011). Similarly, a department or administrative unit involved in strategic planning will identify its unique niche in the larger university community and focus its resources on a limited number of strategic efforts, abandoning activities that could be, should be, or are being done by others (Learner, 1999; Paris, 2003).

Bryson (2011) argues that strategic planning can help organizations develop and implement effective strategies but aptly warns that organizations should remain open to unforeseen opportunities. Cumming and Wilson (2005) further advise that the art of strategy lies both in the combination of frameworks, images or maps and the choice of their focus. As strategic planning continues to evolve, it moves to strategic management. Currently, the trend includes leadership, planning and management (Bryson, 2005). This statement is clarified by saying, people realize that strategic planning comprises a set of concepts, procedures and tools that can help leaders and their subordinates enhance organizational achievement. It might not be enough to decide what to do and how to do it, the doing matters too (Bryson, 2005)

While the foregoing assertions can be true, the concept of strategic planning as an on-going process should not be given too much attention and reverence for strategic plans can blind organizations to other unplanned and unexpected – yet incredible useful sources of information, insight and action (Bryson, 2011). In strategic planning, along with the analysis of internal and external environment of the organization, there is an analysis of strategic goals, vision and mission and also an analysis of the implementation process (Davies and Ellison, 2004; Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2008). Davies (2006) further states that strategic planning is associated with a rational, direction setting approach over the medium to long term. Davies and Ellison (2003) assert that strategic planning is effective in an environment in which there is a low to medium rate of change and the college can understand, react to and cope with that change. This has implications for participative leadership in that being able to cope with

changes might require participation of key stakeholders. Not only should stakeholders be involved but should participate in decision making and the implementation process. Davies (2006) further argues that while schools exist in a turbulent environment, there are aspects of their work which are more predictable and in such a situation; the college can have a clear strategic plan for definable parts of its activities (Davies and Ellison, 2004).

Eacott (2011) asserts that despite the apparent popularity of strategic planning literature, this literature fails to challenge existing social inequalities in education. The way literature chimes with managerial policies might only further intensify existing inequalities (Eacott, 2011). This argument resonates comfortably with this research in that where strategic planning is granted attention, there are areas of concern. The concern whether or not stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process. If they do, what then is the nature of their participation in the strategic planning process? The next section of the review illuminates the rationale for strategic planning.

### ***3.1.1 The rationale of strategic planning in higher education***

Formalized strategic planning grew out of budget exercises in the America of the 1950s and spread to many countries rapidly. Universities, colleges and schools as non-profit making organizations also adopted this planning system (Paris, 2003). It was observed that public and non-profit organizations, like schools and colleges, recognized the usefulness of strategy formulation during the 1980s, when the notion of marketing for

public and non-profit organizations gained prominence (Mintzberg, 1994). The systematic analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is a primary strength of the Harvard model and is a step embedded in all strategic planning models used at many institutions of higher education (Bryson, 2009). Given some years of practice in many countries, strategic planning could be very essential now because of the following assumptions:

- The present lack of effective strategic planning has led to dire predictions from many observers.
- It might not only be ineffective strategic planning as Lawler (1993) emphasizes the need for a complete organizational model in order to design an appropriate participation approach or transition, noting that this can be particularly challenging. Lawler, (1993) notes that most existing large organizations do not provide useful models for how an organization should be designed to create an effective participative management approach that will usher in effective strategic planning.

According to Benjamin and Carroll (1998:12)

*The present course of higher education in the state – in which student demand, tuition, and costs are rising much faster than public funding - is unsustainable. Unless significant steps are taken to address the situation, hundreds of thousands of learners will be denied access to higher education within the next 20 years.*

Breneman (1995) further asserts that this could be a serious, sobering, economic, political, and social catastrophe, and there is nothing in the framework of a current situation that is likely to prevent that from occurring. In light of the above, Naidu,

Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008) add that the process of engaging in strategic planning must therefore be well managed, taking into consideration the institution's context and societal structures, the specific culture of the institution and human and physical resources available at the institution. On emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, Mintzberg (1994) argued that institutions of higher education that do not rethink their roles, responsibilities, and structures can expect a very difficult time in the subsequent years and the next generation. Beaudoin (2003:1) in his distance learning study stressed the importance for institutional leaders "to be informed and enlightened enough to ask fundamental questions that could well influence their institution's future viability" in the strategic planning process. He further adds that some might not survive.

On the contrary, Bryson (2011) asserts that strategic planning can be helpful for the purposes of, firstly, gathering, analysing and synthesising information to consider its strategic significance and frame possible solutions. Secondly, producing considered judgements among key decision makers about desirable, feasible, defensible and acceptable missions, goals, strategies and actions, along with complementary initiatives such as new, changed or terminated policies, programs and projects, or even overall organizational designs. Thirdly, the purpose of strategic planning is that of addressing in effective ways key organizational issues or challenges now and the foreseeable future. Fourthly, enhancing continuous organizational learning and lastly, creating significant and enduring public value.

In the past few years, many countries in the world faced economic hardship as a result of the world-wide economic recession (Mintzberg, 1994). Implication for education was that, even if higher education institutions were on the right track, no university or college or department could afford to remain static for long (Bryson and Crosby, 2009). Strategic planning might minimize crisis-mode decision-making that appears to be affecting institutions of higher education the world over (Paris, 2003). In such instances, it is important for organizations to be interdependent so that they help each other rather than wait for the traditional sources of finance. The study of South African partnerships, for example, the Eastern Cape Higher Education Association (ECHEA), the Free State Higher and Further Education Trust are good examples of partnerships in Southern Africa where these organisations optimise their higher education resources not only for the development of their organisations, but also for the human, social and economic development of the region (Reddy, 2007). In light of the cases under study, Kariwo (2007) notes that the government financing method has little room for incentives and does not promote efficiency. He further points out that budgeting is annual and planning is short term and strategic planning becomes difficult given the short horizons. Given this, an institution cannot survive for long with knee-jerk responses to change nor can it compete with other institutions offering the same services. Participation of stakeholders might help reduce some of the above pointed challenges. Bryson (2011) asserts that participation of relevant stakeholders is necessary since one small group at the top cannot know the needs of students, employers and other stakeholders without their input. It is also difficult for one small internal group to know all that is occurring in the

external environment that will have an impact, positive or negative, on the university or college.

There are times of interdependence, when public institutions such as colleges of education do not have to rely on their traditional sources of help only, but also become interconnected and work with internal, external and even international communities (Paris, 2003). Bryson (1999) provides three examples of formerly distinct arenas that are very much interconnected, which non-profit organizations like colleges and universities in USA and in Europe have engaged. These are, domestic and international: public, private and non-profit; and educational and economic policies. While many educational institutions attempt to make it policy to ensure that the above named arenas are interconnected, there is also another distinction that, although many organizations and institutions are involved in it, no one is fully in charge of (Bryson, 1999).

Increased environmental ambiguity requires educational institutions and other public entities to think and act strategically as never before (Bryson, 2011). Secondly, they should translate their insights into effective strategies to cope with their changed circumstances. This might mean that there is need for organizations to bring key stakeholders together and think, plan and act strategically. Concerns for better use of resources and improvement of college and university performance world over is growing among legislators, public officials, parents, funding agencies, the media, civic organizations and society at large (Machado 2011).

On the same concern, Jurinski (1993) notes that traditional financial resources for the support of higher education are not likely to increase. Cut-backs are the norm in educational financing in recent years yet demands for services continue to expand (<http://www.academicjournals.org/IJVTE>). The Portuguese higher education study carried out by Machado (2011) on the issue of financing education views the issue of 'greater investment in higher education as a vehicle for economic growth and prosperity' as a tired argument. Machado (2011) argues that data from the United States, as reported by Vedder (2004), would suggest just the opposite. The Vedder Report (2004) states that 10 states spending the least on higher education showed a median real income growth per capita of 46%, while the 10 highest spending states only showed 32%. Vedder (2004) also points out that only 21% of new funding is being allocated to instruction, which is the core mission for creating a productive workforce. Jurinski (2003) and Machado (2011) further elucidate that not every institution is pursuing this path. It is therefore the role of strategic planning to give the university, the college, the department, and the administrative unit the opportunity to chart its own course and to focus its own future financial resourcing.

Bryson (2011) calls strategic planning an intellectual exercise in the sense that it is a conscious effort that involves thinking ahead and beyond challenges. As such, the process is also uniquely suited to higher education in that higher education institutions have intellectuals who are capable of articulating the process of strategic planning. Bryson (2011) and Machado (2011) notes that global trends, including those impacting

higher education, are moving inextricably toward a tangled web of unparalleled complexity. This new reality requires that institutions alter their methodologies for innovation, change and organizational structure. The foundation for innovation could be strategic planning. While still on this point, Keller (1983) speaks of conscious academic strategic planning as an appropriate response to turbulence. In light of Keller's view, Machado (2011:10) elucidates that;

*The dogma of colleges as amiable, anarchic, self-correcting collectives of scholars with a small contingent of dignified caretakers...is crumbling... (and they cannot) continue to claim to be akin to a tiny monastic order deserving special dispensation from the rigors of planning, priorities, and management.*

The above view reflects that organizations are changing and therefore colleges are expected to find ways of infusing strategic planning for managing change (Bryson, 2011). With the changes witnessed everywhere in the world, there are new challenges that the organizations that want to accompany the winds of change must face. However, the underlying questions in the Zimbabwean context, given Trainer's (2004) assertion that, despite many challenges, many colleges are seeking opportunities to engage in and support their planning processes could be; how do colleges carry out their strategic plans? And what is the nature of participation in the strategic planning process?

Machado (2011) further points out that a new era of conscious academic strategy is being born. The modern college and university scene is one that is no longer so fiercely disdainful of sound economics and financial planning or so derisive of strategic management (Lerner, 1999; Machado, 2011). This implies that strategic management

processes can be better introduced if key stakeholders can come together and ensure that higher education does not fall farther behind as other competing social forces pass it by. In strategic planning, professors and campus administrators are expected to unite and design plans, programs, priorities, and expenditures in order to insure their futures and keep their higher educational institutions among the world's best (Paris, 2003).

It is sometimes thought that strategic planning is just another term for long term planning, as most organizations refer to their five year plans as strategic plans (Davies, 2006). However, there are major differences between strategic planning and long-range planning. First, strategic planning is much more concerned with identifying gaps and challenges and resolving those issues while long range planning is concerned with meeting set targets. Strategic planning is also sensitive to the external environment than long-range planning (Paris, 2003). In a way there is need to engage with external stakeholders as well as internal stakeholders in strategic planning. However some argue that this process is time consuming and might not always yield the best results. Traditionally, long-range planning was inwardly focused, in the sense that the goals and objectives were formulated with minimal attention to the larger system in which the institution functioned (Dimmock and Walker, 2005; Glanz, 2006). In light of the foregoing, one might argue that long range planning, though it pays little attention to stakeholders, keeps the organisation focused on its targets.

Bryson (1988), on the other hand points out that long-range planning focuses more on specifying goals and objectives, while strategic planning is more focused on identifying

and resolving issues. In fact, goals and objectives which are considered operational planning should not be developed before a college or university has completed its strategic planning. Another difference is that strategic planning places the fate of the institution above all else (Bryson, 1999). Strategic planning places the long-term vitality and excellence of the college or university first. It cares about traditions, faculty salaries, and academic programs (Keller, 1983). It also cares about institutional survival more, so that there will be places for scholars of teacher education to teach and do their research. Scholars cannot easily hang their shingles out like physicians or architects. Professors still need to unite with various stakeholders and work towards a shared common goal (Lerner, 1999).

In the more recent years, strategic planning has been used in a variety of departments, offices, and colleges and has relied on information from internal and external stakeholders regarding their needs, expectations and requirements as the foundation for planning (Davies and Ellison, 2004). It is argued that college improvement rests on prioritising improvements in teaching and learning through an interactive and reflective process that combines both strategic intent and flexibility in meeting the needs and expectations of local communities in times of rapid change and long-term uncertainty (Dimmock and Walker, 2005).

In this light, traditional long-range planning tends to maintain the status quo over time. Assuming that the future will be a linear extension of the present, planners typically spend little time attempting to reshape the organization. However, strategic planning is

much more likely to result in a deliberate shift in direction or refocusing of mission in light of changes, actual or anticipated (Davies, 2006; Davies and Ellison, 2003; Dimmock and Walker, 2006).

Strategic plans, however, are developed around a vision of success or a vision of the desired future. Long-range planning, on the other hand, has generally been oriented to the status quo of visioning and has also been seen as a critical component of strategic planning (Davies and Ellison, 2003). This idealized word (vision) picture represents the best possible future for the institution by focusing on goals and objectives. However, there are concerns around long term planning. One problem that arises, stems from colleges setting long-term plans usually through vision and mission, but leaving these to inert mechanisms which too often diminish strategic flexibility and subsequent action (Dimmock and Walker 2006). This implies that while colleges make long term plans, they do not come up with practical ways of implementing those plans in order to get to the desired goal. This, again in a way, as pointed out by Dimmock and Walker (2006), distinguishes between long-range planning and strategic planning.

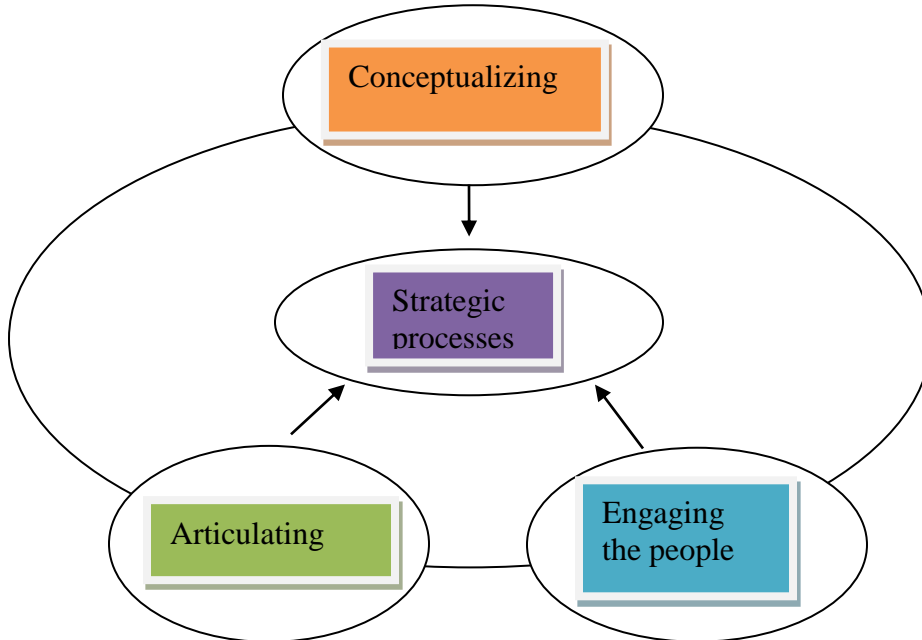
To ensure success of the strategic planning effort, universities need to adjust the business strategy model to higher education. As discussed below, institution-based strategic planning differs from the business model in several specific ways. By recognizing these differences and changing the traditional model accordingly, universities can increase understanding of, and participation in the strategy process

throughout their constituencies (Lerner 1999). The next section of the review illuminates critical strategic planning processes.

### 3.2 Conceptualizing strategic planning processes

Strategic planning processes have been conceptualised variously. Davies' (2006) approach to strategic planning and stakeholder participation considers three processes. These include conceptualizing, engaging stakeholders and articulating. His approach works through a process in which leaders of the college/school and stakeholders make sense of what needs to be done, where the school needs to go, and the new ways of understanding the school needs to adopt. The approach is illustrated in the diagram below.

*Adapted from Davies (2006)*



**Figure 3-1: Davies approach to strategic planning and stakeholder participation**

This approach emphasizes that the first categorization of strategic processes is that of conceptualizing. Leaders need to make time for themselves and stakeholders to reflect on the organizational and educational context of the college and where it fits into the current environment (Davies, 2006). There are four dimensions of conceptualizing. The first is that of reflecting, which implies understanding where the organization is. The second dimension focuses on strategic thinking, which implies knowing where the organization could be. The third dimension which focuses on strategic analysis is concerned with finding out what is known and lastly mental models which are concerned with how the strategy can be explained (Davies, 2006; Davies and Ellison, 2003).

### ***3.2.1 Engaging the people***

The other important process is that of engaging people. Engaging internal and external stakeholders within the college to be part of the process is vital for successful outcomes. It is important to establish how stakeholders within the organization can be encouraged to engage with each other to build strategic understanding and enhance the strategic capability of the organization. Given the problems experienced in Southern African countries as pointed out in chapter one, some of the engagement elements could have been omitted. Davies (2006) argues that this engagement consists of four elements: strategic conversation, strategic participation, strategic motivation and strategic capability. A study by Burby (2003) concurs with the opinion that people participation generates trust, credibility and commitment regarding the planning process right through to the implementation of plans. Brody, Godschalk and Burby (2003) further

add that while stakeholder participation can add time and costs to the strategic planning process, this upfront investment can pay off when it comes to agreement of plans and their implementation. The study by Godshalk (1994) concludes by stating that engaging people results in more equitable and enduring solutions in the strategic planning process thereby helping to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are protected over the long term. The important factor is that of consensus building and keeping everyone participating (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004; Davies and Ellison, 2003; Davies, 2006).

### ***3.2.2 Articulating strategic plans***

The process of articulating and communicating the strategy for the institution is critical to its success. All those who are involved in the school should be able to understand the major direction in which the college is headed and the institution should articulate that strategy to the parental and wider community (Davies, 2006). There are three major ways in which this can take place: oral, written and structural.

However, it is important to note that stakeholder participation has to be set in a broader organizational context. Three levels of organizational involvement can be considered: information, consultation and participation (Davies, 2006). The figure below shows levels of involvement

*Adapted from Davies (2006:55)*

Level	Description
Information	Individuals in the college are kept abreast of major developments and the plans for future direction
Consultation	Individuals are told of the major directions of the school, consulted and involved in planning the details
Participation	Basic design questions are left open for full discussion and decision making

**Table 3-1: Three levels of organizational involvement**

Effective participation may depend on leadership as well as on the situation. As such the culture of participation needs to be built. Strategic leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century may be better conceptualized as getting things done with people (Davies, 2006; Davies and Ellison, 2003). There is need to build trust and a sense of purpose among all those who work in the college's strategic journey. Adequate participation in a way can ensure that strategic planning does not become a self-perpetuating bureaucratic mechanism but rather a self-reflective learning process that familiarizes stakeholders in the colleges of education with key strategic issues and feasible alternatives for resolving issues (Middlewood and Lumby, 2002; David, 2005). However, this is not as simple as is stated here. It is necessary to consider issues such as who participates and at what level is . In a way, this emphasizes the need for decentralization of strategic planning as well as increased and wider participation of all stakeholders in colleges of education, in this particular case, in Zimbabwe. However, there are other challenges such as restricted participation and pseudo participation that can affect the participation of stakeholders. In such situations, a sense of ownership, trust and purpose can hardly be built. The next discussion focuses on aligning strategic plans at different planning levels.

### ***3.2.3 Alignment in the strategic planning process***

The concept of alignment is related to the idea of consistency between the different strategic planning levels. In this regard, three levels of alignment can be introduced that are bound to be considered in the analysis in this study: Vertical, horizontal and stakeholder's alignment (Kathuria *et al.*, 2007; cited in Giroto and Mundet, 2009). Vertical alignment could be interpreted as the degree of consistency between the different strategic plans from the institutional to the business units, covering up some micro-practices (John and D'arsons, 2005). In turn, horizontal alignment can be interpreted as being the coordination of efforts across the organization, which requires the exchange and collaboration among the various functional activities (Callahan, 2003). The stakeholder's alignment could be interpreted as the degree of congruity achieved between the larger institutional plan and the social and economic primary stakeholder's demands (Giroto and Mundet, 2009).

While allowing for flexibility, alignment means that colleges of education within the system support strategic goals of the larger system, and that the units within the college support campus goals. Colleges of education through the use of their deans can define their own ways to establish goals, and choose what is important to them within the framework of the college-wide strategic planning process. This might foster a feeling of ownership of the process, and personal contribution to it (Bush and Coleman, 2000). The design of strategic planning differs between the university level, the college level, and the department level. The process for each college needs to be customized to that

college's unique environment, keeping in mind the high degree of heterogeneity of the population within the college. For example a polytechnic college, could be not one homogenous college, but four colleges living on the same geographical turf.

#### ***3.2.4 Vision and Mission***

The identification of the organization's vision and mission is the first step of any strategic planning process (David, 2005; Cummings and Willson, 2004; Davies, 2006). The institution's vision sets out the reasons for the organization's existence and the "ideal" state that the organization aims to achieve; the mission identifies major goals and performance objectives. Both are defined within the framework of the institution's philosophy, and are used as a context for development and evaluation of intended and emergent strategies (Lerner, 1999; Bush and Bell, 2002; Davies 2006; Glanz, 2006). One cannot over-emphasize the importance of a clear vision and mission; none of the subsequent steps will matter if the organization is not certain where it is headed.

#### ***3.2.5 Environmental Scanning***

Leadership in autonomous schools involves keeping abreast of trends and issues, threats and opportunities (Caldwell and Spinks, 2004). The scanning of the environment within which the institution operates mostly includes aspects such as local competition and those aspects influencing both government legislation and technological development (Middlehood and Lumby, 2004). At the same time, analysts increasingly

found that emerging external issues often had a greater impact on the future of their organizations than any of the internal issues. In response, they began to modify some of their techniques and concepts so that outside developments could be formally included in their results. Initially, the emphasis on tracking the outside world fell on monitoring developments that, from an inside perspective, had already been identified as potentially important (Lerner, 1999, McGee Thomas and Wilson 2005, Glanz, 2006).

Monitoring was found inadequate as entirely new issues emerged that had major effects through mechanisms that had not previously been recognized, necessitating scanning (Lerner, 1999). Thus, it became the responsibility of the forecaster to scan more widely in the external environment for emerging issues, however remote (Davies and Ellison, 2003). The present course of higher education in Zimbabwe, for example, is such that student demand, tuition, and other costs are rising much faster than public funding. This has become unsustainable and might lead to many students being denied access to higher education ([www.zimbabwesituation.com](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com)). Therefore an industry as big as education should not overlook these social developments that stimulate the development of environmental scanning methods, particularly as the scope of scanning activities expanded to include technological developments, economic developments, and legislative and regulatory developments (Lerner 1999).

There are two main barriers impeding the introduction of environmental scanning techniques in higher education: firstly, learning the new process and secondly, achieving the necessary organizational acceptance and commitment to make the process work and be worthwhile (Renfro and Morrison, 1983). Lerner (1999) and

McGee, Thomas and Wilson (2005) posed questions about these two barriers: How can an environmental scanning function be developed in an already existing organizational structure? How should environmental scanning work within the organization? What resources are needed for the process to function successfully?

While the organizational structure of the scanning function will vary according to a given institution's management style, the functions of the scanning process are universal (Davies, 2006). Developing a scanning function within an existing organizational structure is necessarily evolutionary because sudden organizational change is disruptive and costly. While the scanning function could be implemented in many ways, the most popular of the formal systems by far is through an in-house, interdisciplinary, high-level committee of four or five members (but no more than 12 or so). If assigned to a particular department or contracted out, the results of scanning can easily be ignored. And to achieve the widest appreciation of the potential interactions of emerging issues, the scanning function must be interdisciplinary (Lerner, 1999). Without several disciplines involved, cross-cutting impacts, such as the impact of a technological development (for example, the home computer) on social issues (for example, the family), will most likely be missed (Lerner, 1999; Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2005; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). To facilitate the communication of the results of scanning throughout the institution, it is easiest to work directly with the various leaders of the institution rather than with their designated experts. Ideally, therefore, the chief executive officer of the institution should appoint a scanning committee, and to increase the likelihood that results will be incorporated into the decision-making process, the

chair of the committee should be one of the president's or chancellor's most trusted advisors (Davies, 2006; Lerner 1999; Davies and Ellison, 2003).

Perhaps an essential issue for the successful operation of a scanning committee is the selection of the other members. Ideally, membership should include a broad cross-section of department heads, vice presidents, deans, the provost, faculty members, trustees, and so forth (Dimmock and Walker, 2006; Davies and Ellison, 2003). Certainly, the institutional research office should be represented, if not by the director, then by a senior assistant. The objective is to ensure that all important positions of responsibility in the institution are represented on the committee (Lerner, 1999).

The dilemma involved in using strategic plans to channel organizational efforts effectively and efficiently must always be balanced against the risk of losing sight of alternative strategies better suited to the changing environment (Glanz, 2006). Higher education administrators should participate in scanning for several reasons. First, only those with a broad perspective on an institution's current operations and future directions can make an informed evaluation of the potential importance or relevance of an item identified in scanning.

Jones (2005) also asserts that strategic leaders should have a realistic appraisal of environment in which the college finds itself, the resources at its disposal and the opportunities that exist. Secondly, the problems of gaining the necessary communication, recognition, and acceptance of change from the external environment are minimized. Hence, the time between recognition of a new issue and communication to the institutional leadership is reduced, if not eliminated (McGee, Thomas and Wilson,

2005). And when an issue arises that requires immediate action, a top-level scanning committee is ready to serve the institution's leadership, offering both experience and knowledge of the issue in the external world and within the institution. Thirdly, one of the more subtle outcomes of being involved with a scanning system is that the participants begin to ask how everything they read and hear bears on the work of the scanning committee. The major question will, then, be: What is its possible relevance for my institution? Indeed, the development within top-level executives of an active orientation to the external environment and to the future may well be as beneficial to the organization as any other outcome of the process (Lerner, 1999; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004).

A scanning committee does not need to have general authorization, for it serves only as an advisory board to the chief executive. In this sense, it functions similarly to the planning office in preparing information to support the institution's authorized leadership. The scanning committee can be available to be used as one of the institution's resources to implement a particular policy in anticipation of or response to an issue (Dess Lumpkin and Eisner, 2005). But the basic purpose of the scanning committee is to identify important emerging issues that may constitute threats or opportunities, thereby facilitating the orderly allocation of the institution's resources to anticipate and respond to its changing external environment (Davies, 2006).

### **3.2.6 *Gap analysis***

Gap analysis in organizations provides the basis for making decisions. Organizations evaluate the difference between their current position and desired future through gap

analysis (Pisel, 2008; Bryson, 2011). As a result, a college or university can develop specific strategies and allocate resources to close the gap and achieve its desired state. It is important in strategic planning to identify the difference between the current situation and what is desired. Middlewood and Lumby (2004) assert that future position provides the basis for making decisions about possible ways ahead. Fidler (1996) cited in Middlewood and Lumby 2004 argues that gap analysis must include an examination of the organization's culture.

Gap analysis is important as it can help the institution to meet accountability demands of stakeholders while progress is being made and to ensure a closer link with the day-to-day operational activities of the organization (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004; Bush and Bell, 2005). Measuring and comparing the university's operations, practices, and performance against others is useful for identifying best practices. Through an ongoing systematic benchmarking and gap analysis process campuses find a reference point for setting their own goals and targets. This process according to Middlewood and Lumby, (2004) also examines the future agenda of further education at national level in order to draw conclusions for its framework for action.

### **3.3 Strategic Planning Models**

This section reviews two strategic planning models starting with Porter's Five Forces model (P5F), the Systemic Strategic Planning model and ending with the implications of SWOT analysis for both models. According to Ward and Rivani (2005), the most famous

of all models has been Michael Porter's Five Forces (P5F) model (Porter, 1980). The choice of this model is motivated by Ward and Rivani's (2005) assertion that the P5F model has become a standard of comparison for most (if not all) new theories and models that look at the external environment of an organization and the area in which the organization competes. Lerner (1999) presents a different view with regards to these models. He argues that Ansoff's strategic planning model, the P5F model and the SWOT analysis model are three models that are a foundation upon which the subsequent strategic planning models were developed. Machado (2011) elucidates that many universities have found these models to be useful, and were able to adopt them not only to the needs of higher education in general, but to the special needs of specific universities/colleges. One of the most important benefits of these models is flexibility and adaptability (Lerner, 1999). The models can be used in a variety of ways, using approaches specific to a particular setting, to create a unique picture of the institution's distinctive environment (Bush, 2011).

### 3.3.1 Porter's Five Forces Model

Below is a graphical interpretation of Porter's Five Forces Model (Porter, 1985,).

*Adapted from Alexandra Lerner (1999)*

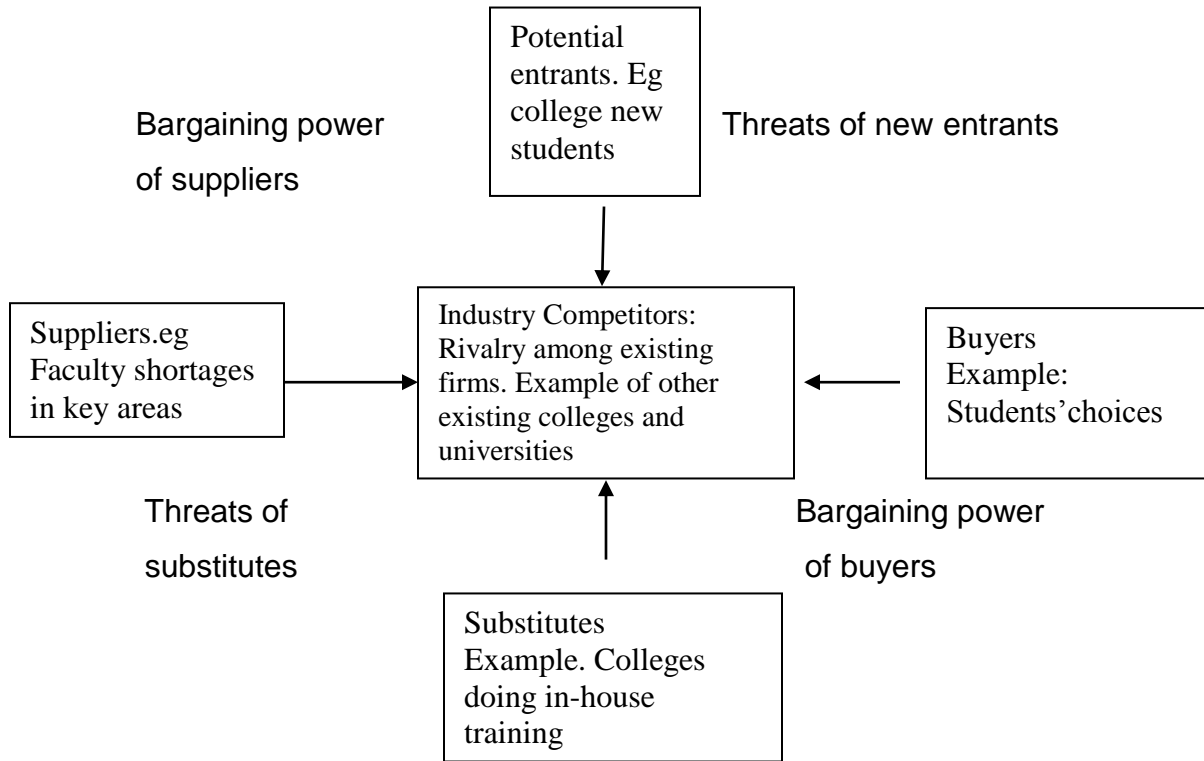


Figure 3-2: graphical interpretation of Porter's five forces model

The Five Forces Model (P5F) and the framework behind it date back to the early 80s and were the work of Michael Porter, a scholar working and teaching at the Harvard Business School (Ward and Rivani, 2005). This model, as viewed by Porter, was able, at that time, to fill a void, in the management field corresponding to the development of a new discipline; that is, 'Competitive Strategy'. Porter's intention was to provide an overall model that would help institutions realize the impact of external scenarios (that he calls forces) on their overall performance (Ward and Rivani, 2005). The five forces model guides the analysis of an organization's environment and the attractiveness of

the service that the organization (college) provides. It includes the risk of new competitors entering the industry. For example, in education; new private colleges might be set up, thereby becoming a threat as potential substitutes. Apart from guiding analysis of the organization's environment, other factors that can be looked into are the bargaining power of students, the bargaining power of the community that is being served, and the degree of rivalry between the existing competitors (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005; Porter, 1985). However despite the general acceptance of P5F model, there are critics of this model.

Many authors have analysed the P5F model starting from a position of admiration and total acceptance to one of a need for renovation. However, academics have criticized this model, arguing that certain elements are not contemplated and that such a flaw merits at least another force. For example, Grove (2001) proposes the addition of a sixth force to include Government and Legislation levers. Others suggest the introduction of the middleman. They argue that the middleman will be able to influence the marketability of the product as well as the competitiveness of an enterprise (Hill, 2001). Some scholars signal a shortcoming of the model as its inability to handle the birth and dissemination of new technologies, for example, internet and biotechnology. They view the P5F model as a static framework that is incapable of capturing the changes of the industry or adapting multinational strategy to local (national) organization (Cullen, 2001).

Despite the foregoing, in an educational set up, the model can still hold for the emerging new technological economies, as it changes only the drivers of the forces. For example, it can be very costly for a new college entrant to raise the fees required. Porter opines that criticism of his PF5 model is rooted in a general misunderstanding of his model in the specific case of change management. The P5F model is useful for picturing the dynamics of a college but does not tell the whole story. An environmental scan identifies external opportunities and threats, evaluates the college's overall attractiveness, and identifies factors contributing to, or taking away from, the college's attractiveness (Hax and Majluf, 1996 Cited in Lerner 1999). In light of these observations, Ginsberg, (2002) argues that strategic planning models have avoided abstraction and a top down style usually found in the old models. He argues that strategic planning is now the key responsibility of all stakeholders and P5F provides a simple framework that can be used in an all-inclusive strategic planning process. Through the organization's use of stakeholders and choice of strategy, strategic planning can alter the impact of these forces (as referred to by Porter) to its advantage.

The P5F model requires the strategist to recognise the source of the power balances or imbalances that they have and still drill deeper into the analysis to analyse not only the sources of such threats and power but also the impact of each on the strategy process. This process should involve participation of all key stakeholders at all stages (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005; Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2005; Glanz, 2006; and Davies, 2006). This explains why the P5F model, central to many scholars' strategy framework,

is also part of the systemic model. The next section discusses the systemic strategic planning model.

### ***3.3.2 The Systemic Strategic Planning Model***

Bryson (2011) postulates that, the thinking process in strategic planning, requires deliberation informed by broad scale, yet informative information gathering, analysis and synthesis. This implies that the process requires stakeholders to use tools of information gathering and come together to synthesize that information (Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2008). The focus here could refer to the goals, vision and mission. Bryson (2011) further argues that there is need for clarification of the mission and goals to be pursued and issues to be addressed along the way; development and exploration of, and choice among, strategic alternatives; and the future implications of present decisions. Clear clarifications can be best achieved through active participation of stakeholders. Thomas and Wilson cited in McGee, Thomas and Wilson (2005:22) postulate that,

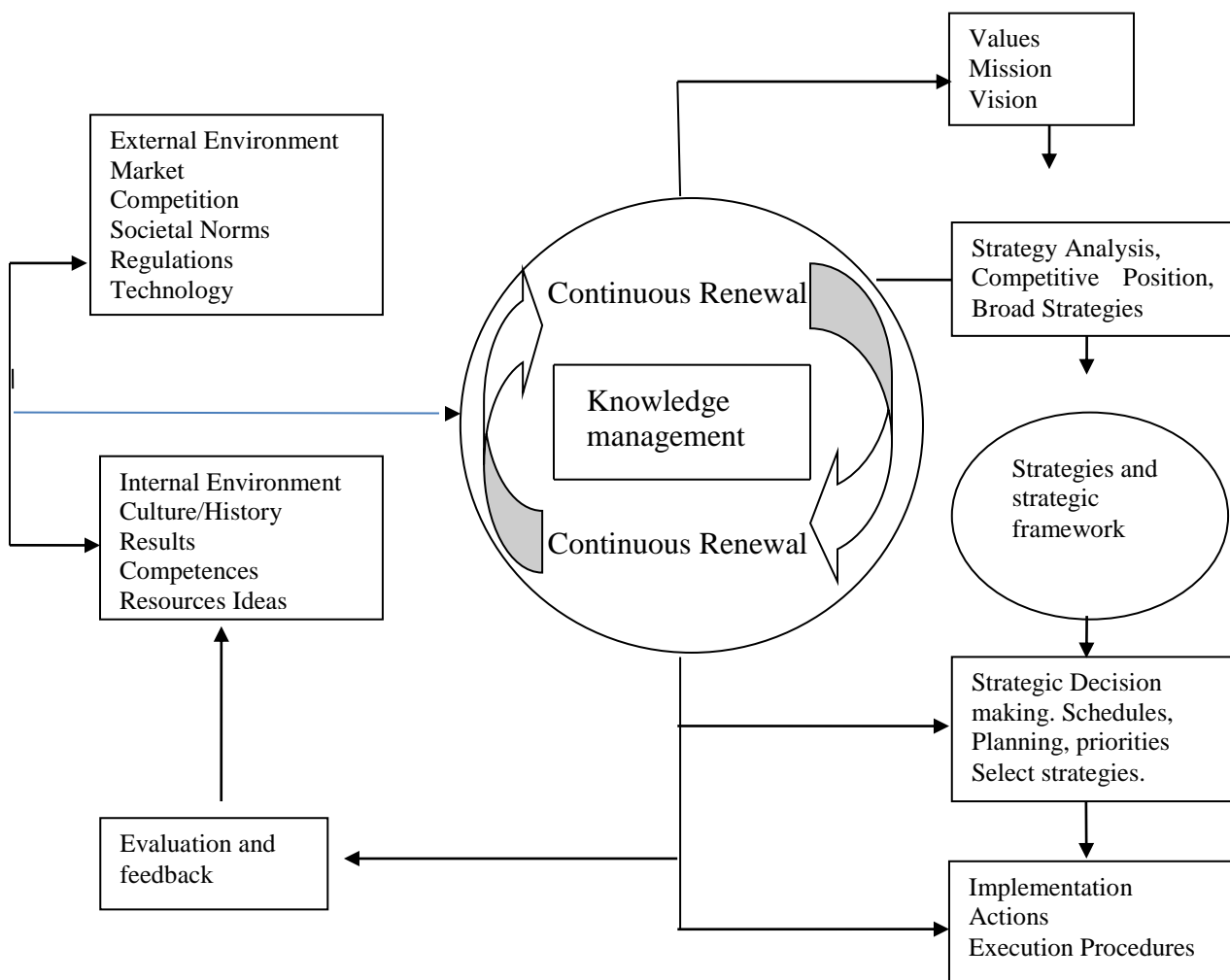
*Strategy frameworks, images or maps help people to do their own mapping, thereby kick-starting an oscillating thinking/acting or strategic process, which instills a momentum that brings other choices and possibilities to the fore. It may not get people 'down the mountain' in a straight line but it gets things moving and, when things move, other things come into view.*

This concept views strategic planning as an on-going process that, along with the analysis of internal and external environment of the organization, support an analysis of strategic goals, vision and mission (Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2008), a process that involves external and internal participation of relevant stakeholders. There should be a continuous system renewal and knowledge management so as to create strategy and

understand competitive advantages. To achieve this, Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008) elucidate that system renewal and knowledge management should be guided by the shared vision, core values and beliefs of the college management, educators and the surrounding community.

Figure 2,2 below is an illustration of the systemic strategic planning model.

*Adapted from Cummings and Wilson's systemic model.*



**Figure 3-3: Systemic Strategic planning Model**

Based on this framework, strategic plans are conceptualized in terms of a strategy map that is cyclic in nature. An assessment of internal and external environment should lead to knowledge management, a process that should be continuously renewed. Vision and mission statements come in after having assessed the external and internal environments. Recognizing that it is a map and a system model, this model animates and orientates the problem of strategy and invites debate and dialogue among those strategists taking part in the strategic planning process (Mcgee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005). This implies that through the use of this model, participants are able to share in the wider decision making process and shared decisions are likely to be better informed and are also much more likely to be implemented effectively (Bush, 2011). On the same issue, Bush (2011) highlights that, while consultation and debate is good, informal consultations with staff does not constitute collegiality. He argues that where heads seek the advice of colleagues before making a decision the process is one of consultation, whereas the essence of collegiality is participation in strategic planning and in decision making. This model can be adapted and used in organizations such as colleges of education and for one to apply it there is a need to fully understand what is going on at each stage of this systematic process.

It is critical for organizations, for example, colleges and schools, to understand and take into account the organization's culture, reputation, competences and resources in addressing what the institution wants to be (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005). The vision becomes the core ideology of the organization which provides the glue that binds

the organization together (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005, Glanz, 2006, Bush and Bell, 2002).

Mintzberg (2003) defines strategic thinking as seeing beyond. He distinguishes seeing beyond from seeing ahead. Seeing ahead can be seen as foreseeing the future by building a framework out of previous events, Mintzberg considers seeing beyond as constructing the future itself by inventing a world that would not lose direction. Strategic thinking should have a result and an outcome (Davies, 2006). McGee, Thomas and Wilson (2005) advance the idea that strategic thinking advances a holistic and integrated view of the organization. Strategic thinking asks the question of how, through analysis and strategic positioning, the organization will achieve what it intends to achieve. This is an essential stage in the strategic planning process where the institution builds understanding and meaning about where the organization is and where it is going.

Gratton cited in Davies, (2006) states that the strategic thinking process requires visionary capability, scanning capability and systemic capability whereas Friedman (2003:25) asserts that we need conceptual strength; that is, the ability to think systematically and incisively about abstract matters, secondly, a holistic perspective – the ability to see the whole picture without being constrained, thirdly, creativity – the ability to think out of the box and come out with new ideas, fourthly, expressiveness - the ability to translate abstract thinking about the organization into words and pictures that are understood by everyone. There is also a need for tolerance for ambiguity

(analysing effectively even when the information available is incomplete or conflicting). Lastly, Friedman (2003) talks of the need for a sense of stewardship for the future, that is, the willingness to consider options that may sacrifice short-term gain in an effort to protect the organization's resources over time.

To develop the strategic thinking in colleges, it could be advantageous to use Gratton and Friedman's points. Davies (2006) asserts that the leadership needs to pose questions that move the debate from how we deal with the urgent day-to-day problems to the strategic future of the school. The strategic framework consists of the strategy, process and also encompasses the strategic planning process which varies from organization to organization. However, the most important element in strategic thinking and strategic planning is to link the strategic framework and broad goals as guides and allow each of the divisions in an organization to develop their own strategies (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005). In such a case, the role of principals would be to co-ordinate all strategies so that they fit the overall strategic framework defined by the vision and the overarching direction of the college.

The task of getting organized and doing it is answered by the phase of the strategy process. In a way the tactical part of operating plan fills in the gaps about division plans, unit plans, and individual goals. It also develops performance metrics at each level so that monitoring of plans can be done (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005; Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2008, Glanz, 2006). This underlines the tactics and execution method in the strategic planning process. In any organization strategic planning must

link with performance. Performance matrices highlight issues such as progress towards goals and more importantly how certain tasks and certain strategies can be adjusted better and faster and how change can be incorporated within the context of the organization (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005; Davies, 2006).

Strategic thinking, while drawing on the initial reflection process, also needs to utilize information on which to build understandings of possible future directions (Bush, 2011). For this information to be obtained, the leader in a college might have to undertake a strategic analysis. Thus, analysis becomes an element of the strategic planning process at conceptualization stage right up to the end (Davies, 2006). The underlying macro-economic conditions might be important to setting the global economic context for the organization, whereas at micro level, framing intelligence and analysis about competition, markets and customer needs is also very important (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005). Key success factors in the external environment enable the firm to focus on appropriate product renewal and generate knowledge and insight about new products and ideas whereas in the context of internal environment, colleges might have to analyze and identify key resources and evaluate their impact on competitive advantage (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005). This systemic model attempts to put together rational approaches such as strategic planning and capability building measures such as strategic intent and strategy analysis. This process should then lead to the formulation of long term and short term strategies. The implementation and evaluation of the strategies is also very important and is embedded in this model. The

evaluation process should feed back to the external and internal environment to facilitate knowledge renewal.

### ***3.3.3 Implications of SWOT analysis in the two models***

The SWOT analysis is embedded in the strategic planning models discussed above. Ward and Rivani (2005) assert that the SWOT Analysis is also a Value-Based Management (VBM) tool that focuses on evaluating four factors that compete in pairs to assess both internal value (*Strengths* and *Weaknesses*) and external value (*Opportunities* and *Threats*). They further assert that the challenge in the use of the SWOT analysis is to find the right balance of these factors and build-up strengths, eliminate or control the weaknesses, take advantage of the opportunities and monitor as well as react to the threats (Ward and Rivani, 2005). The SWOT analysis identifies factors that may affect desired future outcomes of the organization. The SWOT analysis is based on identifying the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities of the external environment, and consequentially identifying the college's distinctive competencies and key success factors. Glanz (2006:29) views the SWOT analysis as a 'strategy or technique that is very popular', easy to use and really a simple and effective vehicle for planning strategically. Strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, along with considerations of societal and organisational values, lead to creation, evaluation, and choice of strategy. The SWOT's objective is to recommend strategies that ensure the best alignment between the external environment

and internal situation (Cummings and Wilson, 2005; Davies and Ellison, 2003; David, 2005)

The SWOT approach is quick and easy to carry out and does not require any special skill or equipment in order to carry it out or analyze it (Davies and Ellison, 2004). Unlike some other tools, this process does not suggest any strategies other than the possibility of turning weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities (Davies and Ellison, 2004; Glanz, 2006, Bush and Bell, 2002). On the contrary there is also another view that the SWOT is now commonly used within business too, particularly in the strategy formulation process, as confirmed by Jarzabkowski and Giuliatti (2007), who, in studying a sample of alumni from UK business schools, found that the SWOT was the most widely reported tool surviving the transition from college to work ([www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)). However, while the success of SWOT cannot be denied, Jarzabkowski and Giuliatti (2007) also found that the reported usefulness of the SWOT was low, and diminished further as the strategy process progressed. This view echoes Valentin's (2001) cited in Clark (2010) finding that traditional SWOT analysis often yield only shallow extemporaneous inventories that are likely to detract from critical issues, themes, and thrusts that illuminate them.

The SWOT analysis is usually presented in the following form:

Table 3-2: SWOT analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Weakenesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>

Glanz, (2006) further states that SWOT analysis involves identifying key constituents (eg lecturers and parents) and having them work together through the SWOT analysis strategy. Effective school organization accentuates their strengths while at the same time minimising their weaknesses. This means that this SWOT analysis process should not only be about fixing the things that are wrong, but also nurturing what is right (Glanz, 2006; Franklin and Ebdon, 2005). Alliance for Non-profit Management, (2003-2004) cited in Glanz (2006:30) assert that;

*External forces include such circumstances as changing client needs, increased competition, changing regulations, and so on. They can either help an organization move forward (opportunities) or hold an organization back (threats) – but opportunities that are ignored can be threats, and threats that are dealt with appropriately can be turned into opportunities.*

The above citation implies that strategic planners should meet with each constituent group separately and work through the SWOT analysis, making certain to record all relevant information and deal appropriately with opportunities and threats (Jarzabkowski and Bologun, 2009). Ideas should be brainstormed and later sifted through to place all ideas in categories after which a summary is made of each category and a similar activity is followed for each constituent group (Roberts, 2000; Glanz, 2006). In short, as a result of the SWOT analysis in a strategic planning process, an organization will have a clearer idea of what it does, and what challenges it faces. If it follows its plans, it will enjoy enhanced performance and responsiveness to its environment (Glanz, 2006; Davies, 2006; Bush and Bell 2002).

### **3.4 Conceptualizing stakeholder participation**

This section conceptualises stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process and the stakeholder model, which has been proffered as one useful strategic planning tool. While stakeholder participation was introduced to management theory many years ago by Freeman (1984), stakeholder participation has developed into management theory's most encompassing concept (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, Stoney and Winstanley, 2001). Freeman's (1984: 25) 'stakeholder view of the organization' instrumentally defines a stakeholder as "Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" and he suggests that there is a need for "integrated approaches for dealing with multiple stakeholders on multiple issues" (1984: 26). While Freeman framed and demarcated stakeholders as elements of corporate strategic planning, he most importantly demonstrated the urgency of stakeholders for the mission and purpose of the organization, and in doing so, also suggested the positive financial implications of better relationships with stakeholders. In line with Freeman's thinking, other scholars have pursued exploration of the link between organizations' corporate social performance and financial performance (Poisner and Streib, 2005; Wood, 1991; Pava and Krausz, 1996), but the conclusions so far paint an unclear picture (Margolis and Walsh, 2003).

In recent years, the stakeholder theory has developed a focus on the importance of engaging stakeholders in long-term value creation (Ebdon and Franklin, 2006; Andriof, Waddock, Husted and Rahman. 2002). This is a process whose perspective focuses on developing a long-term mutual relationship rather than simply focusing on immediate

gains. This does not imply that immediate gains and economic survival are unimportant, but that, in order to remain competitive and survive, it is imperative that organizations engage frequently with a variety of stakeholders upon whom dependence is vital (Miller and Evers, 2002). Focus thus is moved from stakeholders being managed by companies to a focus on the interaction that organizations have with their stakeholders based on a relational and process-oriented view (Andriof et al, 2002: 19). This implies an increased interest in understanding how managers can manage not the stakeholders themselves, but relationships with stakeholders. As a result, this increases the scope of stakeholder relationships from public relations and marketing managers practicing their authority. It also enhances their communication skills to a strategic potential for all functional managers to relate to multiple stakeholders. Stakeholder relationships in this perspective have even been suggested as a source of competitive advantage (Andriof et al, 2002; Johnson-Cramer, Berman and Post, 2003). Again, those institutions with strong relations to other organizations, institutions and partners are in a better position to develop relational rents through relation specific assets, knowledge-sharing routines, complementary resource endowments and effective governance (Dyer and Singh 1998).

The stakeholder relationship is seen to consist of “interactive, mutually engaged and responsive relationships that establish the very context of doing modern business in non-profit and profit making organizations, and create the groundwork for transparency and accountability” (Andriof, Waddock, Husted and Rahman 2002:9). This brings the notion of participation, dialogue and involvement to the centre of the stakeholder theory,

with a clear inspiration and aspiration from democratic ideals. While dialogue is a key tool, agreement and consensus are most often regarded as the solution on which to base further decisions and action, and hence to continue the collaboration. As argued by Johnson-Cramer et al. (2003: 149), "The essence of stakeholder dialogue is the co-creation of shared understanding by organisation and stakeholder". Today, participation and dialogue have become a natural element of corporate self-presentations.

Stakeholder participation in strategic planning and decision making has also been found to be important for the successful implementation of large scale educational innovations by lecturers, teachers and principals. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1996), Rice and Scheineder (1994), Smylie, Lazarus, and Brownlee- Conyers (1996) explain that stakeholder participation in decision making has been found to be necessary for the successful monitoring of large- scale educational innovations by both external and internal stakeholders. It is assumed that "lasting college/school improvement will occur when stakeholders become more involved in professional decision making at the school site", (Rice and Scheineder, 1994:43).

A study conducted by Giesel (1994) indicates that, in the innovative capacities of schools, results show greater bottom-up influence and greater decision-making during (formal) team meetings in high – innovation as opposed to low – innovation colleges. The study by Giesel (1994) further argues that in low- innovation colleges, one can speak of little participation and little agreement on the part of stakeholders with respect to important decisions. Slegers (1991) is discerning to suggest that it is useful to

increase participation in those areas where stakeholders desire greater participation. Conley (1991), Kelly (1988) and Malen (1992) give credence to this suggestion when they state that most plans in education grant lecturers greater responsibility for completing certain tasks for example, preparation of college improvement plans, organization of in-service sessions and implementing policy decisions made in other arenas for example, development of plans to accommodate budget crunches or to institute state, provincial or district initiatives.

In light of the foregoing, few colleges appear to grant lecturers greater formal authority to initiate and formulate policy in the central domains of budget, personnel and program. Perhaps that is why, in some settings, the majority of lecturers report that they have insufficient room to make major changes at the college site. Colleges in Zimbabwe, like schools, often have curricular changes imposed on them by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (MoHTE) and the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) This fact is buttressed by DeLacy (1990) who observes that curricular changes are largely central office dictates rather than school initiated efforts. Further, school councils function more as forums to rally support to reduce resistance to policies made elsewhere than as forums to forge policies for schools in schools (Hanson, 1991, McLeese, 1992).

Duke, Showers and Imber (1980), O'Donoghue and Dimmock (1996) and Wieiss (1993), assert that as stakeholders, lecturers still wish to participate in those management decisions that set parameters for financial decision making in the technical domain. In an employee involvement study of colleges and schools, Mohrman, Lawler

and Mohrman (1992) found that lecturers reported a high level of actual and desired participation in the technical domain than in the managerial domain. It can be argued that lecturers' desired level of participation in financial management decision making is likely to depend, to some extent, on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the financial makers (Newcombe, 1997). In similar study in US universities, Brody, Godschalk and Burby (2003) opined that to ensure meaningful stakeholder participation, the decision to involve stakeholders must occur early and be on-going. The major argument being that early participation injects stakeholder knowledge and expertise into the planning process.

The study carried out in South Africa by Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani (2002) indicates that South Africa has created an enabling environment for stakeholder participation in education through the setting up of governing bodies comprising teachers, learners, parents and other relevant stakeholders. However, while governing bodies are also found in Zambia and Zimbabwe, a very different context is apparent. The prevalence of extreme poverty and the change from heavy state involvement to privatisation reforms of the 1990s are the most significant contextual issues that, up to present day, have not been clearly handled. Furthermore, a high staff turnover, impromptu changes of policies and the political instability prevailing in the country coincided with the introduction of strategic planning. This gives rise to a relook at the nature of stakeholder participation and possible ways to improve it in Zimbabwe and its neighbours.

In the main, colleges and schools in Zimbabwe can be considered more bureaucratic than organic organizations, namely, strategic decisions may lie outside the arena of participation. Accordingly, most educational research done in Europe and in USA has indicated that lecturers and principals concur that, as part of the norms of colleges, managerial issues of college operations and administration fall outside lecturer purview while technical issues, students and instruction fall within it (Rice and Schneider, 1994; Somech, 2002). In a test of relevance Rice and Schneider (1994), argue that most lecturers internalized this bureaucratic perspective and envisaged greater interest in areas related to in-class issues, of immediate relevance to the lecturers own classroom, than in areas related to the college as a whole (Duke and Gansneder, 1994).

In light of stakeholder participation in bureaucratic models, participation can be viewed as a trend that is set to transform top-down approaches, which reduce actors such as lecturers and board members to tools for implementing policies and decisions without making any meaningful contribution and reduce students to mere learners (Middlewood and Lumby, 2004). However, Branch (2002) in his study on participative management argues that the pre-eminence of the bureaucratic, hierarchical organisation model and traditional management practices are facing an increased challenge. Stakeholder participation was approached as modifications to the bureaucratic model. However, recently it has been discussed as a comprehensive governance system that is replacing the traditional bureaucratic hierarchical system for the new, organic, networked

organisational forms (Branch, 2002; Caldwell and Spinks, 2002; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004).

The idea of participation is applied in various parts of the world and Zimbabwe is no exception. For example, in a study of shared governance in higher education institutions in the UK, Lumby (2003) highlights the importance of opening participation to all key stakeholders including staff and students. Lumby (2003) further elucidates that key stakeholders such as students and teachers are willing to abandon traditional leadership models and subscribe to more participative approaches to strategic planning. Lecturers work closely with students and have first-hand knowledge of their needs and, therefore, can be the most valuable people to develop plans that will cater for their needs and those of the organisation. Contrary to the above, Johnson (1995) argues that educational management in South Africa is characterised by structural over-centralisation with the state playing the primary role.

Stakeholder participation firstly calls for stakeholders to assume leadership roles in colleges of education. It can also be linked to strategic planning and decision making in that it leads to stakeholder empowerment which can be defined as the transfer of decision-making authority on key issues to people who in the past looked to an authority to make decisions (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). Secondly, participation leads to autonomy. A college can be said to have autonomy if its lecturers and other stakeholders are given high levels of responsibility and authority in planning and implementing those plans (Caldwell, 2002, Abu-Duhou, 1999). Thirdly, participation

brings about accountability. Hoecht (2006), in his quality assurance study in higher education, concluded that the concern for accountability is closely linked to the discovery of the importance of active stakeholder participation for the building of impersonal trust between citizens and their public institutions. Participation of lecturers, for example, requires every member of staff to be prepared for their own accountability. The college should, therefore, be the agency that is most interested in accountability (Poisner and Streib, 2005; Middlewood and Lumby, 2004).

However, there is still a diversity of perspectives regarding stakeholder participation in the institutions of higher education due to the ever changing political and economic environment, continuing pressures of educational reforms and economic competitiveness (Enslin, 2003; Singh and Lange, 2007). The study by Kariwo (2007) points out that while there is an ever-changing environment, the role of government in higher education institutions can be described as state supervision and, in this model, the state plays a major role in providing funds for education. Kariwo (2007) further argues that, even though there is this state supervision, there is lack of central coordination leading to the decline of higher education; hence the need for stakeholder participation in the planning process.

### ***3.4.1 Rationale for stakeholder participation***

Participation enables stakeholders to become active participants in the strategic planning process. As a result, they will have greater ownership of plans, vision and

objectives and actively take part in the implementation process. It is a proactive approach to information sharing and it nurtures creativity and initiative, empowering them to implement innovative ideas (Middlewood and Lumby 2002). Gershberg and Winkler (2003) portray the need for stakeholder participation by elucidating that participation comes with understanding, followed by public support and commitment. Participation by parties with a stake in the resource not only increases the level of understanding and support for the institution, but also reduces potential conflicts and the need for heavy enforcement (Cocklin, Crow and McAuley 1998; Reeve and Perlich, 2002; Gershberg and Winkler (2003).

It is argued that compliance and involvement are interrelated phenomena, and that involvement contributes to compliance through the participation process (Hall, 1972 in Jentoft, McCay, and Wilson, 1998). Studies by Callahan (2003), Bush (2003) and Jones (2003) reveal that participation enhances compliance because stakeholders become more knowledgeable about, committed to and supportive of strategic plans if they had a say in the process. Participation also leads to increased legitimacy (Bush, 2003; Jones, 2003; Callahan, 2003). As such participants feel that the process was fair and their inputs were used, their compliance is ultimately enhanced. In fact, it has been demonstrated that the perception of legitimacy is linked to the participants' views of the fairness of the process (Sutinen and Kuperan, 1999). Furthermore, participants who view the process as legitimate generally feel a strong obligation to comply with the results, even if the mandates contradict their self-interests (Sutinen and Kuperan, 1999; Jones 2003). Clearly, an essential aspect of the participation process is that

stakeholders should view their involvement as meaningful and as making a difference (Pirk, 2002). Meaningful participation occurs when people see that their contributions to the process have helped shape a decision.

Such participation can be fostered by enhancing stakeholders' participation in the generation and application of information, providing opportunities to increase their sense of worth, and strengthening their ability to meet concerns and deal with changes throughout the process. Brody, Godschalk, and Burby (2003) suggest that information empowers the public to become involved in and make an impact on the planning process. In another related study, Jurisnki (1993) maintains that only an empowered community can address both the need for economic development and the conservation of that which they value in education. In the end, resource conflicts may be diminished, access rights distributed more effectively, management initiatives better implemented, and resources better managed when stakeholders are more involved in management initiatives (Morsing and Schuts, 2006; Jurisnki, 1993). Besides the benefits of increased compliance and reduced conflict, stakeholders should be involved because they have rights (formal or informal) in the education system, as well as useful knowledge about the natural and cultural education environment (Denhardt and Roberts, 2004).

Utilizing local knowledge increases the likelihood that proposed ideas will cater for the needs of the people relying most on the educational reforms being introduced and helps ensure that issues are identified and addressed before the plans are implemented (Fung and Wright, 2001). Such an approach builds a sense of ownership over the

strategic plans and fosters an appreciation for the community being served (Bryson, 2011; Dimmock and Walker, 2006, Pisel, 2008). In many instances, the result is long-term educational protection based on partnerships between resource users and administrative officials. By actively participating, stakeholders are more likely to acknowledge the benefits of their institution and take credit for the designation, as well as support and enforce the regulations they establish (Oblinger, Barone and Hawkins, 2001; Brody, Godschalk, and Burby 2003; Cocklin, Craw, and McAuley 1998). There is, therefore, no doubt that stakeholder participation is a relevant discipline, one that can aid discerning organisations to plan into the future thereby adding value in their processes and systems.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Education reforms appear all over the world and they share similar characteristics. Stakeholder involvement with the intention of empowering organizations and people to make decisions on their own development is most notable in many countries. Stakeholder participation in strategic planning is a trend that is set to transform top-down approaches which reduce schools and colleges to sites for implementing imposed decisions without making any meaningful contribution. This chapter, among other issues, reviewed the literature on strategic planning, the models of strategic planning and the strategic planning process. Stakeholder participation and benefits of participation in the planning process were also discussed. The next chapter explains in

detail the research methodology that was adopted by the study in order to get the correct picture of what is happening at each of the sampled colleges.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4 Research Methodology

#### 4.0 Introduction

The term research methodology was used in this study to refer to the philosophical assumptions, values and theories which inform and lay a foundation upon which a particular research method can be used. This study adopted the qualitative research methodology because of its idiographic nature. The researcher was able to look at small groups in their natural settings using multiple (in-depth) case studies. The researcher also concentrated on a few selected colleges of education. The basic data collection instruments that were used in this study were interviews, observation and documentary analysis. The research questions the methodology responded to are;

##### 4.0.1 *The Main Research Question*

- What is the level and nature of participation of senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe's colleges of education?

##### 4.0.1 *Research Sub-Questions*

- How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?
- How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?
- What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?

- What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

## **4.1 Orientation of the research**

### ***4.1.1 Interpretive Paradigm***

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008:1) every 'methodology rests on the nature of knowledge and of knowing' and for any researcher the starting point should be to reflect on the world that he/she knows. Researchers are guided by the philosophical frameworks called paradigms. Maree (2007:47) states that a "paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world-view". Paradigms address fundamental assumptions such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the one who knows and the known and (epistemology) assumptions about methodologies. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) assert that it is important to distinguish two philosophical concepts; that is, ontology and epistemology. They state that ontology is the theory of what exists. It is of particular importance to note the two basic distinctions in ontology. One of the arguments is that there is a real world independent of our observation and interpretation of it and this is called realism. Cohen and Manion (2006) also argued that ontology specifies the nature and essence of the social phenomena or reality under investigation hence pure reality cannot be known as it can only be interpreted through our senses and experiences resulting in different perspectives of reality. Questions such as: Is reality external to the individual? Is reality an objective nature or a result of individual

cognition? Is reality given out there in the world or it is created in one's mind (Cohen and Manion, 2006)?

The opposite view, phenomenology suggests that it is not meaningful to speak of the 'real world', what matters is the interpretation of the world. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) further argue that epistemology, in contrast, is the theory of what we can know. Epistemological assumptions are concerned with the very base of knowledge, its nature and how it can be acquired and communicated to other human beings (Burrell and Morgan in Cohen et al, 2006). The assumption is that knowledge is capable of being transmitted in tangible form. This view might lead a researcher to adopt an observer role and use the methods of natural science to consider the use of quantitative methods (Burrell and Morgan in Cohen et al, 2006). They alternatively further assert that an interpretive, anti-positivist stance may be adopted, that is, a softer and more subjective, spiritual and transcendental way of acquiring knowledge can be adopted.

Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) argue that by decoupling the ideas of ontology and epistemology one can see that these extremes may not be the most fruitful way to think about social sciences. They argue that one can be an ontological realist, believing that there is external reality that exists independent of our perceptions of it while at the same time embracing elements of constructionist epistemology. This implies according to Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008:20) 'we can believe that there is a reality out there but realize that our observations and interpretations are shaped by psychological biases and quirks, cultural lenses, power relations and a variety of other forces that comprise

the social construction of reality'. The underlining fact is that how well one can apprehend a presumed reality will vary depending of what we study. It is how researchers align themselves, depending on their ontological and epistemological orientation that they go about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour in their research studies. A number of paradigms have emerged due to different ontological and epistemological orientations. The interpretive paradigm is discussed next.

The interpretive paradigm which has its roots in hermeneutics is concerned with the study of the theory and practice of interpretation (Maree, 2007). The interpretive paradigm enables the researcher to understand the smallest details of a situation or phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The interpretivists reflect an interest in contextual meaning rather than generalized rules. Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Maree, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). An interpretative orientation to research aims to describe the lived experiences of individuals from their own view points as well as understand how people interpret their experiences. The advantage of this paradigm is that it can be implemented in individual or small groups in naturalist settings. This paradigm seeks to provide a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalist setting (Creswell, 2003). The interpretive paradigm, in this research, helped the researcher to develop the level of detail needed for interpretation of data and to draw conclusions about their meaning personally and theoretically stating the lessons learned.

The interpretivist perspective is known for its assumptions that human life can only be understood from within and cannot be observed from some external reality (Mertens, 2010; Maree, 2007). Interpretivism focuses on people's subjective experiences and how people construct their social world and realities as they interact and relate with each other. Hussey and Hussey cited in Maree (2007) state that by placing people in their social contexts, there is a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of their own activities. Of particular importance is the uniqueness of a particular situation in understanding and interpreting the meanings constructed. Nieuwenhuis (2007) states that one of the greatest strengths of the qualitative approach is its richness and depth of explorations and descriptions it yields. The researcher becomes an instrument through which data is collected and analysed.

#### ***4.1.2 Limitations of the interpretive research***

Ruddock cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:120) stated that "qualitative research methodologies are criticized for being impressionistic, that is, they are based on reactions and opinions rather than specific facts, biased, ungeneralisable and idiosyncratic, subjective and short sighted". The other limitation is that the subjective involvement of the researcher makes him/her part of the research, making it easier for him or her to share the experiences with research participants. The researcher responded to this limitation by adhering to ethical considerations. Confidential information was not shared with the research participants.

### ***4.1.3 The qualitative research methodology***

The type of research questions posed by the researcher indicated the appropriateness of qualitative research methodology. The questions asked focused on the process and approaches to strategic planning. The qualitative methodology was suitable in this research in that the researcher was interested in assessing participatory approaches in strategic planning. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology. The research looked at what participants had to say with regard to the nature of participation in the strategic planning process in their natural settings. The experiences and perceptions of those tasked with the design and implementation of strategic plans were important.

Qualitative research examines a phenomenon with such detail that it results in a clearer picture of a specific situation or action (Mertens, 2010). This research fit within the qualitative paradigm because it sought to explore, identify, and describe a phenomenon of which little is known (i.e. stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in Higher education institutions). Being able to understand the setting and communicate it to others who are interested in the setting is a goal in itself (Creswell, 2003).

The goals of qualitative research are to understand processes, experiences and meanings people assign to things. Qualitative research thus has the aim of focusing on how people make sense of their settings and experiences through symbols, social roles, identities, and other elements of culture and why people think and act as they do (Kalof, Dan and Dietz, 2008). Particular frameworks of thinking constitute research methodology therefore qualitative research is a useful tool in the context of discovery.

Creswell (2003) asserts that qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic.

Qualitative researchers look for involvement of their participants in data collection. This approach was found to be important in this study, in that, colleges of education were expected to provide a natural setting and since they expected to be involved in strategic planning, they were expected to provide accurate data. This research methodology fits with the kind of problem that this study sought to investigate. The intention for employing this strategy was to be able to find as much detail as possible concerning the nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning carried out in teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) qualitative research is a field of study in its own right and can be defined as:

*...A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self.*

This implies that qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. It further implies that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). It involves the studied use and collection of variety of empirical materials, that is, case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artefacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments

and meanings in individuals lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Befittingly, qualitative researchers employ a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices hoping to always get a better understanding of the subject matter under study. However, each practice makes the world visible in a different way (Barbour, 2008; Kalof, Dan and Dietz, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

It can therefore be concluded that qualitative research lays emphasis on understanding, processes and meanings. Qualitative research can reveal how all parts work together to form a whole. Barbour (2008), states that qualitative research can help us to understand apparently illogical behaviours. The assumption is that the meaning is embedded in people's experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perceptions. This methodology was found to be appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to get the data directly from the subjects, that is, questioning the respondents and hearing their views, perceptions, voices and expectations in detail. The research methodology helped the researcher to recognize several issues that could escape researchers using other methods.

There are distinctive characteristics and assumptions of qualitative research. These characteristics and assumptions are clarified by Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) who assert that in qualitative research, findings are within a social, cultural and historical framework. They tend to focus on the meaning and motivation that underlie cultural symbols and personal experiences. Although with the availability of a theoretical framework and research questions, the researcher in this study participated in the social situation he

was experiencing. The main research tool became the researcher himself, who endeavoured to obtain particular participant perspectives of the social situation with regards to strategic planning. Most qualitative researchers favour the use of semi-structured interviews, which allow for the ordering of questions to be employed flexibly in an effort to take account of the priority accorded to each topic by the interviewee hence the use of semi-structured interviews in this research. However qualitative research has limitations. Mertens (2010) points out that in qualitative research, quality is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies. He further points out that rigor is more difficult to maintain, assess, and demonstrate and the volume of data makes analysis and interpretation time consuming. The researcher responded to this by recording the responses on paper as well as through use of the voice recorder so as to try and eliminate personal bias. Document analysis also ensured depth and background to the report. The researcher also integrated ethical issues relating to the researcher and the respondents.

## **4.2 The case study design**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) postulate that a case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle that can be used to observe cause and effect in real context. Yin (2003) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not very clear and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Yin cited in Mertens (2005)

points out that the case study is identical to ethnographic research. Mertens (2005:237) stated that:

*A case study is a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive descriptions and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context.*

What is common about these definitions is that they seem to focus on a particular instance or case and reaching an understanding in a complex context. Barbour (2008) states that a case study may be simple or complex as it may be of a child or a classroom of children or an event happening. The case study can also be described as a form of descriptor research that gathers large amounts of information about a few participants and also investigates cases in considerable depth (Mertens, 2005; Kalof, Dan and Dietz, 2008). The case study was relevant in this study, in that, in depth information about participatory strategies in strategic planning was obtained.

There are three kinds of case studies that Denzin and Lincoln (2005:445) mention. There is the 'intrinsic case study' and described as a study undertaken when one wants a better understanding of a particular case. In this case, the study was undertaken because the researcher was intrinsically interested in the case though not for generalization or theory formation. The second type of a case study is the 'instrumental case study' where a case is usually examined so as to provide insight into a phenomenon or to draw a generalization. For example, in this study, stakeholder participation in strategic planning in colleges of education in Zimbabwe was the case. The 'multiple case study' is the third and that is where a number of cases are studied at the same time in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or a general condition.

The cases may be similar or dissimilar. The selection of the cases was of the understanding that these cases would lead to a better understanding and maybe theorizing about a larger collection of cases.

Stake, cited in Barbour (2008), distinguishes between intrinsic case studies which focus on studying one instance in its own right and instrumental case study where specific cases are selected in order to allow us to study more general principles and phenomena. Although this may be helpful in characterizing different orientations at the outset of a research project, in practice, this research investigated the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process and as a result when analysis was carried out and an explanatory account was developed, this distinction became blurred.

There is also no doubt that employing case studies can be extremely useful in terms of enhancing the comparative and analytic potential of research (Barbour, 2008). The differentiation between the single case study and a multiple case study needs to be clearly made. A single case study is akin to a single experiment and is appropriate when the case is special for some reason. The single case study can be appropriate when the case provides a critical test to a well-established theory or where the case is extreme, unique or has something special to reveal. A single case study can be used as a pilot study in a multiple case study (Yin, 2003).

This study adopted a multiple case study design. The more cases that can be investigated to establish or refute a theory, the more robust are research outcomes (Babour, 2008). Cases need to be carefully selected so that they either produce similar results or contrasting results but for predictable reasons such as theoretical replication. Mertens (2005) argues that some authors view the case study as one type of ethnographic (interpretive) research that involves intensive study of an individual or a group as an entity. This is contrary to Yin's (2003) view that case studies are not identical to ethnographic research. In this study, the case study was chosen simply because it would allow the researcher to get at the inner experience of participants to determine how meanings were formed and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In this study, the researcher attempted to understand how participants related and interacted with each other during the strategic planning process.

It was also important during the invention phase, for the researcher to use a case study research design as part of the qualitative interpretive research methodology. The study was a multiple case study research design comprising of the investigation of the nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning in colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The case study as a research design was able to highlight the how and why of a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context (Yin, 2003) as well as cover the logic of the research design, data collection techniques and approaches to data analysis. In this research, the case study research design was based on five components; namely, the research questions, assumptions, measures/units of analysis,

linking of data to the assumptions as well as interpreting the findings. The 'cases' in this study were colleges of education and all departments that were involved in strategic planning formed part of the case (principals, heads of departments and lecturers in charge and college advisory board members).

The researcher made use of individual interviews, documentary analysis and observations. Interviews were recorded, with the respondents' permission, through note taking as well as through the use of audio recording devices. The case study design enabled the researcher to get immersed with the participants and get an in-depth and detailed understanding of patterns and trends that emerged in the process of strategic planning. It was hoped that the incorporation of multiple data sources into the case study such as individual interviews and documentary analysis would help improve internal validity since conclusions suggested by different data sources were far stronger than those suggested by one.

### **4.3 Research Instruments**

In the spirit of a case study three types of data collection instruments were used. These included structured and semi-structured interviews, observation as well as document analysis. The combination of these instruments in data collection were able to help the researcher to collect rich and detailed information that provided a more complete picture of the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in Zimbabwe's colleges of teacher education.

### **4.3.1 Interviews**

Interviews are viewed as a two-person conversation that is initiated by the interviewer. It is conducted so as to obtain research relevant material focused on the research. Maree (2007) views an interview as a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions in an effort to learn about the ideas, views and opinions of the participant. All those tasked with the design of strategic plans and participate in the formulation of strategic plans were valuable sources of information. The aim in this study was to obtain descriptive data that would help the researcher understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality with regards to the nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning in colleges of education (Creswell, 2003). Interviews were conducted with college principals, heads of departments and lecturers in charge on site visits. Semi-structured interviews were used when interviewing college principals, heads of departments and lecturers in charge. All these participants were considered to be information-rich.

The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Maree, 2007). It is the flexibility of the interview that makes it so attractive. Interviewing, the transcription of interviews and the analysis of transcripts are all very time consuming, but can be more readily accommodated into researchers' personal lives. In this study, the researcher ensured that all responses were recorded in a digital voice recorder and on paper so that information was not distorted and could be readily accessed for analysis. Interviewers can ask new questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order of questions and even the wording of questions. As a

result, qualitative interviewing tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which the interviewees take the interview and may adjust the emphasis of research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of interviews. In contrast, structured interviews are typically inflexible because of the need to standardize the way in which the interviewee is to be dealt with.

There are two major types of interviews, that is, the standardized interview and the non-standardized interview (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). In the standardized interview (structured interview), the procedure to be followed is determined in advance. Structured interviews use a pre-conceived interview schedule which the interviewer should follow closely while a flexible technique is used in semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews focus on a list of key themes or questions that the interviewer wants the respondent to address. The semi-structured interview does allow the respondent to add new information but they are expected to keep to the key themes (Mertens, 2008). This research study used semi-structured interviews. The interviews involved principals or vice principals, heads of departments, lecturers and College Board advisory member of each of the sampled teacher education college.

Flick (2006) identifies the advantages of using the semi-structured interview. He argues that interviews allow the researcher to enter another person's world and at the same time gain an in-depth understanding of the person's perspective. Interviews are capable of allowing the researcher to get close to the data and get first-hand information about the social world at the same time allowing the researcher to understand the definitions

concepts and meanings that respondents attribute to their social world. When evidence does not exist as hard data and is not observable, for example, perceptions, values and attitudes, interviews are more appropriate. Interviews are a method which is consistent with those theories that value human responses as an actuality.

Through the use of the interviews, the interviewer was able to elaborate on issues and questions as well as clarifying the meaning of statements, answers or questions that may not have been clear to the interviewee. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and they were able to facilitate direct interaction between the researcher and the respondents. They also helped in the collection of rich descriptive data that helped the researcher to understand the strategic planning processes against the backdrop of current changing patterns in strategic planning. The semi-structured interview also allowed the researcher to ask a series of structured questions and then delve in more deeply using open ended questions in order to obtain more complete data and also enable the respondents to express themselves at length (Flick, 2006).

The semi-structured interview was also used in this study because of its flexibility, adaptability and its ability to allow the researcher freedom to probe the interviewee, follow up leads, elaborate on responses, obtain additional and more detailed data and clarify answers (Creswell, 2007). Flick (2006) also states that an interview provides a suitable and desirable combination of objectivity and depth that permits the gathering of valuable data that cannot be successfully obtained by any other method; hence, its suitability for this study. It was through the use of the interview that the researcher was

able to get rich and thick data from participants and also increase the findings of the research.

There are inherent limitations to the interview method. The main problem of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewers manage to make the procedure plausible to interviewees and deal with irritations which may be caused by confrontational questions (Flick, 2006). Again, the adaptability gained by interpersonal situations may lead to subjectivity and the interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee may be biased (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). Interviews are also a more costly means of collecting data and to reduce this cost, purposive convenience sampling was more ideal as it facilitated the selection of respondents from nearest host colleges of education.

The flexibility and adaptability which are the interview's unique strength also allow subjectivity and possible bias. This weakness can arise due to the respondent's eagerness to please the interviewer (Bernard, 2009). To reduce these effects, the researcher managed to encourage dialogue, critical thinking, and discussion in order to encourage freedom of expression of respondents' views, perceptions, experiences and opinions regarding the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in Zimbabwe's teacher education colleges. The other weakness of the interview is that it lacks anonymity that questionnaires provide (Flick, 2006). In this research, the researcher reduced the effects of this weakness by emphasizing confidentiality with regard to the interviewee's responses.

### ***4.3.2 Documentary analysis***

Dahlberg and McCaig, (2010) define document analysis as the systematic scrutiny of the content of documents to identify patterns of change or development on specific issues. Wolf, cited in Flick, Kardorff and Steinke (2004), states that documents are written texts that serve as a record or piece of evidence of an event or fact and occupy a prominent position in modern societies. The increase in the significance of documents is due to the secular trend towards the legalization and organization of all areas of life, and in particular the development of a modern type of administration characterized by the principle of documentation (Flick, Kardorff and Steinke, 2006). Documents of all types can help the researcher to uncover meaning, develop understanding and discover insights. Creswell (2007) states that congruence between documents and the research problem depends on the researcher's flexibility in constructing the problem and the related questions.

Various documents that are related to the strategic planning process were sourced from the sites and examined. Documentary analysis was done through use of public records, strategic plans that colleges of education designed. Document analysis was able to help answer questions that interviews could not address, and enlighten the researcher on some grey areas that could not be addressed by the interviews. Maree (2007) argues that document analysis means focusing on all types of written material that could shed light on a phenomenon. In this research document analysis helped to shed light on strategic planning practices. Written data sources included published and unpublished

documents, reports, administrative documents or any other document connected to the investigation.

The sources of documentary analysis can be primary or secondary sources. Primary sources refer to those materials which are collected by those who actually witnessed the events which they describe (Maree, 2007). Primary sources also refers to the data which is unpublished which the researcher has gathered directly from the participants who actually witnessed the events which they describe and these include minutes of meetings, reports and correspondence. Secondary sources refer to documents written after an event that the author has not personally witnessed, for example textbooks and research reports. In this study, secondary data were obtained from textbooks and statutory instruments related to the strategic planning process and practice. Both primary and secondary sources of data were analyzed (Mertens 2008, Maree, 2007).

In this study documents such as minutes of meetings, reports on and strategic planning processes were analysed. In order to develop an in depth understanding of stakeholder participation in strategic planning practices in Zimbabwe, the researcher analysed strategic planning documents such as minutes, reports on strategic planning by the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and Strategic planning reports done at the sites. Document analysis helped to establish the credibility of collected data and also explore possible links between the current developments in the field of stakeholder participation in strategic planning in higher education as reflected in the reviewed

literature and the practical experiences of strategic planning processes as reflected by the official documents available to the researcher.

Document analysis has specific advantages. It can be used as the singular method of research or as a supplementary form of inquiry (Maree, 2007). Document analysis differs from the majority of research methods in two major ways. It is an indirect form of research in the sense that it is something which has been produced not an individual that we are investigating. Secondly, it is an 'unobtrusive' or 'non-reactive' method. This means that the document will not be affected in any way by this research. It cannot react as a human can. Reliability and validity are central concerns in document analysis (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Documents generally exist for some purpose and the knowledge of this purpose is important in understanding and interpreting the results of the analysis. The major advantage of document analysis is that the data never alters and can be subject to re-analysis. Events can also be compared over time and through use of computers, the researcher can be aided in an analysis leading to complete reliability in applying the rules set down for coding the text (Creswell, 2003).

Document analysis has critics (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). Due to its social context and identity, the researcher may render a selective and biased understanding of a document and may even deliberately choose and select particular documents. Authors of documents decide to record and leave out information informed by their social, political and economic environment of which they are part (Creswell, 2003), hence historical documents are amenable to manipulation and selective influence. In this study

the researcher was aware of these influences and did not assume that documents are simple neutral artefacts from the past. Using documents without due consideration of the process and social context of their construction exposes researchers to criticism of being unreflexive and uncritical in their readings. The researcher in this study was on high alert for these limitations in order to minimize their effects.

### **4.3.3 *Observation***

Adler and Adler, cited in Mertens (2005:382), argue that 'qualitative observation occurs in naturalistic settings without using pre-determined categories of measurement or response'. Observation offers a first-hand account of the situation under study and when combined with interviewing and documentary analysis, allows a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated. This study observed people's behaviours as they naturally occurred in terms that appear to be meaningful to the people involved.

The study was guided by the observation checklist stated in Merriam (1998:97-98). The study also observed what the physical environment was like, that is, its context, the kinds of behaviour promoted or prevented by the setting and the participants. Observation also established who was involved on the scene, how many people were involved and their roles. The questions of what brought people together, who was allowed, their activities and interactions were also observed. Through the observation process the researcher sought to establish what was going on. Whether there was a definable sequence in the process of strategic planning, how people interacted with the

activity and with another and how people and activities were connected? The researcher adopted the simple observation method to collect data from teachers' colleges on the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process. In this study the researcher observed strategic planning meetings. In the meetings the researcher looked specifically for who was participating, what was going on, the definable sequences in the planning process, how people interacted and how they were connected to the activities.

#### **4.4 Sample and Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used in this study since it is not possible or practical to obtain responses from the total population due to the prohibitive cost; hence, the researcher was able to collect information from a sample of the population considered to be information-rich and also representative of the population under study. Maree (2007) asserts that purposive sampling is mainly used so that individuals are selected because of some defining characteristic that make them the holders of the data needed for the study

In this study, the sample consisted of college principals/vice principal, heads of departments and lecturers in charge. Two heads of department, two lecturers in charge, one college board member and the principal or vice principal from each college formed the sample. All participants were considered information-rich as they were directly involved in the strategic planning processes in their respective sites. Respondents were selected purposively from the purposively selected sites.

#### ***4.4.1 Sampling the research sites***

This study targeted all the 14 teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe but then purposively selected three colleges from among the 14 teachers colleges to form the sample. This implies that a total of 3 purposively selected sites were involved in the study. The selected sites represented a 21.4% of the total of teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, which in research terms is a representative sample. Purposive sampling involves selecting subjects because of some characteristic they poses (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). The purposive selection of the colleges is justified in this study because there was a set of criteria that was followed in the selection of the schools as follows:

- i. The researcher was very interested in stakeholders who had attended strategic planning meetings and processes. As a result, purposive sampling helped to select colleges that had stakeholders who had attended strategic planning sessions.
- ii. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to target colleges that can be reached without too many hassles and too much cost.

Flick (2006) asserts that the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Purposive sampling entails selecting organizations, individuals or groups for their relevance to the study being carried out (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Thomas and Nelson (2001:281) also state that 'convenience sampling is used in some case studies because the purpose of the study is not to estimate some population value, but to select cases from which one can learn

most'. This implies that sampling should be done for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer research questions.

#### **4.5 Negotiation of entry**

Negotiation of entry was a step that was completed at the beginning of enquiry. The researcher obtained a letter from the faculty of education in the University of Fort Hare explaining the nature of research he would like to undertake (see Appendix A). Permission to carry out research was then sought from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe (see Appendix B). Upon being granted permission by the permanent secretary, the researcher then made appointments with the respondents. The researcher made appointments through the principals of the colleges and the principals were also able to furnish the researcher with information about their meetings for observation (See Appendix C). The principals also furnished the researcher with documents for analysis. All scheduled appointments were met by the researcher. The researcher drew the informed consent form that each interviewee read and signed prior to the interview (see Appendix D). The researcher visited each of the sampled host colleges. Through use of an interview guide (Appendix E) the researcher managed to carry out in-depth interviews with the lecturers, heads of departments, principals and college advisory board members for deeper understanding of the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in colleges of education.

## 4.6 Data Analysis

The main goal of qualitative analysis is to organize data into a meaningful set of patterns, categories, and themes (Kalof, Dan and Dietz, 2008). Words, phrases, tone, non-verbal communications and the context of comments, among other aspects of the texts, are analysed. Briggs and Coleman, (2007) also argue that the first decision to be made in analysing interviews is whether to begin with the case analysis or the cross-case analysis. In this study, data analysis was approached by treating each case as comprehensively as possible on its own followed by a cross-case analysis.

The study began the process of data analysis by transcribing verbatim audio taped interviews. The results were cross-checked with the participants. The raw data from the interviews were coded so as to come up with data sets. Responses were treated according to the research questions the respondents were responding to. The study also referred to the transcriptions and cut and pasted the data listed under each research question. By so doing the researcher was able to compile data sets for each research question. The study also came up with inductive themes related to each question. The same process was used to analyse data obtained through observations and document analysis.

Qualitative data collected from the interviews were analysed following these steps. (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005),

1. Organising and categorising data.
2. Interpretation of every instance

3. Identification of patterns, that is, classifying information into sub-themes and sub-categories
4. Synthesis and generalisation of information obtained

Nieuwenhuis, cited in Maree (2007) states that qualitative data analysis is an on-going process the implication being that data collection, processing, analysing and reporting are intertwined. They are not merely a number of successive steps.

#### **4.7 Reducing Bias**

Continuous monitoring of all interpretations through the member checks, coding of data, verifying and validating of findings as well as the use of multiple data sources and methods enabled the researcher to control bias. Essentially, these approaches are based on the notion of, for example, people's experiences. Such an approach can be classed as qualitative in the sense that we explore the world according to the individual's experience, or indeed, constructivist, in that, reality is seen to be created through their experience.

Braun (2006:50) argues that 'bias can muddle the whole research process and, thereby, precipitate research results'. The sources of bias may include the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer. This implies that the researcher should not have pre-conceived ideas before undertaking the research. Maree (2007) argues that because researchers develop relationships with the research participants, they may be tempted to see what they want to see and genuinely overlook findings that do not conform to their

expectations. A tendency of the interviewer to see the respondent in his or her own image may also affect the results since the researcher could be biased and again a tendency of the interviewer to seek answers that support his or her pre-conceived notions can also attribute to bias. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) also state that it is possible that the interviewer may misinterpret what the interviewee is saying and this may result in a communication breakdown and this communication breakdown may also result in bias. However, Flick (2006) also argues that in order to know and understand a particular social setting and seeing it from the point of view of those in it, the researcher should not be detached, but be part of the whole situation. The researcher responded to this by seeking for clarifications where the respondents were not clear so as to reduce the element of misinterpreting respondents.

In qualitative studies, 'bias' is not seen as problematic insofar as the researcher is transparent about how he/she goes about collecting the data. On the other hand, minimising bias can be achieved through allowing other researchers to provide on-going critical feedback on various aspects of the study including the analysis of results (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This is sometimes called inter-researcher reliability and *can* be a useful technique for ensuring the validity of the interpretations of the primary researcher. However, this is merely an option for qualitative researchers. One should be aware that this strategy can produce high levels of conformity and oversimplification, as researchers attempt to find 'common ground'. In this study, the following precautionary measures were undertaken to deal with bias. To reduce bias, the research questions were formulated and presented to the respondents in the written form to avoid

ambiguity, while at the same time respondents were able to ask for clarification. Individual interviews were held with the permission of the participants also they were digitally recorded to capture their actual words. Digitally recorded interviews were also transcribed verbatim and cross-checked with the participants and the supervisor. They were also kept safe for reference purposes. The use of interviews and documentary analysis and observation also ensured that the element of bias was greatly reduced.

#### **4.8 Measures to ensure trustworthiness**

The following strategies were adopted, so as to minimize researcher bias during the course of the study. Firstly, the researcher mechanically recorded data and again direct quotations from the transcribed data were used to illustrate views of the participants. The interviewer asked permission to audiotape participants and also use hand-written notes to support the recordings.

The interview questions were checked for what they are probing beyond their literal meaning, ensuring that concepts under research were acceptable and were of paramount importance. It was also important to ensure content validity in the design of questions since this research also aimed at determining knowledge gained by the participants in the design of strategic plans. Trustworthiness also includes the question of transferability, which refers to 'the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups' (Rolf, 2006). To facilitate transferability, it is valuable to give a clear and distinct description of culture and context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection and process of analysis. A rich and vigorous presentation of

the findings together with appropriate quotations also enhanced transferability. There is no single correct meaning or universal application of research findings, but only the most probable meaning from a particular perspective (Hamersley, 2004; Swarnborn, 2010). In qualitative research, trustworthiness of interpretations deals with establishing arguments for the most probable interpretations. Trustworthiness should have increased if the findings were presented in a way that allowed the reader to look for alternative interpretations.

#### ***4.8.1 Standards of rigour***

Morse (2004) asserts that the criteria for establishing trustworthiness of the research conducted within one paradigm are different from those applied to research undertaken within other paradigm. Terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability are used. The eight methods of research practice used to enhance rigour in the course of conducting this research study were: (1) letting the participants guide the inquiry process; (2) checking the theoretical construction generated against participants' meanings of the phenomenon; (3) using participants' actual words in the theory; (4) articulating the researcher's personal views and insights about the phenomenon explored; (5) specifying the criteria built into the researcher's thinking; (6) specifying how and why participants in the study were selected; (7) delineating the scope of the research; and (8) describing how the literature relates to each category which emerged in the theory.

#### **4.8.2 Credibility**

According to Davies, (2002), credibility is a term that relates to 'how vivid and faithful the description of the phenomenon is'. In qualitative research, credibility is demonstrated when 'informants, and also readers who have had the human experience recognize the researcher's described experiences as their own'. Credibility refers to that which can be seen and believed. To enhance credibility of the research study, the researcher used multiple data sources such as lecturers, heads of departments, principals and college advisory board members, verified raw data, kept notes on research decisions taken, coded data, and used member checking to verify and validate findings. Credibility relates to the trustworthiness of the findings (Kalof, Dan and Dietz, 2008). In this study, credibility centred on the nature of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process in Zimbabwe's teacher education institutions. Four methods of research practice for enhancing credibility were used, which were, (a). Letting participants guide the inquiry process by asking for elaboration when they did not understand the question. (b) Checking the theoretical construction generated against participants' meanings of the phenomenon. (c) Using participants' actual words in the theory. (d) Articulate the researcher's personal views and insights about the phenomenon explored by means of (1) Post comment interview sheets used as a tool (2) A personal journal (3) Monitoring how the literature was used (Hall, 2001).

### **4.8.3 Member Checking**

Member checking according to Finlay (2006) is a technique that is most important in establishing credibility. It is in this step that the members of the setting being studied have a chance to indicate whether the reconstructions of the researcher are recognizable. The researcher used member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by submitting all tape recorded interview transcripts to participants to verify whether the researchers' interpretation of what they had shared with him were accurate before the interviews were analysed. The respondents were also asked to note down questions for further discussion and were given an opportunity to make specific comments on how accurately the case study reports reflected their perceptions of the case. The researcher also asked the respondents to verify the data gathered through interviews and also sounded out his understanding with them to verify whether the interpretation of what they shared with the researcher was correct.

## **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

Flick (2008) states that in many domains, research has become an issue of ethics. It is important to protect the interests of those who are ready to take part in a study. According to Creswell (2003), a researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the respondents. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008), also state that a research project that is designed in an ethical manner maximizes benefits to both the researcher and study participants, respects participants' rights and minimizes risks to participants. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008), assert that the first ethical principle is

informed consent. Participation in research should be voluntary and researchers must tell potential research participants what they are being asked to do so they can make an informed decision about whether to participate or not (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). The goals of the research as well as any risks and benefits of participation should be clearly conveyed in a manner that will not confuse the participants' responses during the study. Participants should also be given the opportunity to withdraw from the study if and whenever they choose. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) further state that along with informed consent, a researcher's identity should be disclosed to the study participants.

The researcher abided by ethical considerations as contained in Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) and the Faculty of Education Handbook of Post Graduate Qualification Policies and Procedures, 2009. Participants were made to sign an informed consent form containing a brief of the study and the statement indicating that participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any time (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). The researcher also ensured that the dual role of being a researcher and at the same time a lecturer in charge in one of the colleges under study did not compromise the research findings. The researcher avoided harming the participants, including not invading their privacy and not deceiving them about the aims of the research (Flick, 2006).

#### **4.10 Informed consent**

All participants were informed about the research study in a way that was assumed to be clear and understandable to them. According to Creswell (2003) participants should be furnished with full information before they agree to participate in the research study

or project. Participants are expected to agree on: (a) the aims and objectives of the research study (b) method of research, that is, the procedure that will be followed.

This study also ensured that the aforementioned issues were observed by submitting a written application to conduct the research at the selected teacher education colleges. The identified colleges of teacher education were visited and the researcher was able to introduce himself to the participants. The purpose of the visit and the significance of the research study were clearly explained to the participants. The researcher also afforded the participants the opportunity to ask questions. The letter written by the director of the Higher Education Director granting permission to conduct the research as well as the letter written by the supervisor attesting that the researcher was a registered student at the University of Fort Hare and was involved in the named research study were made available to the participants.

Participants were also informed about the need for their responses to be recorded. Consensus was sought before proceeding. The researcher explained the data collection methods and devices instead of using them clandestinely. These were also made available for scrutiny. Participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw as the established agreement did not place the participants under any obligation to continue participating in the research if they were no longer interested. In this study, the confidentiality ethic was established by using secret codes for all interview transcripts and the names of the participants were concealed and pseudonyms were used to protect the institutions and participants.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

Qualitative interpretive methodology was adopted in this study. This approach was appropriate in this study because it enabled the researcher to get data directly from the participants. The researcher sat with the respondents and heard their views, voices, perceptions, opinions, interpretations and expectations with regard to the nature of their participation in the strategic planning process. The case study research design adopted in this study helped the researcher to gain in-depth information about what was happening in each teacher education college as the aim of this study was not to generalize the findings. The researcher was able to gather rich, detailed data of qualitative nature through basic individual interviews and document analysis. Collected data were analysed inductively and themes and patterns were also derived.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

#### 5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret data gathered through interviews, document analysis and observation. The study sought to investigate stakeholder participation in strategic planning paying special attention to the level and nature of participation of Students Representative Council (SRC), lecturers, middle and senior management and College Advisory Council Board Members (CACBM) with a view to establish how the teacher education system in Zimbabwe could move towards fully involving these actors in the strategic planning. This chapter responds to the research questions which were;

##### *5.0.1 The Main Research Question*

- What is the level and nature of participation of senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe's colleges of education?

##### *5.0.2 Research Sub-Questions*

- How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?
- How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?
- What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?

- What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

The research instruments attempted to elicit information from respondents through the use of document analysis, semi-structured interviews with key respondents, observation of events concerning strategic planning and direct observation of institutions during the 2011-2015 strategic planning process. It was important to explore perceptions from principals, heads of departments, lecturers in charge (lecturers) and college advisory council board members on the nature of strategic planning in their institutions in order to reach a deeper understanding of their participation levels in the crafting of their strategic plans and subsequently examine how it could be improved. This chapter is structured as follows:

- 5.1 Profiles of institutions under study
- 5.2 Profiles of respondents in all institutions
- 5.3 Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

The profiles of these institutions are presented below.

### **5.1 Profile and structure of Institutions under study**

Three institutions participated in this study and were coded as A, B and C. Although all of these institutions are teacher training colleges, there were notable differences in their offerings and in the hierarchical structure that determined the chain of command which, in this case, has a bearing on establishing who participated in strategic planning and why. These colleges of education were different in the sense that, among the two that offer primary teacher training, one offers both teacher and technical education while the

other trains primary teachers and also trains teachers for learners with special needs. The other college trains secondary school teachers. The national chain of command comes from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education through the national secretary for education. The hierarchical structure within these colleges is presented in the diagram below.

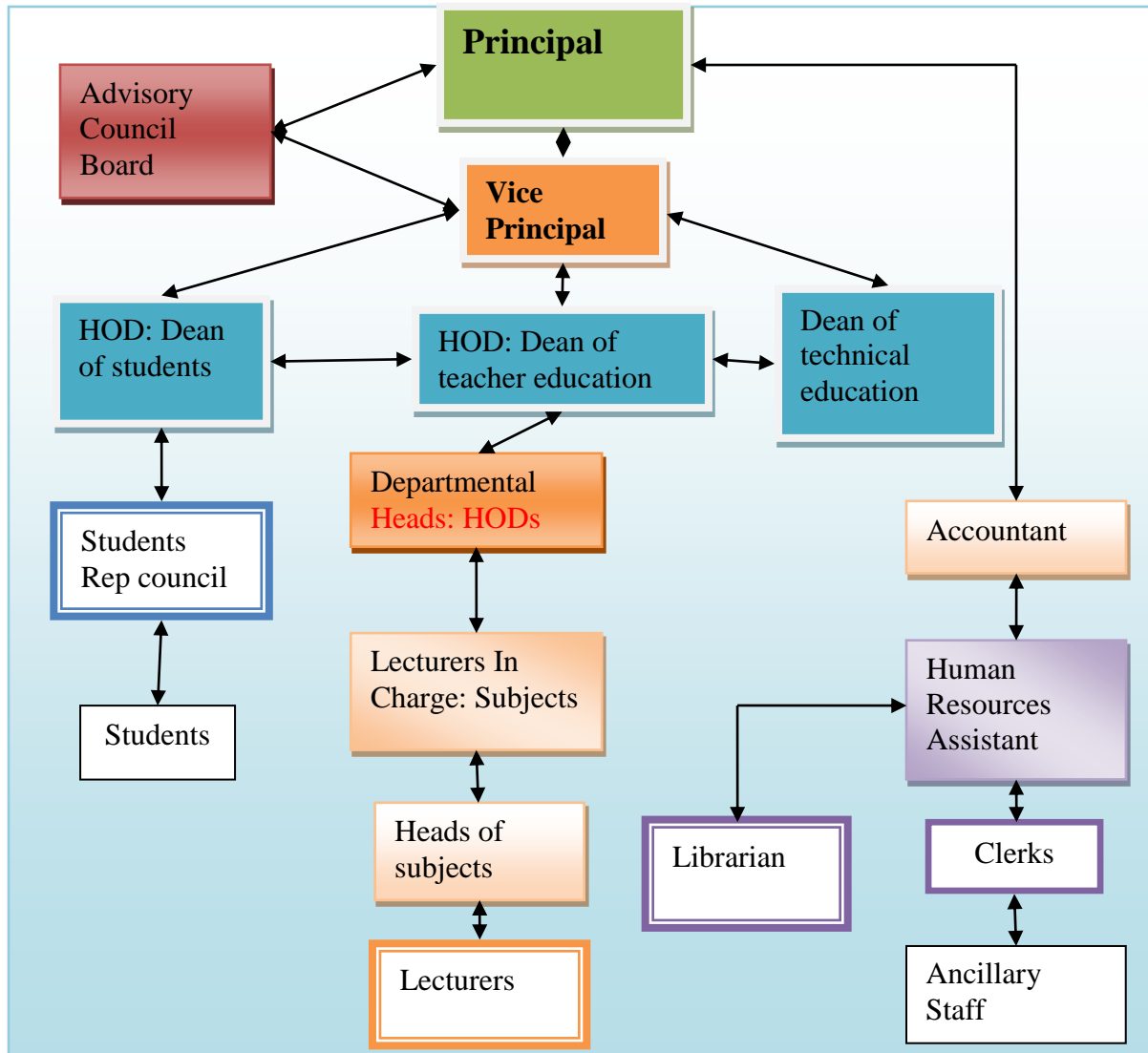


Figure 5-1: hierarchical structure within colleges of education

All the colleges had a hierarchical structure that can be summed as in the organogram above. The Principal is the head of the institution and everyone in the end reports to

him. Second in command is the vice principal followed by the Heads of Departments (HODs). Lecturers in Charge (LICs) work directly with HODs and they report directly to them. LICs are in charge of their subject areas and all lecturers in respective subject areas report to them. There are other positions such as that of the Accountant who reports directly to the Principal. Human resource assistants report directly to the accountant and top management, that is, the principal. One should note that the Dean of Technical Education can only be found in a college that offers technical education which means that the other two colleges do not have this particular post.

These three colleges are similar in that they all offer a diploma in education. The other differences in the courses offered by the colleges are detailed in the table below.

*Differences in courses offered by the three sampled colleges.*

College	Courses offered
A	Primary teacher education(Dip Ed pry), Early Childhood Development (Dip Ed ECD)
B	Primary teacher education(Dip Ed pry), Early Childhood Development(Dip Ed ECD), Special Needs Education(Dip Sp Ed)
C	Secondary teacher education (Dip Ed sec)

Table 4.1: differences between courses offered by the colleges sampled

## 5.2 Profile of internal stakeholders

Outlining the profile of internal respondents (lecturers) is necessary as some of the duties performed by the respondents require some form and level of expertise which are essential for them to function effectively. Lecturing experience as bio data will also assist in determining whether the views of the respondents are congruent with their knowledge of strategic planning. It is assumed that a fuller understanding of these

respondents will make it easier to understand why certain practices are in place within the administration of colleges of education vis-a-vis strategic planning. The age of participants, professional and academic qualifications of all respondents, the positions they hold, length of service and experience in strategic planning will be profiled next.

The table below profiles internal stakeholders (Senior, middle managers and lecturers).

Respondents	Institution	Sex	Age	Exp In Lec	Current Position	Exp in position	Prof Quali	Academic Quali
P A	A	M	56	24	Principal	11yrs	Grad CE	Bsc Honours
P B	B	M	51	21	Vice Principal	10yrs	Grad CE	B.Ed
PC	C	M	50	22	Principal	10yrs	Grad CE	Bsc Honours
HOD.A.1	A	M	55	10	HOD TP	5yrs	Dip educ	M.Ed Cur and Arts
HOD.A.2	B	M	44	18	HOD DE	12yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed EAPPS
HOD.B.1	C	M	46	15	HOD Pr Subjects	7yrs	Dip educ	B.Ed
HOD.B.2	A	M	50	19	HOD PS	10yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed
HOD.C.1	B	F	58	23	HOD Lang	15yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed
HOD.C.2	C	F	48	17	HOD Scie	10yrs	Dip Educ	M.Ed
LIC.A.1	A	F	51	16	LIC Lang	11yrs	Dip Educ	M.Ed
LIC.A.2	B	M	38	8	LIC Pract	5yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed
LIC.B.1	C	M	45	5	LIC Hum	2yrs	Dip Educ	B.Ed
LIC.B.2	A	F	43	8	LIC H Econ	4yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed
LIC.C.1	B	M	46	12	LIC P /S	8yrs	Dip Educ	B.Ed
LIC.C.2	C	M	48	13	LIC Scie	5yrs	Grad CE	M.Ed
Total = 15					P = 3 HODs=6 LICs = 6			B.Ed = 4 Hon = 2 M.Ed = 9

Figure 5-2: Profile of principals, vice principals and all lecturing staff respondents

### ***5.2.1 Internal respondents***

Figure 4.2 indicates the biographical data that assist in providing critical information on planning and decision making in colleges of education. The examination of academic and professional qualification of internal respondents, for instance, helps one to better understand and appreciate the calibre of the respondents.

### ***5.2.2 Age range of participants***

The age range of participants was considered to be one of the important variables in strategic planning activities at the colleges of education in Zimbabwe. Among the respondents only one (6.67%) of the respondents was below the age of forty. Sixty percent of the respondents were in the age range of 41-50yrs and 33.33% of the respondents were in the range of 51- 60yrs. It was assumed that the ages were in a way indicative of the level of maturity of the lecturers. It was further assumed that their maturity could impact positively on the quality of planning.

### ***5.2.3 Length of service of lecturers***

It was also the intention of the study to establish the length of service of the lecturers who were sampled as it had a direct bearing on their level and the nature of their participation in the strategic planning process. Some respondents had over twenty years of lecturing experience. There were some whose lecturing experience fell below ten years but not less than five years of lecturing experience. The meaning deduced from this data set is that the respondents were experienced lecturers in their profession.

#### ***5.2.4 Professional and academic qualifications of lecturing respondents***

The study also sought to establish the professional qualifications of the lecturers who participated in the study. In terms of the academic qualifications the data revealed that 26.67% lecturers were holders of a Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd) and 13.33% of the lecturers are holders of Honours Degrees. Sixty percent of the lecturers interviewed were holders of a masters' degree. All respondents were professionally trained teachers. Among all lecturing respondents, sixty percent held a graduate certificate in education and 40% had a diploma in education. From this information, it is assumed that the respondents were most likely to understand the process of strategic planning in education and might have been at some point participated in strategic planning. With this level of qualification it was assumed that lecturers could strategically plan, hence they participate actively and meaningfully in the strategic planning process. The level of their educational qualification supported the idea that it is possible for them to understand strategic planning processes and as a result they were able to participate and contribute in the strategic planning process.

#### ***5.2.5 Lecturer experience in strategic planning***

The study sought to establish lecturer experience in strategic planning. Forty seven percent of the respondents had more than ten years' experience in the positions they held and had all been participants in strategic planning. Fifty three percent of the respondents had less than ten years' experience in the positions they held and all of them had participated once in the strategic planning exercise. It was assumed that the

positions held by the respondents allowed for automatic involvement and participation in strategic planning and other middle and top management activities such as academic board meetings and finance meetings.

### 5.3 External stakeholders

The table below profiles the external stakeholders who participated in the study. The table indicates their sex, age, area of expertise academic qualifications and number of years as members of the college advisory council board.

Respondents	Institution	Sex	Age	No of years in the board	Area of work	Area of expertise	Academic Quali
CACBM	A	M	52	7yrs	Businessman	Business studies	MBA
CACBM	B	M	51	8yrs	Municipality	Engineering	BSc
CACBM	C	M	50	5yrs	Min of Justice	Law	LLB

Figure 5-3: Profile of College Advisory Council Board Members (CACBM)

College Advisory Council Board Members (CACBM) who took part in this study were all male adults aged between 50 and 55 years. Their ages suggest that they are mature adults who may help develop sustainable plans. Their areas of expertise were varied which might mean that they are able to come up with varied but enriching ideas giving a balanced planning process.

#### 5.3.1 Advisory board member academic qualification

The advisory council board members interviewed had varied in qualifications. One is a practicing lawyer who holds a degree in Law (LLB). He added that he is also a former teacher who left teaching for law. The other member has a Masters in Business

Administration (MBA) and is a local businessman. The third advisory council board member is a local council employee who holds a BSc Engineering degree. The expertise of these members was considered valuable as colleges assumed that these council board members might bring relevant experience that would be valuable in the planning process. It was assumed that these members were taken on board with a mandate to help devise demand-driven quality teacher education and life-long education to students. The other assumed role is that of devising sustainable community driven plans leading to the attainment of knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to community development and manpower development of Zimbabwe.

### ***5.3.2 Length of service as an advisory board member***

The length of service of advisory board members was also established. This was done to show whether there was continuity in the planning process and the implementation process of plans guided by those who take part in the planning process. It provided a picture of the level to which these respondents were likely to understand the planning and decision making dynamics. The advisory council board members had been involved in college activities for more than five years. Among the three advisory council board members interviewed, one had been in the College Board for more than seven years and the other for eight years and the other for five years. Next is coded and thematically presented data with respect to the questions raised in the interviews, document analysis and observation.

## 5.4 Data Presentation

### 5.4.1 Principals views on strategic planning

In Zimbabwe all colleges of education managers are compelled to think and plan strategically. The three principals of the colleges were asked what strategic planning is. Their responses are detailed below. Document analysis reveals the following information as reasons for their participation: First, one may wish to plan and carry out all the activities deemed needed, but may not achieve the ultimate goals hence the need to involve relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, more resources do not necessarily result in the best results. The way one uses these resources can lead to a different level of benefits. Thirdly, because of the poor economic environment, it has become more and more difficult to plan everything one would wish to do. College management ought to make choices, often tough ones, through balanced decision-making trade-offs across the system and consensus building process. In light of the above this research asked for respondents' conceptions of strategic planning. Principals' views on strategic planning can be summed up under these themes.

- **Direction**

College principals as college managers responded to this question and had varied conceptions about strategic planning. Principal A stated that:

*Strategic planning is a process whereby a direction is set forth then the ways and means for following that direction are specified. It is the result of consensus building process, to be agreed upon by all those working in the fields covered as well as the other stakeholders contributing to its implementation.*

Principal B's conception of strategic planning was slightly different from that of principal A. He postulated that strategic planning is a way of designing *'a working tool and it includes not only policy and expenditure frameworks, but also the hierarchy of objectives, key actions and institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluation'*.

- **Planning**

In response to the question of whether colleges of education strategically plan, all principals stated that their institutions do plan, for example (PA) stated that; *"this is something we do every five years and it is key to the development and successful implementation of plans."* The head of department for institution A (HOD.A.1) added that; *"All programmes in the college are planned for and the success of those programmes lie on how well those programmes are planned for. Therefore we resort to strategic planning."* The principal for institution B (PB) stated that they do strategically plan and for planning to be sustainable and properly implemented, there needed to be people who would participate in the planning process. While PA stressed the need for success of the planning process, PB's response stressed the necessity of planning.

- **Consensus**

According to (PC), *"participants have to meet and plan together for proper implementation of any programme."* The response from PC, apart from highlighting the need to come together in the strategic planning process also attempted to espouse strategic planning from the term strategic plan. He asserted that :

*A strategic plan in the education sector is the physical product of the strategic planning process and embodies the guiding orientations on how to run an education system within a larger national development perspective, which is evolving by nature and often involves constraints.*

While principals described strategic planning as a way of designing a working tool that has implications for monitoring and evaluation of the institution and that it often involves relevant stakeholders, they did not touch on issues such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Again, while principal for institution C (PC) touched on strategic planning as an evolving process that often involves constraints, he did not mention how the system must be responsive to a changing and dynamic system and how strategic planning responds to these constraints. In a way, his response was indicative of wider participation but did not shy away from exposing that it is problematic. The conceptions of PA differed from that of the others in that he talked of strategic planning as a tool that “*can see colleges of education moving from formulation to implementation and from plan to practice*”. However, principals’ views touched on consensus building so as to realize the success of the plans.

## **5.5 Nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning**

Senior management, middle management, lecturer and other stakeholders’ participation in strategic planning comes in varied nature ranging from being forced into pseudo participation. The nature of participation as revealed by document analysis and interviews is detailed below. There are themes that emerge in this section.

- ***Restricted participation***

The first question sought to establish their attendance of the strategic planning sessions. This was important because it is assumed that participants are the ones who should drive their colleges' missions and goals nationally and regionally and that they integrate quality teacher education and training for empowerment. Establishing those who participated would help identify those given the task of driving the vision and mission of the college. In response to this question, PA said,

*At the college people who attend are academic board members, that is, the Principal, Heads of department (HODs), Lecturers in charge (LICs), Accountant, Human Resources Manager, Dean of students and College Advisory Council Board Members. These individuals attend the planning session simply because they are the ones who are mandated to drive and stir the development of the college.*

Principal B (PB) had similar but slightly different information; he stated that the people who attend are; *The finance committee members, vice-principal, accountant, accountant assistant, human resources manager and heads of departments.* All the principals were unanimous on the involvement of HODs, Advisory Council Board Members and LICs but differed on other stakeholders. The difference was that in college B and C there was the participation of Head of Subjects, participants who are not involved in college A. The other difference was that principals A and B had the accountant, human resources and the librarian also involved and these participants are not mentioned by principal C. (PC) had this to say about participants;

*The participants in strategic planning are, principal, vice principal, HODS, HOS, LICs As for all other lecturers, the assumption was that their interests were to be represented by their LICs or heads of subjects (HOS). These people are the ones who attend simply because they are key stakeholders in the running of the college and it is also government requirement to involve all these stakeholders.*

The above responses are indicative of the fact that these institutions are in a way able to purposively select participants that they feel will contribute meaningfully in the strategic planning process. The election of participants (according to all principals) depends on the position members hold as well as the experience and expertise of the particular member. The principal/vice principal, heads of departments, lecturers in charge and advisory council board members are indicated by all colleges as participants in the strategic planning exercise. The heads of departments (HOD) and Lecturers in charge (LIC) are people who are in middle management in these colleges. The responses above also indicated that the strategic planning exercise was done by a select few that the college management considered appropriate. All principals were clear on why the mentioned participants were involved in the strategic planning process. They argued that they were the ones given the task of driving the development of their institution and they had to work with their management teams in the strategic planning process. HODs, College advisory council members and LICs also confirmed their involvement in the strategic planning process. HOD .A. 1 said:

*Senior academics in senior management do attend strategic planning meetings. They are the ones who attend because they represent all key departments. They also appoint people with special tasks to action the strategic planning exercise but again it is not all senior academics who attend.*

Advisory council board members also confirmed what the principals said. CACBM. A said:

*There are a number of people with different portfolios who participate in strategic planning. For example, some members of the academic board... Apart from me as a college advisory council board member, senior academics attend. They represent their interests and I am the voice of the community. I am there to help raise what the community wants from the institution.*

From the above responses what comes out is that all those who participated for example HODS and LICs represent the views of the other lecturers in these institutions whilst the college advisory board members represent the views of the community. However, according LIC.A.1, *“it is not all HODs, LICs and Advisory Council Board Members who are involved.”* LIC.B.1 also shared the similar view with LIC.A.1 but went further to say *‘while senior positions allow automatic involvement in senior management activities not all senior academics are involved in strategic planning.’* The 2006-2010 strategic plan documents for all the colleges commonly states that their plans were gathered from various stakeholders who include the principal, vice principal, a few lecturers in charge, some HODs and some members of the advisory council board. These participants were mainly the stakeholders who were commonly involved in the strategic planning exercise. From the above responses, it can be concluded that the position held by an individual could be an avenue for participation in strategic planning. This implies that there is restricted participation since participation depends on the positions held by individuals. This also implies that the college management or principal prefers to consult senior academics in senior management positions. The values and beliefs espoused by their senior positions are based on the principle of respect, service and commitment hence in a way they have become a ‘strategic management committee’ that is responsible for strategic planning in the college.

- ***Wider participation***

Principal B (PB) went further to explain that;

*Other members who attend are members who represent various interests in the college such as the librarian. These people are the ones who attend because they represent their departments and they are the ones responsible for curriculum and the general development of the college.*

PC also added that apart from the internal stakeholders such as lecturers and management *“other stakeholders such as community leaders and college advisory board members also attend.”*

### **5.5.1 Lecturer participation**

The study sought to establish the nature of participation of lecturers in strategic planning. The emerging themes were;

- ***Unequal participation***

It emerged that there was a practice of unequal lecturer participation in the strategic planning processes as highly ranked lecturers tended to dominate the processes whilst junior lecturers' participation ended at consultative meetings. Data elicited from lecturers indicated that in pre-planning meetings that are fore-runners to all stakeholders meetings, only representatives of lecturers at departmental level participated. While some participants (principals and HODs) mentioned in their responses that there was no deliberate training or retraining specifically for strategic planning, all principals stated that in their sites sub meetings were held prior to the all stakeholders meeting. These sub-meetings culminated in the all stakeholders meeting which was the meeting that created the strategic plan. PC stated that *“lecturers meet every five years to help in the strategic planning process.* Corroborating this information, HOD A.1 remarked;

*After every five years we are required to plan for our departments. The plans are done in line with the goals we set in departments. Representing environmental science as HOD we outline projects we want students to accomplish for the five year period we are currently planning for. For example in the last strategic plan, we planned to make the college green and we used citrus plants to provide healthy air, shade and fruits. This was only one project. This was then fed into the plan to create enabling detailed action plans such as funding, transport, seedling, sourcing chemicals for treatment, training of support staff and water reservoirs to back up the watering taps.*

Substantiating this point, HOD A.2 explained:

*For the pre-planning sessions at departmental level, we need to detail what we want to happen within the five years in terms of departmental projects. We bring our written project plans to the meetings and articulate what we want done. The plans include materials and facilities needed, the consumables and periods to action them as well as the personnel required.*

Concurring with the two views, LIC A.1 said;

*In our case we have been having strategic planning meetings specifically looking for ways of soliciting for equipment and facilities since we need a lecture theatre, relevant books and other reading material, projectors and videos as well as transport to take students to specialized learning centres.*

The above responses indicate what heads of departments and lecturers suggested in their departmental meetings. Some of their submissions were their operational plans and it is not clear as to what they considered to be departmental plans, contingency plans and preliminary plans for the all strategic planning stakeholders meeting. However what emerged was that heads of departments and lecturers in charge pushed for special interests for their particular departments or subjects in the strategic planning meetings.

- ***Restricted participation***

The study further sought to find out from managers (principals) how lecturers were involved in strategic planning. The issue of restricted participation also emerged. All the principals revealed that lecturers were involved as preliminary sources of information. This meant that they might in a way be supplying data to craft the goals and the strategies to achieve the goals. These strategies were sourced from lecturers using interview schedules and data analysis to come up with goals for the new plan. The data further revealed that planners did not evaluate the previous plan for achievements before crafting a new one. This also means that there might be no continuity in the planning process. Disclosing this PB said that;

*The current 2011-2015 five year strategic plan started off with pre planning meetings that reveal the projects the departments want students to be involved in for that year. The departments' representatives come to sub meetings with such projects done in line with the vision and mission of the college. The vision and mission are kind of constant but only grow larger each year so as to maintain stability. The departments send their representatives usually HODs with specific projects and they articulate the goals that go with the projects.*

In concurrence, PA added:

*The pre-planning meetings are used to gather all the information and views to be used to craft the new plans. This is usually done on the -first day of the strategic planning meeting.*

There are indications that this information was not used since respondents revealed that plans were not reviewed which suggested that there was no continuity in the planning process and non-review of plans might suggest that new strategic plans were crafted all the time. The above views contradicted what the principals and HODs had mentioned that they were only told of the meetings and asked to prepare (ref page 166) and some

members were not aware of what was expected of them. There was also no evidence in the form of minutes for preliminary meetings held in preparation of the strategic planning exercise. The other reflection is that while participants carried out their preliminary meeting, there was no review of the previous plans that had been submitted so as to measure their progress.

The noted gap revealed by the data collected through interviews and document analysis was that while participants did all the above, there was no mention of previous plans to help them assess their success and failures and what could have gone wrong so that intervention measures could be instituted. Ninety percent of the participants indicated that previous plans were not reviewed. Ten percent of the respondents were not sure and they indicated that they were not involved in the previous plan and as a result they were not sure whether any reviews had taken place. The document analysis also indicated that previous plans were not reviewed.

### ***5.5.2 Middle and senior management participation***

The study further sought to establish the nature and level of involvement of middle and senior managers in strategic planning. The responses from middle and senior management reflected inverse restricted participation due to their positions as they were mandated to follow up every stage of the strategic planning processes.

- ***Inverse restricted participation***

Explaining the nature of their participation in the strategic planning process, PA remarked:

*I actually set up the first meeting then the vice principal or dean (HOD) appointed to run the meetings convene all the various preliminary planning meetings with departments. I do not sit in these meetings unless I have spare time but I follow details closely through daily briefings. I ensure all things are done in line with our vision and mission as a college. I also set funds at the disposal of sub-committees as they do the meetings through the finance committee. I also ensure that all personal tasks are detailed in action columns and demand from deans to give me progress reports of all steps as they unfold.*

Corroborating what was said the next principal PB revealed;

*As principal, I have to operationalize all levels of preliminary meetings by coordinating them. I have to see to it that the chairperson appointed to run the preliminary meetings actually makes calls for meetings. This is where departments report their needs and crafts the projects they need to be tabled at the all-stakeholders planning meeting. I have to check that the parallel meetings that run concurrently with those of lecturers in teacher education are also set up as well as the advisory board meetings. At all these preliminary meetings, the needs, challenges and goals of departments are thoroughly articulated.*

The document analysis revealed that the involvement for these key stakeholders was twofold and came in a series of two stage level meetings. Firstly, it was the preliminary pre-planning done by lecturers to gather or bring together information on challenges on the ground. This was reportedly multi-pronged because it involved lecturers collecting challenges and aspirations of students on the ground, assessing limitations and successes of the previous five year plan and factoring in the information. Observations on Site B further revealed that strategic planning involved (principals) managers who also raised over-arching challenges to the institutions' organizational management.

Finally it involved parallel meetings of the advisory board sub-committees which were split into the finance sub-committee, the academic sub-committee, the technical sub-committee and the operations sub-committee which ran functions and plans practical tasks for all sub-committees. Site A and B had preliminary meetings by the lecturers and other stakeholders and only came to the final all stakeholder meeting.

It emerged from data gathered from managers (principals) and document analysis that middle and senior managers were in the driving seat of strategic planning as they set the timing and tone for the series of meetings. Principals reportedly convened the senior management meetings and appointed key personnel such as the chair person to run the particular phase of planning. This again was an indication of inverse restricted participation. The appointed chairperson, usually the vice principal, had a duty to ensure that some senior managers (HODs and LICs) were appraised of all steps through consultative briefings. It was also the duty of senior managers (principals) to advise, vet and sometimes veto all major decisions.

The HOD A.1 who is a dean concurred with the above view outlining that,

*As a dean, I am at the cross roads when it comes to what happens at the preliminary meetings. I ensure that all departments send the appropriate level of personnel to planning meetings who must at least be heads of departments. I ensure all equipment runs efficiently and is set up at various venues needed. I ensure that secretaries to take minutes are on time and have materials they need to capture accurate records. I then see to it that the appointed chair person has a time keeper and the meetings run on schedule.*

The above statement by HOD A.1 confirmed that the nature of strategic planning was not all embracive to include curriculum innovation at college level. Overall, the above

responses reflected that these preliminary meetings served the purpose of being for-runners of the all stakeholders meeting but they did not evaluate the previous plans. From what was observed, institution A had three preliminary meetings that were held. Minutes of these proceedings confirmed this observation, whereas institutions B and C only talked of preliminary meetings but there were no documents such as minutes of those meetings to support their claim. This in a way might reflect that there was no monitoring and evaluation of the previous plan and the preliminary meetings might have served to look at the new strategic plan.

- ***Wider participation***

The study further sought to establish the participatory role of the advisory council board members at preliminary meetings of strategic planning. The data elicited from the advisory members revealed that the respondents who were advisory board members attempted to enrich the colleges' plans by bringing in outsider views. They held meetings and listened to the needs of the business community and what graduates and services they required. They also listened to the parents on what they wished the youth to train in. In addition, they were a link between the college as an institution of higher learning and the feeder ministry of primary and secondary education on how the students being channeled through could be trained. As such the advisory board members in their various sub-committees linked the college to the community by articulating the views and aspirations of the community in building, equipping and raising as well as widening the colleges' service provision base. Detailing their role in

preliminary meetings running parallel to those of lecturers, advisory board respondent divulged:

**CACBM.A:** *We operate as four sub-sections that make the advisory board. I am in the finance sub-committee and our task is to fundraise for the college. We source for funds and for projects large and small. If the college for example needs a lecture theatre or a hostel, building for their hospitality and home economics departments, it is this sub-committee's task to pull in resources from government, the business sector, industry and ordinary citizens. We use all our connectedness to make such financing a reality. This we do by presenting our strategies to preliminary planning meetings before all stakeholders which is the all embracing planning forum.*

Concurring with the above views CACBM B. disclosed:

*We do forward planning well before the all stakeholders meetings. I am in the academic committee. There we liaise with the various sectors in the community and plan with local aspirations and expectations in mind. This college is located in a dry region five place. There are a lot of gold mines and cattle do well here. Such things as mining engineers and agriculturists are the sought of products industry, business and the community clamour for. Given that we advise the college by researching on the feasibility of providing such courses taking into account the economy, the facilities and the expertise, we report our findings during one of those preliminary meetings chaired by the HOD or dean.*

While the above view reflected on what the advisory council could recommend in relation to the curriculum direction of the college, it is not clear whether these views in real practice influence curriculum direction that the colleges take. In response to the question on the nature of their participation in strategic planning, College Advisory Council Board Member C (CACBM. C) pointed out that:

*As members of advisory board we alert the college on the needs of the community in light of possible projects. I serve in the business units, sub-committee. The committee sees to it that besides out-sourcing for funds the college practically runs small business units that not only allow technical students to practice their skills but form a bed rock of money making units such as poultry raising, tuck shop trading, cattle and goat*

*raising and landscaping are some of the projects currently in the plan in operation.*

While the above was reported, there was no evidence of preliminary meetings in the form of minutes from the advisory council. This might mean that in this site advisory council members took all they discussed in preliminary meetings to the all-stakeholder strategic planning exercise without minutes as evidence of their resolutions or minutes were not given to the researcher. This is inferred in by what CACBM. C said. He revealed that; *as advisory council members we come together and hold meetings and we take all our resolutions to the strategic planning meeting.* While the respondents might have stated what they do in the preliminary meetings before the planning exercise, all college advisory council members reported that not much had been achieved, from their views which are reflected in the strategic plan documents. All college advisory council members also reported that they did not hold review meetings on 'their' plans.

The study also sought to establish the nature of the involvement of the various stakeholders in the all stakeholders meeting which is the highest planning forum before the final strategic plan is adopted at the site and by head office. In response to this question the lecturers said at this point they presented and argued for their plans, giving justification for them and giving specific technical feasibility options. The lecturers also revealed the sort of projects and ideas they tabled aligning these to the goals of the institution. Verifying this point LIC A.1 explained:

*... An example of a goal my department tabled. We had noted that a lot of experienced and highly qualified personnel had left the college in the past five years. The college continued to lose lecturers of good repute. We*

*tabled a goal of sustaining and retaining valued staff through a deliberate aggressive thrust. This was then taken upon as a major goal. On projects my department identified the need to buy newer and more computers so that students and lecturers can have better access to research and communicate internationally.*

In response to the same question respondent LIC .B.1 remarked:

*At that level lecturers report on issues ironed out in the departments as well as preliminary meetings. For the Theory of Education department, we tabled the idea of devolving from issuing courses in diploma to training degree courses. This was in order to meet the demand of higher qualifications in the community. This would also consolidate the skills by opening new entry points to accessing higher education. For a project the department suggested the college build a lecture theatre since students use the library as a classroom.*

The above responses are indicative of contributions made by lecturers. Their contributions were centred on what could benefit their departments. In a situation where all participants advocate for individual departmental benefit, there is likely to be tension firstly on ownership of ideas and secondly on the question of who benefits. The end result might be a situation where participants do not work for the common good and there is no common ownership of the entire plan by participants.

Still on the question of how principals were involved in the all stakeholders meeting which finally crafted the strategic plan, sixty percent of the senior managers indicated that when finalizing the strategic plans, as principals they concentrated on refining the projects and objectives of the departments as expressed by lecturers. The principals were also involved in sharpening views that may not be clear by questioning and quizzing the meeting. Asked what role the managers (principals) played in the all stakeholders meeting, PC responded:

*It is in this meeting where I get to ensure the highest aspirations of the college are crafted because it mandates all the big projects we get to do. I ensure that all building works, cars to be bought machinery and incentives for staff are elaborately outlined and strategies for making them reality laid out. From this plan I get my mandate, enlarge the college in terms of courses, faculties, students' enrolments and also in terms of facilities and services offered. Thus it is the principals' role to raise any aspect departments leave out. As the key public relations officer I also play host to all outsiders invited to assist like the chief consultant.*

Responding to the same question PA disclosed;

*At this meeting it is my function to ensure all regularities of government and ministry are not flouted. I have to keep aligning and guiding the meeting on such issues, for example how we raise funds, what we can and cannot do and how we use the funds as we finance the projects. It is also my function to see to it that the relevant government departments are alerted of this meeting because there are standing laws in Zimbabwe about large gatherings.*

PB also added to these ideas by saying:

*My role is to enrich the issues raised in the plan by adding the administrative requirements to those raised by the departments. For example, if departments need four vehicles for teaching practice supervision, it is necessary to add vehicles like staff bus for shuttling lecturers and a bus for students, trucks or vans for orders. I also ensure that visitors to the college have bookings for a comfortable stay.*

Still on the actual role advisory board members played during the all stakeholders meeting. CACBM .A said

*This is the forum where we argue for the college's projects. The all stakeholders meeting has powerful community leaders in attendance including politicians, academic leaders like principals of other institutions, business leaders and members of parliament. As advisory board members we lobby heavily and tactfully to get these people to commit themselves in specific terms to support projects though I must say at times they simple pay lip service to our concerns.*

All college advisory board members were unanimous in mentioning that all college staff including the principal were civil service members and were "tied by many regulations

*not to squeeze and put their bosses into tight corners but the advisory council members can.”* They explained that they were able to directly channel their concerns to the ministry simply because they were the voice of the community and the community had the right to do so. They further stated that the representation of their chamber includes lawyers, justices of law, academics who are highly placed such as vice chancellors of universities and business people. CACBM .C. went further to say *“given our strength we sometimes take the chance to exploit the situation and canvas and cajole to get commitments in place.”* In addition CACBM .A. stated that:

*In the meeting we strategically position ourselves to ensure we target key people to persuade them to see the colleges’ plight. We actually intensively lobby for the college at all times during tea breaks as well as when a particular item is raised. We take advantage of the media coverage too to launch our needs nationwide.*

The data elicited from respondents as well as documents and observations revealed that four sets of respondents created the strategic plan. Their categories were lecturers (HODS, LICS), managers (principal/vice principal, accountant and human resources) advisory council board members and consultants. These participants represent their individual departments as well as the college and documents revealed only minutes and feedback meetings to show how the strategic plan cascades down to all internal and external stakeholders who might have not participated in the crafting of the strategic plans.

### ***5.5.3 College Advisory Council Board Member participation***

The document analysis revealed that in the selected sites of colleges of education in Zimbabwe there is an advisory council board. This board is made up members of the

community who come from different areas; for example health department, local government, justice, business and religious community. Colleges of education approach these departments and ask for a leading person who will not only represent the department but the community as well in educational support and development.

The study sought to establish from respondents whether the selected sites of colleges of education involved advisory council board members in strategic planning and subsequently established the nature of their participation. The nature of participation reflected was unequal participation as shown by the responses that follow. All advisory council members who were respondents in the study confirmed their participation in the strategic planning process. CACBM.A asserted that *“my service is always available and I try to assist where I can and I attend to college strategic planning meetings when asked to”*. CACBM. B postulated that *“as the members of the board we are involved in the planning process and our participation is determined by our invitation to the planning process”*. The responses by CACBM.A and B indicated that they did not attend the strategic planning process all the time but did so upon invitation. Despite comments from the principals that CACBM were not always present due to their tight personal or business schedules, CACBM asserted that their invitations were limited and was the chief reason for to their limited contribution.

All principals confirmed that college advisory council board members (CACBMs) were involved in the strategic planning process. While PA and PC stated that they involved the council board members because they valued their input, the response from PB

implied that the advisory council was involved in the strategic planning process because they were obligated to and it is government policy and because they are a government run institution they are mandated to involve them. The responses from the selected sites, though similar on the fact that they all involve advisory council board members differed on why they involve them. PA stated that it is hoped they would bring external views and PB stated that it is policy and PC mentioning that their opinion is valued. The response from PC was: *'Colleges of education do involve advisory council board members in the running of the college.'* PB added that it is *'government policy that they involve college advisory council board members and the purpose of the board is to help to plan and develop in a sustainable and acceptable way.'* To explain how planning can be sustainable and acceptable as a result of involving advisory council board members, PB stated that it was assumed board members are parents and they live in the communities served by these institutions and their participation would bring views that are from the community and the community would help and support what comes from them.

All principals were unanimous in stating that the participation of advisory board members is vital in the development of strategic plans. Principal A (PA) further explained that in his institution, there was an operative sub-committee of the advisory council board and this committee advised the entire spectrum of the college system. The mandate of the sub-committee is to get external views and recommend to the college what they think the college should do to best serve the interests of the

community that it serves. Members of this sub-committee are involved in the strategic planning process.

It was also the aim of the study to establish how the advisory council board members are involved in strategic planning in colleges of education. The response attracted similar and different views from respondents with PA stating that the board advises on issues that can benefit the client, PC stating that they are hands-on committee for the day-to-day running of the college. However, PC is contradicted by HOD.C.2 who mentioned that the board hardly participates. The response elicited from PA was;

*We do involve advisory council board members in strategic planning meetings in our college. To answer your question, the advisory council board members have a sub-committee that advise on the running of the college and this committee brings in views on what they think could benefit the clients.*

There were no minutes to determine the frequency of the said meetings. There was also no evidence of the advice. Documents were not provided by PA to support his claim. A similar response was also echoed by PC who said;

*Advisory council board members are very much involved in strategic planning. We do involve them by making use of the advisory council's operations sub-committee that is always hands on the day to day running of the college. Their advice on what the client wants and what the community needs is very important.*

HOD .C.2 had a different response;

*There has always been attempt to involve advisory council board members by asking them to participate in the strategic planning meetings or by bringing their operative sub-committee into meeting. My worry is that they hardly participate; they usually become passive participants. However, they do take part. I am only worried about their contribution. I might be wrong but I think the college management meets with the college advisory council operative committee quarterly and I think it is from such*

*meetings that they help advise the college on their plans which are later on taken up to the strategic management committee.*

The mixed responses on the involvement of the advisory council board members are indicative of the unsystematic manner of their involvement, which in turn, might compromise the quality of their contribution. Still on the same question, HOD .B.2 stated that *“They sit in different selected meetings and contribute therein.”* This means that, in this site, advisory council board members were invited to sit in on different internal meetings where their contributions were welcome. The participation of the advisory council differed from site to site. Site A and Site C had the advisory council whose sub-committees assisted in the planning process. In Site A, the sub-committee played a bigger role of advising while in site C the advisory council with its sub-committee was involved in the day to day running of the institution and strategic planning. This view from the principal C is contradicted by his HOD.C.2 who stated that they were passive participants. This might mean that at this site, they might only be physically present but they contributed minimally to the discussions. Site B had the advisory council with no mention of its sub-committees. In this site the council sits in different selected meetings, which means that the site chooses which meetings require their presence.

Apart from establishing how advisory council members are involved in strategic planning, it was also imperative to establish whether they bring an outsider’s view to compliment and enrich the colleges’ strategic planning process. The responses given by the principals on the contributions of the advisory board and their participation in strategic planning and the role they play in the process seemed not to be in line with

what the heads of departments (HODs) and lecturers in charge (LICs) said about their contribution and their participation. On this issue PA said:

*Yes advisory council board members do contribute a lot in that they bring in a lot of ideas from their work experiences though sometimes they bring what is not relevant and practical... It is also difficult to get all their members who make up the sub-committees to attend the strategic meeting... In our recent meeting a few did find time to come. You will understand that these are also busy people and they might not attend in all the days of the strategic planning meetings.*

LIC .A.2 had a slightly different view from that of PA by remarking that;

*I would like to believe that their views are very useful since they are directly linked to our clients. I believe if they could interact with the college hands on they will be very helpful.*

The views from LIC.A.2 mean that although the members of the advisory council participate in the strategic planning process and have useful views, their participation is not adequate in the sense that they are not hands-on. His assertion might mean that there is still need for more involvement of the advisory council since they are the voice of the client. When asked to explain what 'hands on' interaction meant, the LIC explained that he was referring to a situation where advisory council members could be aware of what is taking place at the college on a daily basis rather than come only when there is the strategic planning exercise. LIC.A.2 went further to say

*In the last strategic plan, only three key advisory council board members were present and in this last one very few (two) were present and I cannot say they contributed much though they have sub-committees that are supposed to be functional.*

HOD .B.2 also had a slightly different response to that of other respondents (LIC.A.2).

The response was; *"They represent various interest groups and as such contribute ideas that help the college to fit in its operational environment."* The differences in these responses could be indicative of different experiences of respondents with regards to

their views about the contribution of advisory council members in strategic planning. These responses seemed not to be the same as what the college advisory council members said about their participation and contribution in the strategic planning process. Some of the responses seem to point to the advisory council members as people who bring in clientele's ideas and help incorporate them in the planning process yet on the other hand some of the responses seemed to highlight a gap between what participants say and what actually happens on the ground with regards to their participation and involvement. Two points to note are the fact that some respondents point out that the council members are passive participants and that what advisory council board members say they do with regard to their contribution is not exactly what other participants say about their contribution. There were indications that the way they were involved in the strategic planning process with specific reference to the incorporation client feedback differed from site to site; hence, the next question aimed at finding out how they incorporate client feedback in the planning sessions.

Apart from establishing whether college advisory council board members bring an outsider's view to compliment and enrich the colleges' strategic planning process, the study also sought to establish how the advisory board member incorporate client feedback into the planning process. In the selected sites, the respondents stated that the only way advisory council members could incorporate client feedback into the planning process was to ensure that they were invited to planning meetings and that they participate in the strategic planning process. Advisory council board members are members of the community who are expected to bring views that not only benefit the

college but the community as well. Asked to explain how advisory board members incorporate client feedback into the planning process, PA said; *“their views are taken on board through discussions that we hold during the planning meetings.”* In a strategic meeting that was observed at institution A. The advisory council board member suggested raising money for the college. CACBM.A said; *the college and community have been benefiting from the sale of chickens. There is need to introduce other small business units like the tuck shop and piggery. From these projects supplementary funds can be raised.* The document analysis revealed that the idea was taken on board and a task team was set up to look into ways of introducing these projects.

#### **5.5.4 Student participation**

Several benefits of students’ participation in strategic planning are reported in literature. The study also sought to establish the nature of participation of students in colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The responses from the students’ representative council reflected both restricted participation and non-participation of students in strategic planning processes.

- **Restricted participation**

The nature of participation is greatly influenced by senior management as it is responsible for vetting contributions from students to determine which ones to take up and which ones to discard because students do not sit in the stakeholder strategic

planning meetings. In response to a question on whether they are involved in strategic planning Site A Student Representative Council President (SRC.P.A) said;

*We are involved to a very limited extent. We are asked to hold our meetings and put all our plans and expectations on paper. We take our plans to the dean of students. In some instances the dean of students holds consultative meetings with the entire student body and sometimes with the representative council. That maybe sums up the extent of our involvement.*

Asked whether, as student representatives, they had been part of the strategic planning all stakeholder meeting, Site A SRC secretary said;

*We have not been invited to any of the all stakeholder strategic planning meeting where there is senior management, lecturers and the advisory council. Maybe that is yet to happen. Our involvement so far stopped at the consultative meetings that we held with the dean of students as well as the vice principal.*

The above response by Site A SRC secretary is contradictory in the sense that the student echoes non-participation as well as restricted participation. Site B SRC president said something different from the Site A president. He mentioned that at their institution they have from time to time held consultative meetings with senior management. He further went on to say;

*It is from these consultative meetings with the principal or senior management where we get an opportunity not only to air our grievances and concerns but to be part of the planning process. However our participation in the strategic planning process ends there. In most instances during this consultation meeting we are merely informed of what is being planned and as for our views we are told that will be considered. So far we have not seen nor reviewed strategic plans to see if our concerns are catered for.*

The SRC secretary from Site C mentioned that their participation was to a greater extent very limited. He further went on to reveal another minor theme (insignificance) under restricted participation.

- *Insignificance*

The Site C SRC secretary revealed;

*As a student body we do hold meetings but in most cases our views are short down by the senior management. We are usually given the same answer that resources are limited. While we agree that as the representative council we have been consulted, we have not been in the all stakeholder meeting to be part of the planning process. Perhaps our views are presented by the dean of students.*

In support of the SRC secretary, the SRC president in Site C in response to the question on the extent to which students participate in strategic planning further elaborated;

*Even though we are represented in the senate and the council by the dean of students, the strategic plans are a result of social and political factors and do not reflect our point of view.*

These responses are also indicative of non-participation by students in some key areas of the strategic planning process.

- ***Non participation***

Site A SRC secretary had a slightly different view. The student responded by citing that;

*There is lack of transparency and consultative democratic processes in strategic planning. There is not even a small elite group of students that sits in the board to represent student opinion.*

Responding to the question on whether student bodies had the platform to voice their concerns concerning their limited involvement in the strategic planning process, only SRC president from Site B explained;

*Although an effort is made through student union to take care of 'student opposed' plans, rules and regulations through dialogue and argumentation, the highest bodies of the college (Council, Senate) insist on their own initial decisions and ideas. Moreover the regulations seem not allow for student representatives in college bodies which condemns*

*the attempts made by students to influence aims, vision, mission and strategic plans of the college.*

The responses from the students are indicative of the fact that their involvement ends at the consultative meeting with senior management and they are not sure of what goes on after their consultations with senior management. To further investigate the nature of student participation in strategic planning; the researcher went on to ask the dean students from the three selected sites. Asked to explain the extent to which students participate in strategic planning, Site A dean had this to say;

*Student leadership changes every year, as result management can only be able to hold consultative meetings with the available student body. Their views from the consultative meetings are recorded and presented to senior management. The senior management then decides on what is to be taken up and what is to be discarded. Student representatives do not sit in strategic planning meetings.*

Site B and Site C deans expressed the same statements. Site C dean explained;

*In as much as we would like to fully involve students as they are our major clients, currently students have not been fully involved in the strategic planning process. Their involvement stops at one or two consultative meetings that are held prior to the strategic planning meetings. The way forward is usually championed by senior management.*

The document analysis also revealed non participation of students in the all stakeholder strategic planning meetings. However the documents showed that senior management had consultative meetings with students. From the above responses, one can conclude that in these selected sites, students had no place on the strategic planning boards. Their involvement stopped at the consultative meetings that are held once or twice a year. Their responses are indicative of pseudo-participation. The issue of their views being viewed as insignificant is echoed in most of their responses. In light of the

foregoing, the strategic planning process in the selected sites is user unfriendly as the community of user is not really conversant with the actual plans.

### ***5.5.5 Role interpretation in strategic planning***

Role interpretation by stakeholders in strategic planning process is at times important as it may at times determine the extent to which these actors participate in the planning process. The study therefore sought to establish how these actors interpreted their role in strategic planning. It was imperative that the researcher investigate how they interpret their role when participating in strategic planning individually or on a one-on-one consultative basis. The underlying question apart from establishing their role is the issue of ownership. Given the role these stakeholders play, do they own the strategic plans?

- ***Ownership***

An enquiry into role interpretation on stakeholder participation in strategic planning yielded the following responses;

*PA. Senior management members and CACBMs play a big role in strategic planning. Firstly, they come in as participants-bringing in their own ideas based on their requirements. They also help to guide and are the drivers of all college policies as a result they are key people in strategic planning.*

The majority of the HODs (83.33 %) also echoed similar sentiments. HOD.A.1 said *“academic board members and senior academics are involved in the day-to-day planning of the college activities and they valuably input into strategic plans.”* LIC.A.1 mentioned in their participation *“they play an organizing role as well as do a SWOT*

*analysis of previous plans and input into new strategic plans.*” LIC.A.2 was not very sure of what was happening. The response was *“strategic planning is something rather relatively new. I will be attending for the first time and I think board members contribute more in the development of strategic plans.”* PB also concurred with PA. The response was:

*Academic board members play a big role in this institution. They are the initiators of whatever happens in the college. They also ensure that they drive college policies. They are the planners, supervisors and implementers of all college plans. Their role in strategic planning is that of being the planning team and apart from that they are the leaders and directors of the planning process.*

From the responses, academic board members appeared to be the key stakeholders in the strategic planning process and in a way own the strategic plans. In addition to what was stated by PB, HOD.B.2 responded by stating: *“our role is to represent the interest of the college. Our function is to surface the projects the college needs and suggest time frames. However, in my view, I think we need to give ourselves more time for preparing for this exercise.”* LIC.B.1’s response was not the same as that of HOD.B.2. The respondent said *“we are participants only.”* This meant that his contribution ended in participating which might imply that as an LIC he has little influence on implementation of those plans. This response might imply that although senior academics play their role, they feel that planning has been done so as to fulfill ministerial requirements and their ideas have neither been fully taken on board nor been fully implemented. This is reported by LIC.B.1 who lamented that *‘we participate and it ends there, there are follow meetings to review plans and we do not in any way influence what happens’*. The response by LIC.B.1 might imply that although they are participants, they do not have a final say on what is adopted at the end of day.

PC responded slightly differently from the other principals in the sense that there was an attempt to detail the role of participants such as senior management members in strategic planning meetings. The response was;

***PC:** The academic board members participate in all planning processes. In this particular case they will review the previous strategic plans and give input on the new strategic plan. We reviewed the previous strategic plans and we discovered that not much was done that was in the previous plan. The second part was to input into this plan our successes and failures so that we plan and ensure that we achieve to a greater extent what we plan.*

HOD.C.1 also added to what was said by PC by saying: our role is that of *“proffering ideas worked as individuals and in focus groups during strategic planning meetings and come up with home grown ideas.* The response from LIC.C.1 somehow reflected something different from what was said by the principal and the HOD. This is what was echoed by LIC.C.1; *“we don’t really play any role bigger than that of being participants. We sometimes rubber stamp what our senior management wants done.”* This might imply that there are some in the process who lead others and those that are led. After finding out what they say about their roles it became imperative to establish whether the respondents understand who they plan for. The researcher probed further by asking the question, *“For whom is the strategic plan established”*, a question which evoked different responses from respondents. All principals and 90% of HODs emphasized that strategic plans cannot be established for only one group of stakeholders because it reflects the reason for the existence of the college. HOD.C.2 said *“the mission of our institution is to prepare critically reflective teachers and education professionals for leadership in our community and society.”* Therefore strategic plans cannot be for a select few stakeholders hence the need for them to be all inclusive for the benefit of the institution and the community. PB said our mission is:

*To provide in a sustainable manner demand-driven quality teacher education, technical training and life-long education to students and the community leading to attainment of knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to manpower development.*

The above responses were in a way indicative of one reason why strategic plans were established. They are, in a way, a vehicle of getting them to their ultimate goal and ensuring that these institutions achieve that which they see as the purpose or reason for their operation. The mixed reactions from the above responses are indicative of different perceptions of strategic planning which might imply that respondents have different views about how it should be done and for whom it is done. This might also imply that these institutions are still looking for proper ways and tools for implementing strategies and realizing benefits of strategic planning or they just legitimize the plans of their institutions and then shelve them.

#### **5.5.6 Areas of participant contribution**

Apart from establishing the role played by these participants, it was also important to establish the specific areas in which these actors contribute. All HOD and LIC respondents seemed to attach great importance to the contribution they make towards their subject areas or areas of interest. The question “while participating in strategic planning exercise, what did you contribute to?” evoked different responses by informants. PA said:

*I contributed on issues pertaining to supervision and co-ordination of the work of students. As a principal I also have to ensure that all that is planned is in line with what the ministry wants. In a way I direct the planning process. I do this simple because I am the one who takes responsibility of everything that happens at the college.*

The response from the principal seemed to be more concerned about the responsibilities that are upon him. HOD.A.1 stated that *“some decisions related to my area of interest are laid down by the ministry. I feel I can contribute more but what comes from the ministry sometimes stifle my contribution.”* HOD.A.2 had a different sentiment from the other HOD. The response was *“I have contributed a lot when it comes to how we can improve the IT department. Nothing much has come out of my contribution though my contributions have been noted.”* When probed to explain why his contribution has not been meaningful, the responded explained; *‘financial constraints are said to be the reason why but I think its lack of will power to find alternative means. There are no initiatives that have been taken.’* This question also revealed the determination that those who are yet to participate have. LIC. A.1 said that

*I was not actively involved last time but I can input more as to where we can procure books because I have been in contact with many institutions that serve educational institutions.*

LIC. A.2 also brought another side about his contribution. The response was;

*I contribute more in areas related to the development of my subject area and other subject areas because strategic planning is based on ideas and suggestions from many people. It is not a task list but a way of guiding many kinds of work across the college.*

CACBM.1 said *“I contribute more on areas that are related to college infrastructural development and community development.”* Minutes of the strategic planning meeting held in this institution were indicative of the contributions made by these actors in their areas of interest. They reflected contributions of individuals in different areas in such a way that they would contribute in one area and never in other areas or very little from them in other areas. The minutes revealed that advisory board members actively contributed on issues related to construction of buildings and fund raising activities.

From observation, the level of active involvement changed each time something new was introduced. The trend was such that the people who introduced something become more active in the participation during the discussion of that which they introduced. For example, CACBM A. was an active participant when introduced the issue of how they could fund-raise through setting up small business enterprises and there after he was not an active participant. This might mean that some participants chose to actively participate on issues that they were comfortable contributing to probably due to their experience or their expertise. In some instances, some chose to be passive participants thereby to some extent highlighting their lack of expertise in what was being discussed.

PB also had his views on areas where he contributes more.

*As a principal I contribute more on all issues related to the development of the institution. I have to do this because I am the one who has to initiate and encourage my colleagues to work with me particularly when it comes to planning. They work far much better if they feel that it's also their project.*

The response by PB in the last sentence highlights the issue of ownership by other stakeholders. HOD.B.2 also would perhaps own some of the suggestions that he would to put forward. He specifically stated the areas he would want to contribute more on.

He explained;

*Three issues I would like to put through the board for planning purposes are: deployment of students, transport to follow up and lastly workshops. However, meetings are not held regularly but I have put them through. I contributed a lot last time in our 2006 plan and nothing much came out of it. I don't know what is going to come out of it as from 2011 to 2015.*

The document analysis from this institution indicated that information for the 2011 to 2015 strategic plan was gathered from these participants who met for three days and contributed towards the crafting of the plans. PC's contribution was not very different from PA's contribution. The response was;

*I try to contribute more on all administrative issues. I also contribute more on issues related to my subject area. The reason why I contribute more on these issues is because I am more comfortable when contributing on issues related to my subject area and I also have to ensure that all plans are to a greater extent a success by contributing more on administrative issues that unify all departments.*

HOD.C.2 added on to what all others were saying about their contributions in their areas of interest by saying, *"Of course I contribute more in my area of interest which is my subject area. I am also advocating that things be done differently across the board by involving more people and also in terms of technological procurement."* When probed why The HOD said *"People need to feel that they own the plans so that they implement them as something they own and things that are technological are better done by engaging a specialist in that area."* The respondents attached great importance to their contributions and the response from HOD.C.2. also in a way views strategic planning as a way of unifying faculties, staff and administrators of the college because the plan is based on ideas and suggestions from different people.

### **5.5.7 Information dissemination**

By information dissemination, this research refers to how participants report back to their departments, clients and community on proceedings of the strategic planning meetings. After establishing participants' roles and their areas of contribution, the study

also sought to establish how the participants reported back to their academic and non-academic departments on proceedings of the strategic planning meetings. PA said;

*PA: I share the contents of the final report with all members of academic and non-academic staff. I call for these meetings and brief them on what we have come up with. I also encourage participants to share with others what we came up with since they are the ones who will be working in their fields of expertise.*

PB has a similar response to that of PA. He said I report back through “staff meetings, committee reports and principals’ reports. HOD .A.2 had a different response he stated that:

*The assumption is that we will report back through departmental meetings but this is not always easy as some members in departments treat this as something that is not theirs and therefore should be done by people who participate only. Sometimes the report back in some areas only emphasizes on things that directly affect that particular department.*

The response by HOD A.2 is indicative of a lack of ownership of strategic plans by some other stakeholders. The response by HOD.B.1 also echoed a lack of ownership of strategic plans. He was rather positive about reporting back at departmental meetings but he was rather skeptical about the practice as a result of what happened during the term of the previous plan and what to report on. He echoed that in previous years there were no reviews and hence there was little or nothing to work on or report on. The assertion by HOD.B.1 was:

*Convening departmental meetings would work but since the first meeting was a once off I am afraid some do not take these meetings seriously. Sometimes the plans remain on paper because some stakeholders don’t understand the difference between the plans and strategic plans and therefore cannot determine specific features of strategic planning.*

The above respondent highlighted that there is a difference in planning since there are contingency planning and strategic planning and some cannot differentiate between the two and hence might confuse report backs for contingency plans as report back for

strategic plans. HOD.B.2 echoed similar sentiments. The difference was his concern for report back meetings being scheduled but not held. The assertion was:

*Departmental meetings were held soon after the plan but then meetings to appraise all others were not held maybe because nothing planned seemed to be done. I would still love to think that meetings and circulars can serve as the way of feeding back to others.*

PC was more worried about the report back to community members as he was not sure whether much was being done to report back or apprise community members of the strategic plan. The principal revealed that no plans or structures had been put in place to apprise all interested external stakeholders of the strategic plan but was rather positive about reporting back to his members of staff. The assertion was:

*It is very easy to report back to my members of staff because we can always call for meetings and everyone will attend. Secondly, we give them copies of the strategic plan. What comes out of the planning process is communicated to the ministry easily as well. My worry is with the community that we serve. It has not been easy to get members of the community to attend strategic planning appraisal or feedback meetings. I am also not sure how advisory council members can overcome this problem. Members of the community do not usually attend meetings and I am not sure whether circulars we send to them do make sense.*

HOD .C.1 was content with the newer developments. The response echoed what was happening in the past and what is happening at the moment. The responded stated that:

*In the past fifteen years planning was centralized and the only way those plans were communicated was through meetings and circulars. At the moment we plan at the site and we are beginning to see the strategic plan documents that we own and we communicate among ourselves. The only thing we are not sure of is whether we are doing the right thing because this is something that we started doing in 2006.*

The majority of respondents (75%) reiterated the problems that they faced when reporting back on strategic plans. Advisory Council Board members all shared similar views. They stated that they attended these meetings and they only talked about these

plans when at college. Apart from expressing their short comings when it came to reporting back on strategic plans to all stakeholders CACBM.C went further to suggest what he felt could be done. The assertion was:

*It has not been easy to communicate strategic plans to all stakeholders due to a number of reasons. Firstly, it has not been easy to source finances to print and send the document to key stakeholders. Secondly a lot of key community members seem not to understand what is meant by strategic planning and seem not to be motivated to participate. There is therefore a need to educate all key stakeholders on strategic planning so that maybe they can realise the benefits of strategic planning.*

CACBM. 2 also echoed a similar response:

*The economic and political climate has made it difficult for us to communicate strategic plans to key stakeholders in the community we serve.*

The document analysis from institution A also revealed two scheduled meetings that were connected to strategic planning as a way of apprising other stakeholders who were not participants. In the other two institutions, B and C there were no records of meetings held to review strategic plans, assess progress or look at key performance indicators. The above responses indicated that though there seemed to be an effort made to communicate strategic plans to all stakeholders, there could have been problems that were related to the way information was perceived as well as problems related to the economic and political climate that might not be favorable leading to the shelving of plans and passive participation by stakeholders. The other problem could be related to a lack of expertise to guide the specific process of strategic planning at the level of all college units.

### **5.5.8 Strategic planning meetings**

Respondents reported that their institutions had faced several economic and political challenges, forcing these institutions to undertake continuous strategic planning so as to ensure that they remain operational and competitive. However, some of the respondents felt that these strategic plans did not serve the purpose that they were meant to serve, as some of the plans were overtaken by events, economically affected or politically interfered with. In a way their views indicted that the strategic planning process was a mere ritual.

- ***Ritual***

It is assumed that strategic plans usually face formidable challenges probably due to the continuous transformation of world of knowledge hence the need to be always versatile, innovative and dynamic in the endeavor to meet the expectations set by the strategic plan. There is also an assumption that, in countries that are less developed, education departments face a lot of challenges and throughout these challenges there has to be a way of ensuring that strategic plans are, to a greater extent, achieved. This was echoed by PB who said;

*In the past five years we have faced many economic and political challenges that have rendered our plans null and void. This was the time we needed to join hands with the community and strategically plan so that we could continue with the education business. ...However whatever we planned kept on being overtaken by events.*

The last sentence in PB's response echoes the uselessness of the strategic planning process at his site rendering the planning process a mere ritual. However, PA's response emphasized the need for strategic planning. He stated that while they had had

difficult problems *'there is need for strategic planning meetings and we do hold strategic planning meetings. The outcomes from these meetings should be observed, and reviewed from time to time.* While HOD.A.2 agreed with his principal, that there is strategic planning in these institutions, he did not share the same view with his principal over the necessity of these meetings. He argued that *'these meetings are only held to craft plans that are never followed. There is no need to come up with a paper that will only serve to fulfill a government requirement not needs of the institution.'* Document analysis and observation also revealed that there was strategic planning in all three institutions under study, which meant that these sites are mandated to plan strategically. However, it is participation, the conception, process of planning and the purpose that these plans serve that raises questions. As pointed out by the above HOD, these plans are a white paper that serves to fulfill government requirements.

Having established that there was strategic planning in these colleges of education, it was important to establish whether the actors involved in strategic planning met for strategic planning and how regularly these participants met to review their plans. This is what was said by PA;

*We met for strategic planning and we did lay out a 5 year plan in 2006. I must say due to financial constraints it has been difficult to achieve that which we planned to achieve....The college faced serious challenges in implementing the 2006-2010 mainly due to unstable economic environment. Hyper inflationary environment affected the college making it difficult for us to meet on a regular basis and assess our key performance indicators to see if there is need for change of plan or not. As a result no reviews were made. However, we are in the process of writing the final document of our second strategic plan.*

From the responses there was an indication that those who were involved in strategic planning in all the selected sites met for strategic planning purposes. This was also

evidenced by the fact that while institution A was in the process of preparing to craft the second strategic plan with the first five year plan having been crafted in 2006, institutions B and C were also preparing to craft their plans as observed by the researcher in the minutes of their meetings. At all sites, there were reports of challenges in bringing all relevant stakeholders who were present in previous planning processes to review the plans and for continuity purposes. Principal B (PB) also confirmed what was said by P A but further added that,

*It has been difficult to bring all stakeholders together to review strategic plans and closely look at key performance indicators due to ever changing economic and political climate. As a result I can honestly say we met as full strategic planning board at the time we came up with plans and to a greater extent not much has been done after that planning process.*

PC stated that; *'my institution has strategic plans but as an institution we **simply** crafted them and perhaps there is need to start reviewing them now.'* The statement by PC appears to be loaded – the word *'simply'* helped shape the thought that strategic planning was a mere ritual at these sites. The issue of non-review of the five year strategic plan is indicated by all principals in their responses. Principals A and C stressed that the review of strategic plans would have been very important, as it would have helped the implementation process and at the same time it would have ensured continuity in the planning and implementation process. On the contrary, the strategic plans for all the institutions under study indicated the review dates and also the key performance areas, however, these review dates were not observed, as all principals indicated that the plans were not reviewed. The 2006 – 2010 strategic plan document for Principal B's college stated that the strategic plan would be reviewed once every year by the institution's management. It went further to say the annual reviews would

precede the preparation of the institution's annual plans, a process which should take place every October. There seems to be a gap between rhetoric and reality as what was kept as a record of what should be done was rarely done. This might mean that, at times, these sites crafted strategic plans but end up with little or no effort being put towards realizing the plans.

The negative reactions on failure to meet and discuss key performance areas suggest a low possibility of qualitative and meaningful work being done on to strategic plans. Some of the heads of departments (HODs), lecturers in charge (LICs) and all the advisory council board members confirmed what was said by their principals. Ninety percent of the respondents stated that their institutions last had their strategic plans in 2006 and there were no regular meetings thereafter due to an economic environment that was not conducive to holding such meetings. One of the HODs pointed out that,

***HOD.B.1.*** *It was a 3 day workshop that we only held once and came up with strategic plans. We were holding such a meeting for the first time and we have never revisited what we planned. We recently held another meeting this year. It was also a three day workshop and this time there were facilitators.*

The revelation by HOD.B.1 that strategic plans had never been revisited at his site served as confirmation that the whole process of strategic planning was a mere ritual. HOD.B.2 pointed out that despite having been in the institution for more than five years and having been appointed HOD three years ago, after the previous HOD had left; he had never been involved in strategic planning. In fact, he had been a lecturer for the past fifteen years. Still in the same vein, respondent HOD.A.2 postulated that, *“For the past ten years I have not attended a strategic planning meeting. I have only been invited*

*for the coming strategic planning meeting.*” The same was also said by LIC .A. 2 who stated that *“I will be attending the strategic planning meeting for the first time in 2010 November.”* When the respondent was asked to explain why he/she would be involved for the first time, the respondent said *“I was not a member of the academic board in the past 8yrs. Now that I am a member I am sure I will be involved”*. This could also indicate that strategic planning in these institutions apart from involving college advisory council board members was done by senior academics who in this case are HODs, LICs, Principals and Vice Principals. The picture that emerged from these responses was that the criterion used to select people who were involved in strategic planning was based on the positions that these participants held. The expertise of the select few members is not specified which might also mean that this selection criterion might be very narrow in scope. The other emerging picture, as a result of the indication that the plans drawn were not reviewed, is that some pertinent issues in strategic planning were not addressed. This indicates a system of strategic planning that is flawed and could also be related to lack of expertise on the part of the planners.

#### ***5.5.9 Chairing and minute taking***

All strategic planning meetings in the selected sites were expected to have a chairperson. The study also sought to establish how strategic planning meetings were chaired. When asked about who chaired the strategic planning meetings, the principals, who are the leading heads of these institutions had their views. PB and PC stated the same thing. PB said *“I chair these meetings and I am sometimes assisted by the Vice*

*Principal.*” PC said “*I am involved in chairing these meetings. I sometimes delegate that to the Vice Principal*”. PAs’ response was slightly different from other principal’s responses. His site was also slightly different from the other sites, in that, it combines both teacher (primary) and technical education. The organogram is similar to that of other sites the difference being that it has two deans; one for teacher education and one for technical education. Site B, apart from training primary teachers, offers special education (teacher training for the disabled). Site C trains secondary school teachers. PA said;

*I do chair these meetings at times but I make sure that the chairing of meetings alternates among members of top management and middle management and I have to make sure that there is a balance between teacher and technical education.*

The College Advisory Council Board members all stated that it was either the principal or the vice principal who chaired the meetings. One said “*the chairing of these meetings is usually done by the principal or vice principal*”. Most of the LIC responses were similar to what the principals said. Eighty percent of the respondents pointed out that it was either the principal or the vice principal who chaired these meetings. LIC.A.1 summed up what all others mentioned by saying “*all meetings are usually chaired by the principal. The last strategic planning meeting was chaired by the principal and vice principal and I think the coming one will be chaired by the principal.*”

LIC.A. 1 responded differently from all other LICs by saying;

*In the strategic meeting we held for the first time it was the principal who chaired most of the time. At some point he delegated this to other lecturers depending on what was discussed and the level of expertise of the chairing person. I understand there, for this particular planning exercise, there will also be facilitators from another university. I would like to think that they will also chair and direct the planning session.*

The above responses indicated that, in most instances, principals were the ones who chaired and directed the strategic planning exercise. The minutes of the strategic planning meetings held at Principal A's college indicated that the three people who chaired the meetings, were the principal, the vice principal and the dean of teacher education. The same happened at Principal C's college. Minutes from Principal B's college indicated that the strategic planning meetings were chaired by the principal; one of the HOD's delegated by the principal and the HOD appointed as dean of teacher education. The above revelations may be indicative of the point that principals of the selected sites were usually in control of all activities and also directed participation and strategic decision-making. However, what principals A and B said was contrary to what was observed in the strategic planning meetings. PA chaired the first meeting and after introductions that were done by the vice principal, the individual asked to be the facilitator took over and directed all proceedings. PB chaired the strategic planning meeting while the facilitator directed the proceedings and. PC chaired on the first day, the second day it was the vice principal and the third day it the Head of Department (Research). The above responses and observations, pointed to the particular role of the principals in these institutions as leaders who should chair the meetings. This might imply that the principals also had role of leading the participants and at the same time encouraging the people to participate in open discussions related to strategic planning.

#### ***5.5.10 Strategic planning preparations***

This study also sought to establish how these senior academics in top and middle management positions are made ready for their role of strategic planning. This question

sought to establish whether there were preparations in the form of workshops, internal and external consultations prior to the strategic planning sessions. While all institutions were unanimous in saying that they prepared for the strategic planning process, the response from PA echoed inadequacy in the way they prepared for strategic planning. He stated that;

*While at times we do diaries preliminary departmental meetings for the strategic planning exercise, there is no formal training that is done to capacitate members for their roles as participants in strategic planning. They become members of the academic board by virtue of the positions they hold and that in a way ensure their involvement in strategic planning. There is an assumption that since most of them are members who have served for a long period, they have gained a lot of experience in the planning process and can to a greater extent come up with plans that will help develop the college.*

The lack of capacity building for the participants explained by PA highlights that the strategic planning process is still a ritual because the ministry requires these plans. Teams are set up to perform this ritual. HOD .A. 1 pointed out something different from what PA mentioned. There were differences in what was raised by participants of the same college, HOD.A.1 and PA. PA mentioned members who participate in their institution and how they became participants. The respondent, HOD.A.1 mentioned the participation of external facilitators in the strategic planning meeting. The mixed reactions from respondents were an indication of uncoordinated preparations for the strategic planning process leading to a situation where some participants were not aware of how the planning process would unfold. The response from the HOD.A.1 highlights inadequate preparation;

***HOD.A.1.*** *For the first strategic planning meeting we had planned to call expert facilitators to come and assist but due to lack of resources this was not done. We planned relying mostly on our experiences. For the strategic*

*planning meeting that we are just about to hold, there will be external facilitators from one of the universities but I must say there is still no formal training that is planned or that was done. I can only say we were only informed of such a meeting. Members were only told to prepare.*

The issue of non-training and the strategic capacity building for planning teams was also confirmed by HOD.A.1. HOD .A. 2 had a similar response to that of PA. The response was *“we have not had any form of training; the assumption is that all invited stakeholders will hold meetings with their relevant departments before the meeting to get their input but those meetings are not in the calendar”*. LIC .A.2 said that *“It is the second time we are having a strategic planning meeting. We were only made ready by being notified of the planning meeting. We will see what facilitators will bring”*. From the responses, there was mention of external consultation and facilitation for the strategic planning meetings, yet in the previous strategic planning meetings, no external facilitators were invited. This might imply that there were noticeable problems with the first strategic plan hence the involvement of facilitators. The picture revealed by the above responses serves to show that while there were noticeable problems and gaps in the previous strategic planning process and strategic plans, nothing much was being done to bring about change in the whole process except for the introduction of external facilitation perhaps rendering the whole process a ritual.

Principal B (PB) reiterated the fact that as a college they involved more experienced senior academics with the assumption that through their training and experiences they would have learnt a lot about strategic planning. An example of reliance and participation of experienced participants is more pronounced in Institution B where participation of experienced special education lecturers (training for teachers of the

disabled children) is emphasized in the strategic planning process. The reasons for the involvement of experienced participants advanced by institution B were made clear in documents such as minutes. The document analysis of institution B revealed that they endeavoured to be the leading institution in special education and the use of experienced personnel in the planning processes could help develop and advance the interests of the institution. PB's response to the question on how members were made ready for the strategic planning meeting and plans they had put in place so as to be the leading institution in special education was:

**PB-** *We do have staff-development sessions to capacitate members on various activities that they take part in. As for strategic planning: this is something that we recently adopted about five years ago in higher education institutions such as teacher education and to be honest some of the senior academics and some stakeholders are not well informed. We rely on the expertise of those who have been involved and those who have practiced it to guide us through. There is really no formal training that members have been introduced to. We also rely heavily on their experience with the hope that since most of them are experienced academics, their experiences will be handy in guiding the institution through the planning process for special education and other programmes offered by the college.*

The response from HOD.B.1 was not very different from Principal B's. The respondent said that *"not much has been done in this regard. Members have not been really staff-developed for this role. In our previous strategic planning meetings members were only informed and those who were to participate were asked to attend. The same has happened for the just ended strategic planning meeting"*. The same was echoed by LIC .B. 1 who mentioned that he was just asked to attend. *"Nothing was done prior to the meeting except being notified and being told to prepare two weeks before the meeting."* Asked to elaborate on what 'preparing' entail, the responded explained; *"preparing in this instance refers to thinking of what I as a participant would like to contribute during*

*the planning meeting.*” PC’s response was not very different from what other principals said. The response specifically stated how as an institution they have notified members for the strategic planning meeting. PC stated that:

*Invitation letters to all stakeholders were sent two weeks before the date of the meeting. This was done so that all those going to participate can consult and think about all they will have to contribute in their areas of interest. All lecturers were made aware through an announcement made during tea break. Even those that were not going to take part were also notified. People came knowing what they were supposed to do. This was done for the meeting that we are holding this month.*

The response from LIC .C. 1 was slightly contradictory to what his principal in the same institution ‘PC’ had said. While the response stated that there had been a deliberate attempt to inform members of the planning meeting, it further went on to reveal non-training of participants in preparation for strategic planning, which meant that some participants might not be sure of what strategic planning is all about and what could be expected of them during the process. The response was;

**LIC.C.1:** *There has never been a deliberate attempt to educate all lecturers on what strategic planning is all about and neither has there been an attempt to prepare people for this exercise in the form of workshops. We were only informed of the date and the venue. We were asked to prepare for the planning exercise and I am not sure if all of us are aware of all expectations.*

The LIC from institution 1 was asked to explain the meaning of ‘preparing’ and the explanation was; *in this case it refers to thinking of what as individuals and as departments we would like to input into strategic plans.*’ The above statement from the lecturer in charge in institution C who says participants were asked to prepare contradicted the above statement from the principal in the same institution ‘PC’, who said members were ‘*made ready*’ for the strategic planning process but did not explain

how, when asked to elaborate. There are no documents that support principal C on how participants were made ready for the planning process. Documents reveal that participants were notified of the planning date. It would appear participants were only notified of the strategic planning date and venue and according to LIC.C.1 strategic planning preparation and role preparation was not done.

Various documents such as strategic planning minutes, minutes of other general meetings and strategic plans were also analyzed and it emerged that in all the colleges of education under study, there had never been any workshop with regard to strategic planning. The only form of preparation was to inform participants of the day they were expected to participate in the strategic planning exercise. Those that were notified and were participants seemed to be content with this preparation method and their participation in strategic planning even though it might appear in the responses of LIC.C.1, LIC.B.1, PB and HOD.B.1 that the whole strategic planning process could be fraught with problems right from preparation to the final meeting.

The responses from all HODs and two Principals, A and B, in a way seemed to suggest that they did not view the success of strategic planning as something that depended on how participants were prepared for this process, trained or retrained but on the experience of participants. Participants in institution 'A' highlighted group work, team work and brain storming as something that participants engaged in during strategic planning meetings yet at the same time they seem to be silent on external consulting, supervision and coaching, workshops and seminars at college and at national level.

The mixed reactions from these institutions might suggest a low possibility that the participants received any training or re-training. The reflections on what respondents highlighted point to a situation in which participants were not sure of what was expected of them, and deductions from what they said point to a likelihood of an unsystematic way of planning with each participant focusing on individual departmental priorities. Under such circumstances it might be difficult to monitor key performance indicators and goal achievement might not be assured.

Having been notified of the strategic planning that was to be held, the researcher observed strategic planning meetings that were held. The issues of who participated, role preparation and the nature of participation were also observed. It was observed that people who were said to be participants were the ones who participated in the strategic planning exercise; hence, the assumption that they were information rich. This research also sought to find out during the 2011- 2015 strategic planning meeting whether the participants were prepared for their roles.

Principal B responded by stating that *“we have never made a deliberate attempt to prepare people for the strategic planning exercise apart from informing them and also telling them to think of their contributions for the exercise in their various departments”* the principal further revealed that *“we rely on the expertise of the participants and since we are experiencing high staff turnover, some participants might not be aware of what is expected of them”*. This was confirmed by HOD.B.1 by mentioning that *“some members who participate in strategic planning are not very sure of what is expected from*

*them*". LIC.B.1 pointed out that *'apart from being notified of the meeting there was very little that we did in preparation for this exercise. I cannot say I am really aware of what is expected of me'*. The above views that some participants were not sure of what was expected of them were also observed by the researcher at the strategic planning meeting that was held by institution B. One participant (LIC.B.2) said to the facilitator. *"Kindly explain to us what is expected from us so that we contribute meaningfully"*. The reflections that might come up from these responses were that being notified of the planning meeting was one of the 'preparation' methods that was employed by these colleges.

There appeared to be a gap between what participants were expected to do and the knowledge they possessed on what they are doing. The fact that principal 'PB' stated that some of the participants might not know what was expected of them highlights the need for an intervention method so that there is meaningful preparation and meaningful stakeholder participation. Having established how colleges of education prepare for their strategic planning, data gathered also sought to establish the nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning in their respective institutions.

## **5.6 Inadequately resourced strategic planning process**

On the issue of resources, PA and PB reported that there were developments in Zimbabwe that included the decentralization of management functions such as financial management of colleges of education. The statutory instrument number 87 of 1992 outlined the involvement college advisory council board members and financial

management of tertiary institutions. Colleges were therefore mandated to establish their finance committees which ran the financial affairs of their colleges. The finance committee comprised the principals, vice principals, HODs, the accountants and the deans of students. Of particular interest, is the fact that most of the funding for these colleges still comes from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education which might imply that the ministry still has a an obligation to finance these institutions. In light of what the principals had reported, this research sought to establish whether these institutions set aside resources such as money and time earmarked specifically for strategic planning. The response from PA was;

*PA: We would really like to set aside adequate resources for strategic planning and even projects that we come up with as a result of strategic planning. However, funding set aside by the college for all college activities is very little. As a result I cannot say there is enough money specifically set aside for strategic planning though the finance committee does allocate funding for the meetings. This is something that is relatively new that has just been introduced in the ministry and is not more than ten years old particularly to Colleges of Education. We are aware that it has to be done very well. We have set aside time for strategic planning in the past. We are going to set aside time again for another strategic planning process. We hope that the time set will be adequate and we will try to source other necessary resources so that the planning process becomes a success. We hope to do better than last time in the current plan.*

The response from the PB reflected his concern about the inadequacy of funding. The finance committee minutes mentioned the inadequacy of funds for most of the projects. The other concern was the specific use of money as stipulated by the ministry meaning that the finance committee did not have all the autonomy to plan and use finances as they wish. This view was confirmed by PB who said that;

*PB: It is always my wish as a principal that the institution has a provision of all required resources. As a college we have set aside time for strategic planning. In the past years we have not really had an exceptional case such as funding the strategic process simply because we were not fully involved in this process in the sense that it was centralized. It is only in the*

*past ten years that there has been an attempt to make it all inclusive. We are yet to see how independent we become in the process of strategic planning. In the planning process we had five years ago, we tried as a college to be all inclusive and I realized that we need resources to be able to bring in experts in this field so as to workshop board members and other relevant people the reason being that most of them indicated that they were not sure of what is expected of them. However I must say this was not effectively done partly because resources were not enough. The college is also heavily funded by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and as a result the planning process in terms of use of money is still centralized and we are not at liberty to use all the resources we have independently.*

PC was also concerned about the inadequacy of funds and less autonomy in deciding on how to run programmes in the institution as a result of ministerial demands. PC asserts that;

*PC: We have as a college set time for the second strategic planning process. We had one strategic planning process during my stay here five years ago. Finances were set aside during the last strategic planning process. However, judging from the fact that there were no follow up meetings after the exercise, I would like to think that finances were very much inadequate. The other problem could be that as an institution we are not independent enough to independently decide on how to use financial resources. There is still a centralized approach of doing things simply because all the teachers' colleges are still to a greater extent financed by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education which leads to a point whereby the ministry still wants to have control on everything that is to happen in these institutions. However, for this planning exercise there was an organization called VVOB that offered to assist us in our strategic planning exercise. I must be specific to say they offered financial and material assistance towards this strategic planning exercise that we held. I am also not sure whether their assistance is a once off thing or it will be ongoing.*

In relation to what the responds say, the Ministrys' strategic planning document states that "*in light of the budgetary constraints faced by the government, initiatives to generate supplementary income by institutions will be pursued with renewed vigour and innovativeness*". This blue print statement by the ministry could have been seen as necessary to create an enabling environment in strategic planning and improve the

efficiency of decision-making and service delivery at colleges of education. The response by PC above seemed to highlight initiatives to generate finances for the strategic planning exercise and this was an issue that was not raised at all by the other institutions. PB's strategic plan document for 2011-2015 states that the institution is dependent on the fiscus, the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) and fees collected from students. The responses from the college advisory council members also highlighted that these institutions had problems in financing some of their programmes. CACBM .2 stated that, *"the institution sets aside finances for strategic planning though it is not enough. There is need for the institution to harness funds from the corporate world and fundraising activities so that they realise their dreams."* This response indicates that these institutions have problems in harnessing additional resources to finance their programmes and mirrors a situation whereby strategic plans can be shelved simply because there are no resources to back up all plans.

The majority of HOD and LIC (60%) responses indicated that principals and the finance committee had the mandate to make general finance decisions. This was in contradiction to what all the principals had indicated particularly with reference to their not having the autonomy to use financial resources the way they saw as beneficial to their institutions. In one college, HOD.A.1 echoed that *"it is the principal and his finance committee who can better answer the question on whether resources such as money will be set aside. I know dates have been set for the coming exercise."* LIC.B.1 concurred with this by stating that, *"time has been set aside for the strategic planning meeting but I do not remember money being set aside. The Principal or finance*

*committee members can better answer that.*” These responses confirm that HODs and LICs were not aware of how finances were run and at the same time they were not very positive about who made the final decisions on issues pertaining to money. The responses show a strong possibility of HODs and LICs participating in strategic planning not being aware of finances required and that the planning process itself did not align strategic plans to financial resources.

This also showed that while participants seemed to participate in strategic planning, the majority of them did not participate in decision making involving finances, implying that in these colleges, the level of involvement differed from issue to issue as a result of the position individuals held and the committee they belonged to. Apart from the above noted reflections, the interest and attention devoted to strategic planning as indicated by responses shows that these institutions and even government is beginning to recognize the necessity for strategic planning. However, this happens with no increase in funding for strategic planning that is mandatory at public institutions as mentioned by the principals.

While it was important to establish whether the institutions set aside resources for strategic management, it was also important to establish whether individuals or individual departments received resources such as funds for the projects they run. All principals echoed similar statements PA said; *“We make an effort to fund departments and let people responsible for those departments run those projects they initiate. The*

only problem is that resources are very scarce.” The sentiments by the principals were shared by the HODs and LICs. HOD .B. 1

***HOD.B.1:** I have never seen this happening especially when it comes to strategic planning. I run the teaching practice department and all these years I have been asking for funds to run workshops and staff development programmes on mentoring and assessment criteria and funds have not been available. This is something I brought up in the last strategic plan and I brought it up again.*

LIC .B. 1 also echoed a concern by saying;

*I run the IT department in this college. In the last strategic plan we agreed on computers for each subject area. We were looking forward to having these computers distributed to subject areas. I am afraid not much has been done.*

HOD .C. 1 blamed everything on the system. The response was;

*I feel the institution has limited funds and limited control over funds. Everyone is controlled by ministry regulations as a result not much has been availed to my department because of too many bottlenecks. There is a need to come with ways of financing strategic plans otherwise plans will always be shelved which means participation in this exercise might remain a futile exercise.*

The response from LIC .C.1 appeared to apportion blame to the institution as well as the ministry. The response was;

*I don't think the ministry does allocate enough resources for strategic planning. From the little that is allocated, I don't think the institutions do release all the funds as a result resources such as money have not been to a greater extent committed to strategic planning. Again little time has been committed to strategic planning. It has always been limited to three day planning activity.*

The above responses highlighted what seem to be financial short comings of the ministry as a funding body and the colleges as institutions with regards to the funding of strategic planning. This might imply that the response to internal and external environment problems is left to chance and that there is need for these institutions to

think of ways of generating funds for new and old initiatives. All the points in the verbatim data seem to point to the fact that the strategic planning process is inadequately resourced.

### ***5.6.1 Aligning resources to strategic plans***

Resources in this case refer to financial and material resources that could be used towards the attainment of targeted goals (strategic plans). The respondents were also asked whether resources were aligned to strategic plans. This question brought up mixed reactions from each selected institution. PA's response was:

*Our budget is built upon what the ministry allocates us and upon combined current services of the institution and in most instances these funds are not adequate. We are waiting patiently for a time whereby our strategic plans will be treated as special funding initiatives outside the current services budget. To answer your question, we have not reached a stage whereby we can confidently say our resources are aligned to our strategic plans simple because they fall short of what we require in each financial year.*

The response from the HOD .A.1 was slightly different from what the principal had said. The HOD mentioned that *'while the college does make an effort to align resources to plans so as to focus academic priorities on areas of excellence to improve the college and differentiate the college from its public competitors, resources to do this have not been available.*

PB's response was similar to that of PA but went on to add that:

*Even though we have had challenges as colleges of education due to the ever changing economic and political climate and non-availability of funds to align to strategic plans, since the dollarization of the economy things have slightly changed. As an institution we have made great progress in the past year towards ensuring that the little we get can be aligned to our strategic plans. For example in the past six months we have managed to buy two college vehicles as replacement for the run down vehicles we had.*

The response from HOD .B.1 was not in agreement with what the principal had said. The HOD's response was: *'Colleges of education in Zimbabwe have created no fund to catalyse the planning process let alone to align to strategic plans and for the enhancement of academic quality.'* When asked to explain why this could be happening, HOD .B.1 went on to say:

*In general there should be a strong alignment between the college's strategic plans and priorities and resources. However, the colleges of education budgets in Zimbabwe are to a greater extent built upon ministerial fiscus and to a lesser extent upon combined current services of each institution. This has to a greater extent led to centralised planning especially when it comes to the use of resources. Furthermore the economic decline and the ever changing political environment has made it difficult for these colleges to strategically plan or come up with initiatives for the development of a system wide program. Therefore to me, aligning resources to plans is something that has not happened to a greater extent because these resources are not there to begin with.*

PC also came up with a response that echoed the unavailability of resources. The principal stated that:

*At my institution academic units are expected to align all of their priorities and resources to strategic plans. However, the college has not been able to award all academic units with enough funds based upon their innovation, sustainability and a set of accountability measures.*

The above responses reflect that colleges of education in Zimbabwe are not awarded funds based on a competitive process where academic and non-academic departments submit their proposals and strategic plans and are awarded funds based upon their innovation, sustainability and a set of accountability measures. The document analysis revealed that much of the funds for accomplishing the colleges' strategic plan came from the ministerial strategic plan for each college and were budgeted for at that level. The role each institution plays under any strategic plan initiative is negotiated (along

with the budget) separately between ministry secretariat and the institutions. Again the ever changing political climate has hindered the colleges of education from operating in a continuous mode of conducting research based assessment, improvement and investment with the goal of effectively accomplishing their mission (ie providing quality education through sustainable development). It is also clear that colleges of education have created no funds to catalyze the planning process and for the enhancement of academic quality.

The document analysis is also indicative of the fact that the national strategic plan controls and outlines some of the strategic goals of all the fourteen (14) teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The document states that teacher and technical colleges should ensure that strategic plans outlined by the ministry are achieved. However, it also states that these colleges should come up with their home grown strategic plans and ensure they adhere to ministerial regulations. From the documents, there is no mention of how these plans should be crafted, and how they should be funded.

### **5.7 Strategic planning model(s) followed by the colleges**

The study also sought to establish the models or planning systems followed by the colleges of education in crafting their strategic plans. The model in this study was taken to be the concept mapping guiding principles colleges use to achieve the kind of plan befitting the mission and vision of the college. The document analysis revealed that these colleges of education had vision and mission statements which might suggest that

there were certain planning steps that might be followed. However responses seemed to point to a lack of awareness of the model used on the part of stakeholders.

- ***Lack of awareness***

First there was need for leaders to be clear about the vision that influenced the strategic heights they intended to reach. For example Site A drew a line that the bench mark was excellence and nothing less, the college thus crafted its vision;

*To be the leading institution nationally and regionally that integrates quality teacher education and technical training for empowerment.*

To realise this vision the mission of the college was stated as:

*To provide in a sustainable manner and to international standards, demand-driven quality teacher education, technical training and lifelong education to students and the community leading to the attainment of knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to the manpower development of Zimbabwe.*

Having stated issues such as quality and excellence as benchmarking, the strategic thrust of the five year plan, the college sought to design goals, performance indicators and details to achieve the plan.

There seemed to be a gap between the college documents and what the participants said about the strategic planning model these colleges used. Participants were asked what model the institution used in strategic planning. All participants, including principals were not sure what model their colleges used. PA responded by saying, *“I am not so clear about the specific model used. The concept is new.”* The same was stated by PB who said *“I don’t know any strategic planning model and during our meetings there has*

*not been any particular model mentioned.”* HOD .A. 2 concurred with PA. The response was *“I am not sure of the model used in strategic planning in our college.”*

Documents are indicative of a systematic way of planning which implies that there are models used yet participants seem not to be aware of the model used. This alone might imply that planning is still much centralized and participants just follow what is brought up by the ‘experts’ passively so as to fulfill a ministerial requirement. This might also mean that this is done out of obligation and participants are not so keen on really understanding the process. This again reflects negatively on the implementation of the plans that they come up with. In simple terms, it means participants have a document that states their plans but they seem not to be aware of how this document came to be, what it is and the models that this document is based on. This again is indicative of gaps that could be there in the understanding of strategic planning by participants.

No participant was sure of how the model used considers service enhancement options in strategic planning. PA lamented that *“this is an action plan with some inbuilt mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.”* PB did not answer the question; he only said *“I am not sure.”*

Participants were not aware of the models used. However, they attempted to respond to only one technical question based on the model. Participants were also asked to explain how the college sets clearly defined measurable performance standards for each plan element based on the model used. PA responded by saying *“for each plan*

*element we set key performance indicators.”* HOD .B. 1 had a similar response. The response was *“there are expected measurable outcomes for each plan element.”* HOD .B. 2 also concurred by saying *“there are performance indicators put in place that are monitored periodically and specific senior managers monitor aspects of these.”*

## **5.8 Challenges encountered in strategic planning process**

The study sought to establish challenges that colleges of education encounter during the crafting and implementation of strategic plans. Data was gathered on what challenges respondents encountered in building the plan. On this question lecturer respondents indicated that the major problem they had to deal with was lack of commitment by some of the stakeholders such as head office officials, politicians and some business leaders. These stakeholders were so important that, if they only window dressed issues in terms of support, then those particular projects were doomed.

Responding to this question respondent LIC .A.1 lamented:

*...at times we plan intensively and give massive details and support to well investigated projects only to have them fail because of lack of support from politicians and the business community.*

Respondent LIC .B. 2 also concurred pointing out that:

*No matter how much we plan, if there is no political will, projects fail. When this happens staff morale nose-dives because a lot of effort will be nullified. The problem is that sometimes these stakeholders pretend to be interested when in actual fact their interests lie elsewhere.*

Respondent, LIC .C. 2 saw the failure of projects as lying squarely in the hands of politicians and site management. The LIC echoed that:

*Politicians and business people have many items to chase. They are responsible for projects nationally and it is the college's management that should be at the forefront in making things happen at institutional level.*

Still on the same question, managers were asked what challenges they saw as causing projects to stall. Reacting to this item, respondent P.A said;

*As partners in the business of education we do our part. Many challenges stand on our way and we try to circumvent them. The major one was the economic meltdown. That meant Government could not continue to fund projects no matter their prioritization. As a result colleges failed to meet their intended outcomes.*

Responded P B on the same subject observed:

*There are a lot of regulations we have to follow to attain assets. We plan for those intensely. When we have finally presented everything, we may be told the period is over and we have to face frustration of all the subordinates, co-players and stakeholders who helped us build cases. That is what happened with cars. In this case we built buds when the cost of a car was reasonable and we could afford several. By the end of the financial year plans, collapsed because prices had changed and forced to strategize and plans had to be re-compiled.*

Advisory committee members were asked the same question and they indicated that their role was to support and lobby but they left the finer details of the execution of plans to the college.

Explaining that, CACBM. 1 remarked:

*We work hard to create an enabling environment politically and the connectors necessary. At times we are equally disappointed when we hear it in the news that plans have been abandoned.*

On the same issue CACBM 2 elaborated:

*We try earnestly to cajole and push the well positioned officials to get things moving. However, quite often, politicians and business people are big talkers but have no scruples in letting us do.*

The above responses indicate the frustrations that participants felt as a result of very little being realised from strategic planning. The responses did not only highlight the

challenges faced by participants but also strongly mirrored a lack of hope on any success on goal and mission achievement.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

The researcher used a case study approach to investigate strategic planning process at colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The case study was used to obtain exclusive data from the main object of investigation – colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The data presented concentrates attention on the way stakeholders such as students, lecturers and college advisory board members participate in strategic planning. This can suggest some structure for future research on the prospects of strategic management in higher education in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze present and interpret data obtained through interviews, observation of strategic planning meetings and document analysis. An attempt was made to present the research findings as factually as possible in order to enhance trustworthiness. To enhance the analysis, the data was categorized and coded so as to identify emerging themes that were aligned to the research questions. Each of the research questions attempted to address the main research question which sought to establish the nature of stakeholder participation in strategic planning at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

The chapter surfaced the nature of stakeholder participation in colleges of education with specific highlight on how managers (principals) heads of department, lecturers in charge, students and college council advisory board members participate in the planning process, how resources are aligned to strategic planning right up to the challenges faced by these actors in strategic planning process.

Generally, in all participating colleges, there seemed to be a few select members who participate in strategic planning confirming the *restricted participation* theme that emerged strongly. Those involved were selected from among heads of departments, lecturers in charge, college advisory board members. The principal/vice principals and administrative principals such as the accountants complete the circle of participants. The nature of their involvement varied from institution to institution. This involvement confirmed the *unequal participation* theme which was contradictory to the initial theme of *wider participation* that emerged from principals and college advisory board members. The most striking aspect is the fact that no participant seemed aware of the model that their institutions use in strategic planning. This clearly affirms the *lack of awareness* theme that pervaded the responses of most information particularly, lecturers and students. The point of interest is that they all echoed inadequacy of financial resources and non-alignment of resources to strategic plans. However, another point of interest was that despite the restricted and non-participation of some of the critical stakeholders, there was a convergence and consensus of views that strategic planning was necessary for *planning*. Participants also generally agreed that the process of strategic planning was necessary as it implied *institutional direction*, a central

element that is revealed by the conceptual frameworks presented in chapter 2. The data clearly reveals a poignant theme; *ritualism*, which implies restricted participation that is enforced by ministry and institutional requirements for various levels of staff to engage in strategic planning.

The study also established that strategic planning has a profound impact on the effectuation of decisions. There is a positive correlation between performance and level of involvement in strategic planning and strategic management. However, compromised work output in the strategic planning process in this case can be traced to the lack of expertise on the part of those involved or the alienation of some of the stakeholders in making certain strategic decisions.

# CHAPTER 6

## 6 Discussion of findings

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study. The study sought to establish the nature of participation in selected colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The discussion raises issues arising out of the data and goes on to examine their implications for stakeholder participation in strategic planning. The discussion explores how the process of strategic planning is carried out. Evidence from this study raises a number of issues. These points will be thematically discussed in line with research questions. The first set is on the nature of participation.

### 6.1 Participation in strategic planning

The study established which stakeholders participate in strategic planning in the selected sites. These, according to the findings, were the lecturers, LICs, HODs, Vice principals and the Principals. In all the sites, the strategic planning team comprised a few select members who were selected by college management. Differences were noted when it came to the participation of internal stakeholders with Site B and C involving heads of subjects. Nonetheless, participation of stakeholders at grass-root level was through consultative meetings held with students and other internal and external stakeholders. However, participation of stakeholders at all levels fell short of the cutting edge technique of strategic planning where information is solicited and there is use of expertise from a wide range of involved stakeholders. These findings differ

from what was observed by Lewin (1947) who stated that people may come to a group with very different dispositions, but if they share a common objective, they are likely to act together to achieve it. Limited participation goes against Lewin's concept of action research which involves planning, action and fact finding.

Findings of the study confirmed those of Giesel (1994) and Rice and Schneider (1994) who found that even if the group dynamics are positive, one small group at the top might not know the needs of all stakeholders without their input. It is also difficult for one small internal group to know all that occurs in the external environment that can have an impact, positive or negative, on the college (Giesel, 1994; Rice and Schneider, 1994).

Still on the size of the of the strategic planning group, Giroto and Mundet (2009) further posit that along these lines, at the organizational macro level, participation can be directed at thinking about strategies and helping to shape a plan that tackles the broader issues. On the other hand, at the micro level there is on-going need for members to participate in organizing and implementing a wide variety of activities that will be all inclusive. For this reason, leaving these activities to a small group of members could make progress slower than it should be and limits diversity and richness of ideas (Andriof and Waddock, 2002; Bush 2011).

## **6.2 Restricted participation in the strategic planning process**

It is the researcher's contention that the most interesting finding of this study is that stakeholder participation was restricted. Participation was dependent upon the position

held by the individual rather than the expertise or training that the individual had undergone. In this case, the study sought to look at those structures, such as the professional level of actors involved in the strategic planning process, technologies and discourse, through which micro actions are constructed and which, in turn, construct the possibilities for actions. The information gathered on respondents' qualifications revealed that the participants, judging from their qualifications, were in a position to understand the process of strategic planning in a deeper way as the lecturers' qualifications revealed a relevant educational background, which means that they were well informed in strategic planning and were capable of drawing working plans.

Details of external participating stakeholders were also established. This was done to establish personnel linkage between internal and external stakeholders. The advisory council members were those members of the community who were involved in planning college development activities. These members had varied qualifications as reflected in their educational background. Some of the college advisory council members had been involved in college activities for years. External stakeholders have traditionally served as advisors in these sites. This made them appropriate members of the strategic planning process (Glanz, 2006). However, this collaboration does not give a clear picture of the process undertaken within the planning cycles regarding cross-functional staff participation (Giroto and Mundet, 2009).

In light of the foregoing, the profiles of respondents were outlined to show some of the duties they perform in their institutes, as respondents required some form of expertise to

function effectively. A fuller understanding of the respondents was meant to reveal why certain practices existed within the administration of colleges of education for the success of strategic planning processes. The data revealed that the positions they held had allowed them automatic involvement in all senior management activities including strategic planning. The hierarchical structure which was used as the channel of command in higher education institutes in the selected sites also served as an indicator of those entrusted with the responsibility to devise plans that are strategic to the development of their institutes.

When planning in an organization, it is vital to make an attempt to ensure wider participation of stakeholders. This is because if they are not involved, they may reject programmes set and may not be one in purpose with the planners. Poister and Streib (2005) point out that if some sectors of the team are not involved in planning, they may reject the plan and refuse to be involved. At times this happens because they fear changes and feel threatened by them, or simply feel that the management disregards their input. This has dire consequences for the organization because when stakeholders are expected to implement the plan, they are likely to pull in opposite directions and the implementation fails (Poisner and Streib, 2005).

It was interesting to note that preliminary meetings that should be held at every department level are not held at all levels but they are held by senior managers. This was another indicator of *restricted participation*. While restricted participation can be seen as not ideal, the researcher contends that it does not fall at rock bottom as

indicated by the first rung in Arnstein's (1969) ladder. It falls somewhere between informing and consultation. It is important to note that when fewer people are involved in planning, ideas harvested are limited. Certain insights that could have been useful may not be tabled (Ebdon and Franklin, 2006). Another factor that makes all-inclusive participation of stakeholders desirable is that some distrustful sectors of society are quietened if citizens outside leadership circles are involved (Davies, 2006; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006). When an institution invites the public who are stakeholders to participate in a strategic plan, it must guide them to key focus areas. It must, for example, show targeted goals and outcomes, mechanisms to arrive at these designs already tried and ways of funding them as a starting point (Bush and Bell, 2002; Glanz, 2006; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006).

Participatory problems that accompany strategic planning as a result of restricted participation include the fact that it is difficult to ensure representation of every sector. This research contends that in these cases under study poor representation led to loss of public confidence. Ebdon and Franklin (2006) contend that it is hard to ensure representation. The reasons they advance are that, responses from invited participants may come in too late. As a result, even the articulation of goals may not be well timed. Another factor to note is that at public meetings of stakeholders some people grand stand and say things which are not valid (Ebdon and Franklin, 2006). In such cases, Arnstein (1969) contends that, since it is in both the organization and citizen's interest to seek participation, both parties should make a move to attract stakeholder involvement (Ebdon and Franklin, 2006; Miller and Evers, 2002).

The other interesting part of the finding is that departmental heads in selected sites bring an element of sectional representation. This means that the interest of all sections of the departments that make up the institution might not have a chance to input to the plans. This in a way might not be useful because the workers then get the feeling of not owning the plans neither do they push the plans to fruition because they view the plans as not theirs as evidenced by the studies by Poisner and Streib (2005) and Ebdon and Franklin (2006). However, despite sectional representation, the problem identified in Zimbabwe's colleges of education was that not all departments participated and this created a feeling that the exercise of strategic planning was meant for some departments but not others. This confirms the *unequal participation that apparently pervades institutions of higher learning*. As a result some stakeholders do not take the exercise seriously.

The lower level stakeholders usually in the categories of students should also get a chance to participate in the planning process. This might be necessary since they partner key stakeholders in implementing the plans. While this contention resonates well with Davies' (2006) concept of engaging people, it also links with Lewin's (1947) field theory and Arnstein (1969) public participation theory. The research contends that less engagement of key stakeholders may pose challenges to the plan such as not working hard to fulfil targets. Physical tasks tend to have lower level workers involved in implementation (Poisner and Streib, 2005). It is in this noted argument that all-encompassing strategic planning is beneficial to an institution because the plans require the support of all sectors such as experts politicians, ancillary staff and even students

(Fieldman and Khademian, 2007; Vigoda, 2002; Denhardt and Roberts, 2004; Fung and Wright, 2001).

The model of centralizing power in one elevated person who commands the rests of the team which is subordinated is out dated as also observed in related literature by Fieldman and Khademian (2007). Inclusive management thus enables people from various walks of life who come with the purpose of enriching the ideas of the issues being planned (Vigoda, 2002; Fieldman and Khademian, 2007). Restricted participation of internal and external stakeholders is further discussed below.

### ***6.2.1 Participation of Senior and middle management***

Another major finding of the current study was that principals as leaders of these institutions did not fully own the strategic planning process. Their participation in the strategic planning process was inversely restricted. Data gathered from the participants revealed that the senior management of the colleges acted as the drivers of the whole process of the strategic planning. They set the time and the tone of the series of meetings. These findings concur with those of Eacott (2011) who postulate that principals had the task of convening the series of preparatory and the actual strategic planning meetings. Findings were further in line with Lewin's (1939) change of management theory, which revealed that the role of the principal was to convene senior management strategic planning preparatory meetings where they would be in a position to choose the chairperson of the main strategic planning session. However the issue of

principals convening the senior management meetings and appointing key personnel to the particular phase of planning confirms inversely restricted participation.

In light of the foregoing, the issue of autonomy and accountability also comes to the fore as findings also revealed the semi-autonomous and at the same mandatory participation by senior management due to ministry requirements. These findings vindicate the position that some stakeholders take the strategic planning process to be a ritual that they engage in periodically at the behest of those in authority. The revelation by PA that he did not sit in preliminary meetings unless he had time leaves the question of who then is accountable. However, this finding is not in keeping with Caldwell (2002) and Abu-Duhou's (1999) contention that a college can be said to have autonomy if its lecturers and other stakeholders are given high levels of responsibility and authority in planning and implementing those plans. It is the researcher's contention that restricted autonomy also leads to poor or non-accountability. Critical of the intensity of accountability is Hoecht (2006), who commented that the concern for accountability is closely linked to the discovery of the importance of active stakeholder participation for the building of impersonal trust between citizens and their public institutions.

It was also revealed that it was the dean who made sure that all departments were represented in all the planning session and in the actual strategic planning session. However, this was done with limited consultation. In the words of the dean from site B *"it is his duty to ensure that all materials needed for the meetings to run effectively are in place"*. These materials include the equipment that is needed to capture the correct

record at every stage and the main strategic planning process proceeds well. This revelation confirms a bureaucratic, hierarchical organization model and management approach commonly referred to as *Taylorism* (based on Frederick Winslow Taylor's 1911 classic *The Principles of Scientific Management*). In light of the foregoing, one can contend that the top hierarchy develop plans which they then market to their communities. However, the pre-eminence of the bureaucratic, hierarchical organization model and traditional management practices is facing increased challenge (Lawler, Mohrman and Benson, 2001). In the reviewed literature, participative management has been discussed as a comprehensive governance system that could, and is, replacing the traditional bureaucratic hierarchical system for the new, organic, networked organizational forms emerging in the late 1990s (Lerner, 1999, Dooris, Kelly and Trainer, 2004).

### ***6.2.2 Participation of the College Advisory Council Board Member***

Another major finding of the current study was that the participation of college advisory council members was not mandatory but rather through invitation as reported by CACBM A. Their participation, though in the public eye will be representative of wider consultation, was limited to those meetings that they were invited to. External stakeholders have traditionally served in advisory capacities to the educational enterprise. Involvement in strategic planning is much more substantive than the advisory role. Their involvement essentially lays the groundwork for continuing support and participation by those stakeholders (Paris, 2003, Girrotto and Mundet, 2009). Data

gathered revealed that the advisory council board members contributed by presenting the views from the community and the parents. However, they did not attend conferences and forums on planning to train in areas of need. Their participation was mainly through the assumption that they are members of the community and they know better what the community wants and was only limited to meetings they were invited to. The other assumption was that the views from former students and graduates of the college would also be revealed through the college advisory council board.

Taking from document analysis, participation was in some instances expressed in ways that could be understood by advisory board members. These included instances where the principal would report and inform members of what is to take place and, thereafter, the meeting was adjourned. The local culture is that the principal knows better. On the other hand, while all sites reported their participation, there was no evidence of their attending preliminary meetings, in the form of minutes from the advisory council. The frequency of the meetings said to be attended by advisory council board was not clear as there was neither evidence of meetings nor evidence of the advice that they gave on the running of the college.

### ***6.2.3 Lecturer participation (Restricted participation)***

Every college operates within its own culture (Bush, 2011). A culture of planning can be achieved through the strategic planning consultative process. The study revealed that participation by lecturers is also restrictive. Their participation is through preliminary

consultations that are held during the course of the year. The term preliminary is suggestive of restricted participation and the fact that they are used as sources of information confirms the nature of their participation which is not active. Senior and middle management engaged all staff in consultation meetings in an effort to develop plans. The findings of this study were that the pre planning meetings used to gather information were said to have been held but there was no evidence of such meetings in the document analysis. These findings are not in line with those of Davies (2006) who asserts that engaging people in the planning process from the beginning to the end helps to create a sense of ownership of the plans.

Another finding is that these preliminary activities, which were geared towards familiarizing the lecturers with strategic planning as well as sourcing information from lecturers, did not serve the much needed purpose, as lecturers felt that this was done only to fulfil ministerial obligations. The revelations by lecturers that there was no continuity in the strategic planning process, as there was no review of previous plans, is indicative of their lack of commitment to the exercise. These findings are also not in line with Lewin's (1939) planned change theory, as there is no buy- in by the user.

The noted gap of failure to look at the success or failure of the previous plan is also not in line with Lewin's (1939) action research theory. There is no evidence of the colleges engaging in action research when doing strategic planning. It is the researcher's contention that preliminary meetings cannot be taken as engaging in action research, given the fact that there was no evidence of such meetings having been held,. The

other interesting finding was that there is no deliberate training specifically for strategic planning leaving them with little understanding of the process. All the end-users were, therefore, unable to fully comprehend the strategic planning process due to this mere conscientisation of the process only done through 'preliminary' meetings.

#### ***6.2.4 Student participation (Pseudo participation)***

The study revealed that students' participation was in-between non-participation and restricted participation in the strategic planning process. This research contends that the pseudo-participation of students in the strategic planning process was designed to mask the centralised nature of strategic planning in some colleges. Their views were not taken seriously, as pointed out by one student. The foregoing indicated that the students' inputs were considered insignificant. The fact that they had never attended any stakeholder meeting, as their views were represented by the dean, confirms the false nature of their participation. This finding does not concur with Lewin's (1939) change model which emphasizes fostering a sense of empowerment, equal partnership and a vested interest in successful outcomes of institutional strategic plans. Pseudo-participation of students in the strategic planning process renders the plans user unfriendly as the community of users is not really conversant with the actual plan.

### **6.3 Improving participation in strategic planning**

This study contends that improving participation can directly contribute towards improving the quality and the efficacy of the education system. A study by Giesel (1994)

indicates the necessity of having a well-defined, well aligned and well communicated sense of mission if the efforts of stakeholders are to be coordinated towards efficient goal attainment. The concept of resource alignment to strategic plans is related to the idea of consistency. Giroto and Mundet (2009) indicate three levels of alignment, which are, vertical, horizontal and stakeholders. In this case the vertical alignment could be interpreted as the degree of consistency between the different strategic plans from the institution to the business units covering some micro practices (Callahan, 2003). The findings of this study were that there was no consistency in this regard as evidenced by the indications that strategic plans were not reviewed and there were no follow up meetings to check on key performance indicators and lastly the indication that very little was achieved.

This research concurs with findings by Giesel, (1994) together with those by Giroto and Mundet (2009) that horizontal alignment could be interpreted as the coordination of efforts across the organization, which requires the exchange and collaboration among various functional activities. The other findings of this study were that very little was done in improving participation and blame was apportioned to the ever changing political and economic environment as well as education policies that are embedded in a heritage of colonialism, the socialist revolution and most recently, some movement toward a market economy and privatization. Through the use of the *field theory*, college leadership may be able to map out issues impinging on the strategic planning process. Leadership can also bring stakeholders together to work as a cohesive unit but with the understanding of each member's environment (Lewin, 1947). Stakeholder participation

alignment in this case is the degree of congruity achieved between the larger institutional plan and the social and economic primary stakeholder's demands (Giroto and Mundet, 2009). The research findings were that, in as much as stakeholders were involved, their involvement ended in the crafting of plans but they were not involved in the alignment of strategies and the consequent performance evaluation.

### **6.3.1 Resources**

Another interesting finding of this study was that the strategic planning processes were inadequately funded. It was evident from the respondents' responses that colleges of education are not well funded and inadequate funding has proved to be a great challenge to the process of strategic planning in the colleges of education under study. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) elucidate that the current challenge for administrators, policymakers, and faculty of higher education institutions is to acknowledge and accept that there have been significant and irreversible changes in societal demands, funding shortfalls, competition, technological innovations, and student demographics. As a result, there is a critical need to move creatively and assertively to confront and adapt to these changes (Bush and Coleman, 2000). Successfully responding to these demands involves a change in mind-set and a commitment to reposition higher education institutions in terms of teaching and learning. Addressing this challenge requires creative and innovative action; it also requires a shift in thinking in the way we conduct the educational enterprise (Lewin, 1939; Arnstein, 1969; Bush and Coleman, 2000). This research contends that one of the issues to be addressed is demotivation in the planning process as a result of funding.

However, despite this lack of motivation as a result of funding, lecturers who participated in strategic planning could not comment about the funding of the strategic planning process apart from mentioning that funding is inadequate. The data revealed that in Sites B and C, it was only the principal and the accountant who knew how the process was funded. Giroto and Mundet (2009) assert that if articulation of vision, mission, and values are not aligned sufficiently with personal aspirations of a critical mass of important stakeholders, plans are likely to be ignored and participants take no interest in important activities such as sourcing for resources (Mintzberg, 1994; Dolence, 2004; Davies, 2006). Inadequacy of resources hinders these institutions from being autonomous in their planning processes. These findings corroborate that of Glanz (2006) and McGee, Thomas and Wilson (2005) who contend that inadequate resources also hinder stakeholder engagement in an on-going, integrated and institution wide research based planning. They further contend that it hinders evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that will result in continuous improvement as well as demonstrate that the institutions are accomplishing their mission. While the data revealed that this was due to a twelve year economic shrinkage associated with hyperinflation until forced dollarization in 2009, new problems are still threatening this latest economic resurgence. The political climate in Zimbabwe as confirmed by the November issue of [www.zimbabwesituation.com](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com), is still flawed and with the governments' apparent determination to nationalize much of the remaining private sector, there is no likelihood that colleges of education might be free from the centralized approach to planning

The selected sites are still funded by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in a country that is yet to achieve a meaningful economic turnaround (Kariwo, 2007). The institutes therefore have limited control over funds as all funds are controlled by ministry regulations. This means that not much is provided for projects to be held in the different institutes. This includes those projects that would have been a result of the strategic planning process. This research finding reflects that to a greater extent strategic planning is still centralized in Zimbabwe. This does not concur with the findings by Adams (2000), Arnstein (1969) who aver that while central mandates may be necessary to stimulate change, research on central mandates has led to the conclusion that many changes in public institutions cannot be mandated from the centre.

Giroto and Mundet (2009) further assert that, in the context of higher education institutions, these activities carried out at the micro level have the objective of the plan to embed in the broader context of the institution and the larger community. Consequently, effective strategic planning should offer a mechanism for different faculty members along the units and departments to clarify their vision and define the goals that are to be accomplished (Friedman, 2003; Bush, 2011). They further argue that the above argument could be of relevance to triangulate the micro-level strategies with macro-level historical sources and background knowledge on the economic, social and political fields.

Central planning only provides the illusion of control and ignores persisting problems and difficult choices (Adams, 2000). In Zimbabwe for example the setting of goals and

objectives at the centre has led to a dialogue than educational change as evidenced by the fact that many respondents indicated that most plans had not been achieved and neither had they been reviewed.

Another finding of the study that resonated with a study by John and Darsons (2005) was that poorly resourced plans kill advocacy and ownership of the plan. It was evident that some plans were formulated in strategic planning sessions and never taken note of as a result of the lack of financial resource. This meant that these issues could not be acted upon because of the unavailability of money to fund the workshops and also to buy necessary equipment. In view of such developments, John and D'arsons (2005) postulate that it is important to build an understanding of the role of advocacy in policy development along with the roles of rational arguments for funding.

The reflections by the principals HODs and LICs indicated a different practice from what statutory law 87 of 1992 seeks to achieve, that is, decentralize education. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education's strategic plan from which colleges of education also consult during their strategic planning meetings also highlights the financial problems and the control they have of projects and plans. In light of this, this research contends that the ministry clearly restricts the activities of the planning process by inadequately funding the process. While strategic planning is an intellectual process that is uniquely suited to higher education, traditional financial resources for the support of higher education are not likely to increase in the selected sites. This finding corroborates Jurinksi's (1999) observation that, the world over, cut-backs are the norm in educational

financing yet demands for services continue to expand. Despite the foregoing, Paris (2003) still contends that strategic planning gives the college, the department, and the administrative unit the opportunity to chart its own course and to focus its own future.

When institutions bring together people from different fields to plan how to raise funds the result can be fruitful. In the stakeholder meeting of that kind, there may be accountants, bankers, lawyers, politicians and other intellectuals with vast experience in sourcing and gathering resources. These stakeholders may also have connections that enable such a meeting to activate channels that may bring in funds. This was confirmed in related literature by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock report, (2010).

### ***6.3.2 Strategic planning and the curricula***

Strategic planning takes stock of the quality of resources the institution commands and is able to attract stakeholders, in order to create connectedness suitability between all the elements of the plan. The data from the respondents as collaborated by the UALR (2010) indicated that there were a lot of highly qualified and talented lecturers across the disciplines yet the strategic planning process in colleges of education did not incorporate curricula innovation.

Data sourced by the study revealed that the colleges offer a broad core curriculum consistent with the requirements of primary/secondary schools in the nation. The curriculum spreads across sciences, humanities and art subjects as well as practical subjects. This curriculum should be updated periodically, for example, once in four years. This contention is collaborated by the UALR (2010) which confirms that the

curriculum is a well-entrenched foundation of skills and knowledge that equips individuals to navigate well in today's civilization.

### ***6.3.3 Strategic planning and performance measures***

A further major finding of the study was that strategic plans in selected sites are not linked to performance measures and much blame has been apportioned to the changing economic environment. In related studies, Poister and Streib (2005) postulate that strategic plans must be aligned to performance measures and budgets. These must be balanced between the organizations' goals, plans, actions and budgets. It is crucial that values, challenges, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses be analyzed (Ward and Rivani 2005; Glanz, 2006; Ebdon and Franklin, 2006; Roberts, 2000). Thus, it should be clear to the planning team that strategic planning is an action oriented process (Poister and Streib, 2005).

### ***6.3.4 Benefits of strategic planning***

It is this research's contention that strategic planning is vital to organizations if they are to stay afloat in turbulent and challenging times. This is because administrators need to be informed and be ready to contend with foreseeable challenges (Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003). Institutions cannot downplay strategic planning because that would put their organization's future viability at risk (Beaudon, 2003). Organizational issues such as a teacher's colleges meeting the needs of their clients, decision-makers being capacitated to respond to new competition and the ability of the institution to maintain viability, create the need for planners to forecast and adapt to current strategic planning

trends. It has to be noted that many changes such as rapid technological changes, new opportunities such as the introduction of information technology and new business chances makes regular periodic strategic planning crucial (Bryson, 2011; Reeve, 2002). It was also found that projections in enrolments and the need to increase facilities also challenge institutions to make updated adjustments. Financial projections and enrolment projections could not be easily made. This concurs with the views by Callahan, 2003; Jones, 2003; Reeve and Perlich (2002) who assert that when enrolments surpass or become very low, the institutions are strained in their attempt to offer services (Oblinger, Barone and Hawkins, 2001; Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003).

In light of the foregoing political and economic challenges, there has been failure to meet clientele demands. Such developments that vary the clientele demands require careful strategic planning; hence, the aspect of adapting to the prevailing environment is crucial if an institution is to succeed. Besides, no organization can survive without adjusting its functions to those of the world as it develops. It is also important to harness the organization's potential (Levin, Warner, Stump and Skelton, 2001).

### ***6.3.5 Limitations in the strategic planning process***

Information supplied by the respondents revealed that in most educational institutes strategic planning meetings were held once every five years. This means that they devise their five year strategic work plans that are in line with the ministry's five year plan. The paraphernalia of national planning in the form of five year educational plans

persist in many countries. An examination of rhetoric of contemporary educational reform suggests that expectations for more effective, efficient and equitable education are increasingly legitimised by policy. They are also encouraged by private sector involvement and realized and fine-tuned by highly participatory grass-roots management (Adams, 2000). The research findings contradict Adams assertion as reflected by restricted participation at grass-root level.

In the selected sites, the focus has been on the planning process where the planning sequence appears to be too rigid, too bureaucratic for organizations in their rapidly changing environments (Enslin, 2003; Giroto and Mundet 2009). In this study, the reflections on bureaucratic tendencies were reflected in simple things such as the chairing of meetings. The data collected indicated that strategic planning meetings were, in most instances, chaired by the principals of colleges. The reflections from the findings were that the principals of colleges under study wanted to be in control of all activities and direct all discussions and strategic decision-making.

Various views emerge concerning how members are made ready for strategic planning sessions. LICs revealed that nothing was done as it was assumed that since they had been in the service for a long time, they could draw from their experiences to devise plans. Contrary to LICs' views, some HODs revealed that staff development sessions are held to capacitate members on a number of activities involved in strategic planning. However, documents, such as minutes, from the strategic planning sessions and minutes from general staff meetings were analysed and it emerged that in all selected

sites under study there were no workshops held as a preparation to strategic planning sessions. A further finding was that documents did not give a clear picture of the process undertaken within the planning cycles regarding stakeholder participation. The formalized strategic documents did not demonstrate the extent to which the staff had participated in workgroups that develop the plan (Davies, 2006; Giroto and Mundet, 2009). The responses from participants indicated that strategic planning in colleges was done by a few individuals who met and concentrated on describing the main program components such as the definition of a mission and vision, evidence of a SWOT analysis and the formulation of objectives and strategies. The formulation and development of plans by a small group of actors could result in problems in the alignment of plans among the overall college levels (Adams, 2000; Giroto and Mundet, 2009).

The study also found that in part, strategic planning was influenced by external quality assurance requirements by the ministry. This reflection came from the indications that after drawing the plans, the annual progress reports were made, a practice that did not guarantee that the changes took place. This, in a way, also confirms the ritualistic nature of the strategic planning process. This again is highlighted by the fact that there are no annual reviews of strategic plans. In light of this practice, Adams (2000) argues that the multi-year plans, unless significantly revised annually, tend to have weak records of implementation and may serve primarily as visions of the preferred future rather than sets of explicit, feasible actions.

Reflections on the failure to review plans and poor preparation of participants suggested that the current practice did not view the success of the strategic planning as depending on the way participants had been prepared for the process and constant review of plans. This practice is not in line with Lewins' (1939) group dynamics theory. For any process to succeed there is need to adequately plan how it is to be crafted and implemented (Appelbaum, St-Pierre, Glavas 1998; Adams, 2000; Giroto and Mundet, 2009).

It became clear that some operations and procedures for doing things were not streamlined. The heads of subjects (HOS), lecturers in charge (LIC) and heads departments (HOD) appeared to have a lot of duplication of duties. Another factor was that some of the organograms were top heavy and had senior managers who could not effect any decisions since the vice principal and the principal had the real power (Paris, 2003; Bryson, 2011). The duties of supervising curriculum delivery, ordering supplies, making decisions in the finance committees needed to be streamlined to have a lean but effective group of managers doing them.

The findings of the study were that methods such as group and team work as well as brainstorming are the ones that participants engaged in, in the stakeholder strategic planning sessions. With planners not sure of what is expected of them, there is a danger that plans will not be systematically done and each participant is likely to focus on individual departmental priorities (Adams, 2000; Adams, Kee and Lin 2001; Whittington and Cailluet, 2008). Strategic planning done under such conditions is

difficult to monitor as key performance indicators and goal achievement is not assured. The plans prepared may then be a flop, leading to a lack of progress and the underdevelopment of the institutes.

Educational systems are sometimes fraught with ambiguous goals, variable input, vulnerability, low interdependence, managed and operated by different and often disagreeing communities of lecturers/teachers, parents and administrators (Adams 2000). In light of this assertion, participation is seen as a social action and a vehicle for building consensus or negotiating divergent interests (Adams, 2000; Giroto and Mundet, 2009). Strategic planning in institutes is a process that is supposed to be ongoing and participants are expected to hold meetings periodically to review their strategies so as to ensure that whatever has been planned takes place according to the set plan (Morsing and Schults, 2006).

#### **6.4 Role interpretation in the strategic planning process**

The study established that stakeholders interpreted their role in the strategic planning process as that of establishing the foundation, clarifying core values, assessing the internal and external environments, identifying the strategic issues, developing strategies, and Implementing the plan. The findings also corroborate those of Lerner (1999) Glanz (2006), who contend that the strategic planning team can be made up of concerned groups and those leaders who are the prime actors for each of the general strategic planning stages. The interpretation of their role is indicative of *partnership and delegated control* in the Arnstein (1969) ladder. However participants indicated that due

to restricted participation, which was also resonated in the findings, they were unable to play their role to the full. The underlying theme that resonated from the responses of senior managers was the contention that the whole strategic planning exercise is a ritual. It was done simply because they were mandated to do it. The planning teams were only created to design plans that would be seen by the ministry and participation, in this instance, lay in the bottom rungs of Arnstein's ladder. This research contends that public participation does go just a rung above the nonparticipation stage and the consultation stage.

Other research findings were that a planning committee was formed not to begin identifying planning issues, and in particular, to collect a sense of the college's strengths and challenges from campus members but to play the role of drawing a five year strategic plan. This finding confirms that there was no element of *Action Research* that Lewin (1939) advocates for in his theory. The Vice Principal or the Dean for Academic Affairs was charged with leading the planning committee. This stage of the process and the next, identification of strategic issues, extended into the second day, through several issue-based task forces, and multiple brainstorming meetings for participants comment and discussion. Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009) argue that communication and participation are unlikely to result just from 'bringing people together'. Different interests and different experiences of communicative and participative activities by actors occupying different organizational roles are likely to impede the process, leading to only partial integration, or 'lip service' to supposedly shared goals.

The findings of the study were that strategic planning relied on the existing organizational structure and leadership at the divisional and departmental levels. The research findings concurred with the findings of Lewin (1939) and Dolence (2004) that after the planning process and the adoption of the plan, divisions and departments were expected to integrate the priorities of the strategic plan into their own priorities and actions. However, the data revealed that no institutional structures or support accompanied the launch of the new strategic plans. Instead, the plans relied on management endorsement and the assumption of support for the goals because of select participation in the formation of the plan. Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009) and Callahan (2007) argue that in such a situation little attention is given to the capacity and motivation to carry out plans during plan preparation and frequently plans are constructed with little local input and with suspect statistics.

The data revealed that the evaluation of progress on the strategic plan was to be determined through a review of the annual reports. This was something that was also planned but not done in the previous strategic plan as revealed by the minutes and interview responses.

Principals of colleges also expressed their wish that their institutes would provide all needed material resources for the process of strategic planning since they felt that the process had to be done very well. The data collected revealed that it had not been possible for the colleges of education to hold awareness workshops with members involved in strategic planning so that they were aware of what was expected of them.

Respondents also said that they had not been able to hold follow up meetings to the strategic plans they have made. The factor that contributed most to this was the inadequacy of resources. The other underlying theme that this study found was the lack of motivation in all planning processes as a result of the lack of funding. This research contends that the lack of motivation was also due to fact that the plans remain on paper and are not reviewed or implemented. The other demotivating factor is knowledge deficiency as a result of the lack of training in the strategic planning process.

#### ***6.4.1 Information dissemination***

It was revealed that in some cases staff members were each given a copy of the strategic plan. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education was also given copies of the strategic work plans set. However, circulars were sent to stakeholders, and the concern then was whether the members of the community received back the circulars on the strategic planning report. It was a concern from the CACBM that they only talked about strategic plans when they are at college and they never came to talk about the plans set anywhere else. This finding does not corroborate that of Garrison and Kanuka (2004) who argue that forms of communication and our ability to manage information challenge our cognitive abilities and the participatory process. This research contends that educational institutions need to discover their transformative potential. Reflections are that in this instance it is best to utilize both face-to-face and online communication tools for purposes of disseminating information.

## 6.5 Strategic planning model followed by colleges

Data collected revealed that colleges do have their missions and visions in place. It is believed that all this is set to ensure that as the colleges engage in strategic planning they choose a model that produces quality and achieves excellence. However, participants revealed that they did not know and some said they are not sure of the models that the colleges use to come up with their strategic plans. This scenario is indicative of the poor consultation found in the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder of participation. On the contrary, the documents analysed indicated that there was a systematic way of planning which implied that there were models used, yet participants seemed not to be aware of the models used. This is another indication of centralized planning since some college members do certain activities without knowing their basis. This further confirmed the *lack of awareness* theme that pervaded the lower strata of the colleges. More research on the activity performed would have shed more light on the part of the participants. Planners simply follow what is brought to them by the experts from the ministry passively so as to fulfil the ministerial requirements.

This research observed the stages followed in the strategic planning. The stages corroborate those advocated by Mare and Fraser (2008). In the first stage of the strategic planning process, departments held meetings at the preliminary level and suggested what was to be qualitatively improved on. The second stage of the planning process entailed departments identifying the skills, procedures and resources they needed to put in place. At stage three specifications were refined and reviews of feasibility were done. At Stage four the sub-plans were presented at the all stakeholders

meeting where a lot of evaluation, pruning and strengthening of plans were done. The all stakeholder's meeting played devil's advocate checking on challenges that could curtail the projects' moving to achievement. They put in place performance indicators to show what was to be achieved. Stage five entailed planning how to secure funds, materials and personnel to achieve the plan. Stage six was an adaption of plan before handing it to the chief consultants for legal checking, editing and presenting a finished copy. However, while this could be observed and it is also stated in the documents, participants in their responses mirrored a picture, where they are totally not aware of the models that are used.

The fact that all members are not fully aware of what is entailed in strategic planning was also indicative of the fact that the strategic planning process in colleges is held sometimes out of obligation and participants are not really keen on understanding the process. This is again indicative of the *lack of awareness* theme that resonates in some of the findings. This reflects negatively on the plan implementation as members may not be aware of how the plans will be implemented (Dimmock and Walker, 2005, Davies, 2006).

## **6.6 Major findings of the study**

The major observation emanating from this study is that there is institutional consensus about the need for the crafting of strategic plans in all the sites that were visited. In all the institutions, it was apparent that the stakeholder participation varied from restricted

participation to inverse participation while at the lower levels of the organisation non-participation was heavily reflected. There also appeared to be a gap between the ministry's external quality assurance demands and the resources that are provided to individual colleges for the purpose of strategic planning and meeting institutional goals. This variance can perhaps account for the ritualistic nature of the strategic planning process that the study revealed across all the institutions. The study therefore contends that there clearly is a need for all education institutions and the parent ministry to review the manner in which the strategic planning process are done with a view of effectively increasing stakeholder participation and cascading ownership of the process to all relevant levels in the institutions. The study showed that institutions need wider engagement at all levels particularly that of lecturers and students. There also appears to be a compelling need for institutions to move toward a continuous process which includes systematic annual reviews of the plans. The study also revealed that there is limited awareness among all the critical stakeholders and that there was no knowledge of the models that were used by the institutions. This presents serious challenges to all administrative levels as planning processes are perhaps ad hoc and not systematic and theory driven so as to be in line with international best practice.

The study contends that the challenges encountered in Zimbabwe might not only be peculiar to that country only. Enslin (2003) contends that the historical divisions and inequalities produced by colonialism and apartheid policies in South Africa have seen inequalities being particularly marked in education. Despite economic stability since the transition to democracy in 1994, a plethora of policies have been formulated to address

every form of division and that includes public participation (Enslin, 2003; Sayed 2002). Dooris, Kelly and Trainer (2004) posit that stakeholder participation in strategic planning in a college or university occurs in a complex, dynamic, real-world environment, not readily amenable to controlled studies, or even to quasi-experimental designs. It is difficult to parse out the measurable effects of strategic planning from the influences of such other important factors as institutional leadership, demographic change, fluctuations in state and federal funding, politics, the actions of competing organizations, social and cultural forces, and the like (ibid). Thus, perhaps in countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, the present empirical evidence about whether strategic planning does or does not work in higher education is less than conclusive.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

It can be concluded, from the case studies and evidence of this study, that strategic planning in Zimbabwe's colleges of education exhibit retrospective characteristics in the sense that collegial partnerships between internal and external stakeholders; and between the college and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education is skewed towards a managerial rather than academic relationship. In the given context, the question on how self-regulation, self-evaluation, autonomy and continuous improvement as a result of strategic planning can be achieved in higher education institutions is inescapable. The major findings of this study show that stakeholder participation in education encountered numerous challenges ranging from restricted participation, lack of awareness to non-participation of the stakeholders in the strategic planning process

# CHAPTER 7

## 7 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three main parts; summary, main findings and recommendations. The chapter draws together key elements, lessons and questions drawn from the study.

### 7.1 Summary of main findings

Theories of stakeholder participation have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century received considerable academic attention particularly in the early 1990s to present day. These theories have been a source of debate at least since the 1960s after a seminal theoretical work on the subject of community participation by Arnstein (1969). Stakeholder participation in strategic planning has also been seen to be important in education and other non-profit organizations. Strategic planning was introduced in colleges of education in Zimbabwe in the last decade. Giroto and Mundet (2009) argue that although strategic planning has been touted in numerous studies, the empirical use of formal strategic planning and the benefits from its use have been questioned repeatedly. Critics of strategic planning point out this uncertainty regarding its effect on performance (Bryson, 2011; Pisel, 2008), and the critiques have focused on issues such as the lack of realism, or that its formalization would favour analysis over intuition making planning contradictory to the

strategy itself (Bryson, 2011; Westhuizen and Legotlo, 1996; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

Despite the fact that studies dealing with strategic planning are innumerable, very often, the focus has been on the planning process, where the planning sequence appears to be too rigid or too bureaucratic for contemporary organizations in their rapidly changing environments (Pisel, 2008; Hodgson, 2004), which tells more about the rigidity of pre-defined process than about the specificities of planning itself. Indeed, most studies do not actually analyse strategic plans themselves, in other words, empirical studies have not properly addressed the way the strategic plans are written and read and how this could help to better understand its own performance hence the need to also specifically look at the nature and level of stakeholder participation in the process of strategic planning with the hope of bridging the highlighted gap.

Contestations around what participation and strategic planning are and how they can assure organizational development, continue to elude theorists and practitioners alike (Bryson, 2011). What is important, however, is to settle in with a definition and show consistency in its usage. This study was guided by the conception of stakeholder participation in strategic planning and within that, strategic planning was used to mean systems, processes and practices to assure accountability, control, compliance and improvement in the service delivered (Bush, 2011). The main findings of this study can be summarized under three headings: understanding participation; internal strategic planning practices and external strategic planning practices in higher education.

### **7.1.1 Understanding strategic planning in colleges of education**

With regard to how strategic planning is practiced in the Zimbabwe teacher education, the study concludes that:

- 7.2.1.1. Practices such as strategic planning aimed at achieving organizational goals in Zimbabwe's teacher education were mainly carried out through external accountability requirements enforced by the external quality assurance body, the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education (MoTHE); The greater reflection is that the practice still appears to be rigid and bureaucratic for organizations that operate in rapidly changing environments such as Zimbabwe.
- 7.2.1.2. There seem to be no specific criteria for selecting participating members save for seniority and positions held by individuals. Findings were that stakeholder participation in strategic planning at colleges of education was not all inclusive; only a select few individuals do take part in the planning exercises.
- 7.2.1.3. Colleges of education and the ministry focus on the *product*; that is, crafting the strategic plan. They ignore the *process* activities such as reviewing plans periodically and taking note of key performance indicators which promote continuous improvement.
- 7.2.1.4. Managerial actors perform the work of strategy, both through their social interactions with other actors and with resource to the specific practices present. Within the context, the study focused on how people engage in doing the real work of strategic planning and found that they receive no formal training and that the quality assurance practices by the ministry and internal

managers were skewed towards control and compliance. They exhibited managerial accountability tendencies which lie within central bureaucratic approaches.

- 7.2.1.5. It was found that central practices of planning which are in some instances employed in colleges of education by the ministry and managers lie in tension with community participation approaches. It again raises questions on sustainability of plans and the autonomy to allocate resources flexibly and on stakeholder focused commitment among all stakeholders.

### ***7.1.2 Internal strategic planning practices***

- 7.2.2.1. There were no support services for participants in the form of in-service workshops, regular communication from the colleges, incentives, strategic planning handbooks or ladder of participation forms to support participants. This cast doubt on the maintenance of continuous improvement.
- 7.2.2.2. Most participants were purposively selected by managers and they all held middle to senior management positions with the assumption that the requisite qualities, experience and expertise they have will bring in quality to the planning process.
- 7.2.2.3. Strategic planning is hurriedly done within the period of a week. While hurried crafting of plans may meet bureaucratic requirements of producing the plans and fulfilling the ministerial requirement, it undermines self-regulated continuous improvement.

- 7.2.2.4. There was a lack of liaison between internal stakeholders and external stakeholders in the form of regular communication regarding general administrative issues and specific issues pertaining to strategic planning. This brought about tensions between lecturers and managers to hold the colleges accountable to the community for outcomes within the context of national measures.
- 7.2.2.5. Internal stakeholders did not invite external stakeholders to participate in plan reviews and evaluations. This then created a gap between what is expected and the actual practice. Such a state of affairs not only undermines achievement of stakeholder participation but also can confuse stakeholders.

### ***7.1.3 External strategic planning practices***

- 7.2.3.1. The external strategic planning practice in Zimbabwe's teacher training colleges promotes accountability to the ministerial requirements.
- 7.2.3.2. National planning still persists in Zimbabwe and it is not clear to what extent colleges of education are autonomous in their planning. This raises the question of how the global trend toward educational decentralization can be expected to be fine-tuned to meaningful local participation and grass-root planning and management.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

This study has delved into how strategic planning is practiced in colleges of education in

Zimbabwe paying particular attention to stakeholder involvement in the planning process. It, therefore, provides learning points for consideration by teacher education practitioners as well as academics doing research in the field. These recommendations are divided into two groups: those relating to strategic planning process and activities and those relating to further research.

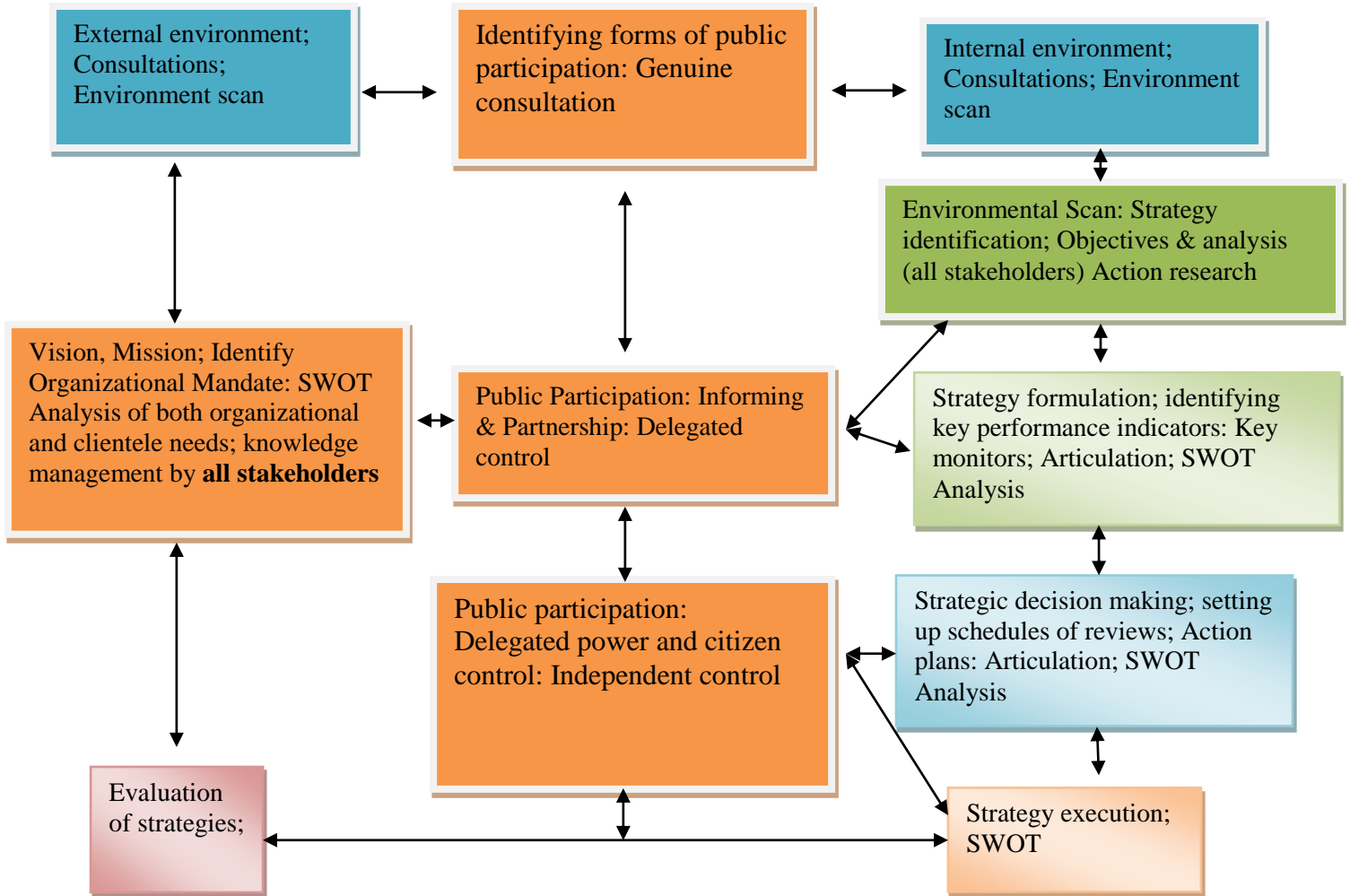
### **7.2.1 Major contribution of the study**

#### ***(a) Towards the new model***

The stakeholder participation practice, on paper, resonates well with the current global trends in quality assurance and management systems as its operations are guided by the partnership of students, lecturers in teacher education institutions and advisory councils. However, in practice, strategic planning practices still reflect autocratic features of the old integrative model.

In order to improve the effectiveness of stakeholder participation in strategic planning, there is need to work out a strategy. In this regard, the cross adaptation of Lewin's (1939) change management theory and Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation theory as explained in chapter two, might provide useful insights into effective stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process.

*Adapted from Lewin's Planned Change Theory and Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation.*



**Figure 7-1: The new model**

The above model is a modified model that was first introduced in the theoretical framework chapter. It is a seven step model which is a culmination of what the researcher learnt from literature and qualitative studies. The seven steps fall under the four main categories of participation as illustrated in the diagram above. This model is a reflection of best practice learned from both the literature and empirical research. It is a given fact that by virtue of being employees of government, internal stakeholders have

to participate in the strategic planning process. The same cannot be said about the external stakeholders. External stakeholders have a choice not to participate. However, this model places more emphasis on ways that can promote greater internal and external stakeholder participation. The study contends that the participation process should be contextual and move towards addressing the needs of a particular institution in the context of what the institution and the community that it serves need.

#### Step 1: Stakeholder consultations

The internal stakeholders and external stakeholders consult each other and clarify what the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education expects from them. This may entail identifying the organizational mandate and articulating their roles and the nature of their participation (Lewin, 1939; Arnstein, 1969; Davies, 2006).

#### Step 2: Vision and Mission

Involvement of internal and external stakeholders is very important at this stage since all the stakeholders work towards a common goal. A workshop is also necessary at this stage as it could introduce all stakeholders to the process of strategic planning so that as they come up with a vision and mission, they do not only own the vision but know what would be expected of them and take up the challenge. A SWOT analysis and knowledge management is also necessary at this stage.

### Step 3: Environmental scan

The environmental scan is based on research and can be done within the framework of the five forces model and SWOT analysis (Lerner, 1999). At this stage there is need for internal and external stakeholder involvement in a brainstorm, development workshops and a SWOT analysis of institutional needs. All components of the strategic plan should be looked at. Stakeholder induction is also necessary as it would help stakeholders appreciate why their involvement is important and how they can complement each other as stakeholders. Lastly there is need to synchronize all effort of all stakeholders. After the environment scan it is useful for stakeholders to engage in a brainstorming session and, for example consider issues such as (i) how the college can cope with the political and economic environment.

### Step 4: Identification of objectives.

The identification of strategic objectives would entail involving both internal and external stakeholders. The process would entail brainstorming about strategic objectives. This resonates well with the consultation stage that Arnstein (1969) advocates for as well as the group dynamics and action research that Lewin (1939) talks about. Strategic objectives can be streamlined or categorized under curriculum development, infrastructural development and business unit development.

### Step 5: Strategy formulation.

At this stage, it is essential for stakeholders to evaluate the difference between their organizations' current position and the desired future through a gap analysis and take

stock of resources they can use to close the gaps as they formulate strategies. This stage can be what Lewin (1939) refers to as the unfreezing stage. At this stage it is also necessary for stakeholders to compare the colleges' operations, practices and performance against other useful best practices through an on-going systematic benchmarking process. At this stage it is also important to assess the progress of the strategic planning process and in pursuit of this, the college needs to review the strategic plan, make necessary changes, and adjust its course based on these evaluations. The revised plan must take into consideration emergent strategies, and changes affecting the organization's intended course.

#### Step 6: Strategic plan

All stakeholders (participants) should design the strategies and find ways of fusing them with the current Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education plan.

#### Step 7: Evaluation

The evaluation process should occur at every stage and again periodic evaluations of strategies, tactics, and action programs are essential to assessing the success of the strategic planning process. It is important to measure performance at least annually (but preferably more often), to evaluate the effect of specific actions on long-term results and on the organization's vision and mission (Lewin (1939); Adams, 2000; Giroto and Mundet, 2009). The organization should measure current performance against previously set expectations, and consider any changes or events that may have impacted the desired course of actions (Independent control, Arnstein 1969).

## ***7.2.2 Improving stakeholder involvement in strategic planning***

It is recommended that:

- 7.3.1.1. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and the Department of Teacher Education, at the University of Zimbabwe, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, should develop norms and standards for teacher education to align Zimbabwe's stakeholder involvement in strategic planning with the global trends.
- 7.3.1.2. Colleges of education should supplement their understanding of operational contexts by exploring possible future trends and circumstances. The criteria for reviewing strategic plans should be developed by peers, and practitioners in the field, in consultation with national norms and standards for teacher education.
- 7.3.1.3. Self-evaluation needs to focus on the effectiveness of the strategic plans to ensure the achievement of both continuous improvement and accountability.
- 7.3.1.4. Internal stakeholders and external stakeholders need to be given joint in-service training on strategic planning practices in higher education to promote collegiality and shared understanding of purpose of activities.
- 7.3.1.5. Involve all stakeholders in timely sensitization and strategic planning training and develop task force teams with a culture of working together on projects. This will ensure that stakeholders fulfil the purpose of institutional development.

### **7.2.3 For further research**

It is recommended that:

- 7.3.2.1. Contextual matters under which stakeholder participation in strategic planning and effective participation practices need to be investigated. Findings should shed more light on why it is desirable for planning practices to move away from bureaucratic practices to collegial/emancipator practices.
- 7.3.2.2. The college strategic team should allow decision makers to question themselves about the way things are in order to force new ways of looking at things on the surface. How micro-practices deployed in the planning process and its interrelationships with strategic alignment as a collaborative endeavour in Zimbabwe's teacher education can be a subject of another study. Again a study of micro-strategy may be located within the body of research on how it is actually practiced

### **7.3 Conclusion**

This study highlighted a variety of approaches to strategic planning that could be adapted to align with the educational colleges' mission and organizational culture and yet be beneficial. Sharing models of strategic planning responsibilities into existing structures would be helpful to institutions attempting to develop these processes under severe budgetary constraints. Finally, this study focused on stakeholder participation and strategic planning for academic and organizational development. In the increasingly competitive higher education industry, it is crucial for colleges and universities to

reaffirm their unique missions and to design operations that will attain institutional goals as effectively as possible.

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## APPENDIX 'A'

### University of Fort Hare

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**Alice (main) Campus:**  
Private Bag X1314, King William's Town Rd, Alice, 5700, RSA  
Tel: +27 (0) 40 602-2412 • Fax: +27 (0) 40 602-2448



7<sup>th</sup> June 2010

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that Gladwin Bhebhe is a Doctoral student at the University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education. Her research title is "A case study of stakeholder participation in strategic planning at four colleges of education in Zimbabwe". He is due to collect data during the period of June/July 2010. Kindly grant her permission.

Sincerely

Dr N. Duku  
Research Promoter

*Bhisho Campus:*

P.O. Box 1153, KWT 5600, Independence Ave, Bhisho, 5600, RSA  
Tel: +27 (0) 40 639-2445 • Fax: +27 (0) 40 639-2447

*East London Campus:*

P.O. Box 7426, 50 Church Street, East London, 5201, RSA  
Tel: +27 (0) 43 704-7000 • Fax: +27 (0) 43 704-7095  
VIC Dial Up: +27 (0) 43 704-7143/7144

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[www.ufh.ac.za](http://www.ufh.ac.za)

## Appendix 'B'

From the Office of The Secretary for Higher and Tertiary Education

*All official communications should be addressed to  
"The Secretary"*

-----  
Telephone: 795891-5, 796441-9, 730055-9  
Fax: 733070  
Telegraphic address "EDUCATION"



ZIMBABWE

Reference: C/9./1

SECRETARY FOR HIGHER AND  
TERTIARY EDUCATION  
P.O. Box CY 7732  
Causeway  
HARARE

26 June 2010

Dear Mr G Bhebhe

**RE: PERMISSION LETTER TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education institutions on the topic: **Stakeholder participation in strategic planning processes at three colleges of education in Zimbabwe: Towards the development of a participatory process strategic planning.**

Permission is hereby granted. You are required to liaise with principals of the colleges at which you want to research. You are also required to provide the ministry with the final copy of your research since it is instrumental to education in Zimbabwe

Yours Sincerely

  
**Washington T. Mbizvo (Dr.)**  
**PERMANENT SECRETARY**

## APPENDIX 'C'

Univeristy of Forthare  
P Bag X1314  
Alice  
South Africa  
5700  
16 July 2010

### **The Principal**

Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education  
Zimbabwe  
Dear Sir/ Madam

### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY AT YOUR COLLEGE**

I am a phd student at the above mentioned university. I am kindly asking for permission to carry a study in the colleges of teacher education. I am at the data collection stage. Find attached a letter from Dr N Duku who is my supervisor. As well as the permission letter from the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education

Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Bhebhe Gladwin  
28-036369N21  
0884759T

## Appendix 'D'

### Informed Consent- Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place at your work site. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by **Gladwin Bhebhe**, a doctoral student at the University of Fort Hare, located in Alice in the Eastern Cape.

I understand the study is entitled — The study of stakeholder participation in strategic planning in colleges of education: Towards the development of participatory leadership strategy.

The purpose of this study is to explore the participatory strategies employed by the paying particular attention to their nature of participation.

I understand that my participation will consist of audio recorded interviews lasting 30 to 40 minutes with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 20 to 30 minutes. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time until the completion of the study.

I understand that my anonymity will be maintained and the information I provide will be kept confidential. I understand that only the researcher, **Gladwin Bhebhe**, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which all transcripts, audio recordings, and field notes from the interview(s) in which I participated will be kept.

I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be used to assist colleges in Africa and world over to become more effective in their strategic planning processes.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Bhebhe Gladwin

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. N Duku: University of Fort Hare, East London Campus.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX ‘E’

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS.

#### THE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC PLANNING:

The interview schedule responds to the following questions:

##### 1.2.1 The Research Main Question

- 1.2.1.1 What is the level and nature of the participation by senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe’s colleges of education?

##### 1.2.2 Research Sub-Questions

- 1.2.2.1 How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.2 How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.3 What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.4 What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

Table of respondents

Respondents	Principal/vice principal	Heads of departments	Lecturers	College advisory board members
Institution A	1	3	3	1
Institution B	1	3	3	1
Institution C	1	3	3	1

#### A. Background information.

- a. Please tell me more about your professional life?
- b. *Your age range..... Gender.....*
- c. *Your highest academic qualification.....*
- d. *Your highest professional qualification.....*
- e. *The position you are holding now.....*
- f. *Length of service as a College Board Member.....*
- g. Which college decision making bodies do you belong to?
- h. For how long have you been the member of the Board? How were you elected? Why were you elected? Do you feel you belong to this board?

#### B. Involvement of academic board members in strategic planning in the college.

- 1. Who attends the strategic planning meetings? Why these particular individuals?
- 2. How regularly is it performed?

3. Who chairs these meetings and who takes minutes?
4. How are members capacitated/made ready for their roles as board members
5. Does the institution set aside resources such as money, time earmarked specifically for strategic planning? Streamline activities the money is specifically used for.

**C. interpretation of their role in strategic planning**

- a. What role do you as board members play in the strategic planning process?
- b. Are there specific areas where you contribute more? Why?
- c. Are resources such as time and money made available to you for strategic planning purposes?
- d. How do you report back to your community or constituency on proceedings of the planning process?

**D. Involvement of advisory board members**

- a. Are you involved in strategic planning at your institution?
- b. Do advisory board members bring an outsiders' view to compliment and enrich the colleges' strategic planning process?
- c. Do you as advisory board members incorporate client feedback into the planning process?

**E. Effective quality improvement of education through sustained strategic planning**

- a. What model does the institution use in strategic planning? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this model for the institution?
- b. How does the model used consider service enhancement options in strategic planning?
- c. Does the college set clearly defined and measurable performance standards for each plan element based on the model used?
- d. Explain how the institution develops an organised system for monitoring how well performance standards are met?
- e. Does the organization review monitoring and revise decisions appropriately?
- f. Are individuals responsible for strategic planning motivated in rewards?

## APPENDIX ‘F’

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS (LICs) AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS.

#### A CASE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

The interview schedule responds to the following questions:

##### 1.2.1 The Research Main Question

- 1.2.1.1 What is the level and nature of the participation by senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe’s colleges of education?

##### 1.2.2 Research Sub-Questions

- 1.2.2.1 How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?  
 1.2.2.2 How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?  
 1.2.2.3 What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?  
 1.2.2.4 What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

Table of Respondents

Respondents	Principal/vice principal	Heads of departments	lecturers	College advisory board members
Institution A	1	3	3	1
Institution B	1	3	3	1
Institution C	1	3	3	1

#### A. Background information

- a. Please tell me more about your professional life?
- b. *Your age range*..... *Gender*.....
- c. *Your highest academic qualification*.....
- d. *Your highest professional qualification*.....
- e. *The position you are holding now*.....
- f. *Length of service as a lecturer/Head of Department*.....
- g. Which college decision making bodies do you belong to?
- h. For how long have you been the member of the Board? How were you elected? Why were you elected?  
Do you feel you belong to this board?

#### B. Involvement of academic board members in strategic planning in the college.

- a. Who attends the strategic planning meetings? Why these particular individuals?

- b. How regularly is it performed?
- c. Who chairs these meetings and who takes minutes?
- d. How are members capacitated/made ready for their roles as academic board members
- e. Does the institution set aside resources such as money, time earmarked specifically for strategic planning? Streamline activities the money is specifically used for.

**C. Interpretation of their role in strategic planning**

- a. What role do you as academic board members play in the strategic planning process?
- b. Tell me about the specific areas where you contribute more? Why?
- c. Are resources such as time and money made available to you for strategic planning purposes?
- d. Tell me how you report back to your academic departments on proceedings of the planning process?

**D. Involvement of advisory board members**

- a. How are advisory board members involved in strategic planning at your institution?
- b. Do advisory board members bring an outsiders' view to compliment and enrich the colleges' strategic planning process?
- c. Explain to me how advisory board members incorporate client feedback into the planning process?

**E. Effective quality improvement of education through sustained strategic planning**

- a. What model does the institution use in strategic planning? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this model for the institution?
- b. How does the model used consider service enhancement options in strategic planning?
- c. Explain how the college set clearly defined and measurable performance standards for each plan element based on the model used?
- d. Explain how the institution develops an organised system for monitoring how well performance standards are met?
- e. Does the organization review monitoring and revise decisions appropriately?
- f. Tell me how individuals responsible for strategic planning are motivated to actively participate in strategic planning?

## APPENDIX ‘G’

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS/VICE PRINCIPALS.**

#### **A CASE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The interview schedule responds to the following questions:

##### **1.2.1 The Research Main Question**

- 1.2.1.1 What is the level and nature of the participation by senior and middle managers, lecturers, students, and college advisory board members in the strategic planning process at Zimbabwe's colleges of education?

##### **1.2.2 Research Sub-Questions**

- 1.2.2.1 How do stakeholders participate in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.2 How do education stakeholders interpret their roles in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.3 What are the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process?
- 1.2.2.4 What model can be adopted to improve stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process at colleges of education?

Table of Respondents

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Principal/vice principal</b>	<b>Heads of departments</b>	<b>lecturers</b>	<b>College advisory board members</b>
Institution A	1	3	3	1
Institution B	1	3	3	1
Institution C	1	3	3	1

#### **A. Background information.**

- a. Please tell me more about your professional life?
- b. *Your age range..... Gender.....*
- c. *Your highest academic qualification.....*
- d. *Your highest professional qualification.....*
- e. *The position you are holding now.....*
- f. *Length of service as a Vice Principal/Principal.....*
- g. As a principal /vice principal which college decision making bodies do you belong to?
- h. For how long have you been the member of the Academic Board? How were you elected? Why were you elected? Do you feel you belong to this board?

#### **B. Involvement of academic board members in strategic planning in the college.**

- a. Who attends the strategic planning meetings? Why these particular individuals?
- b. How regularly is it performed?

- c. Who chairs these meetings and who takes minutes?
- d. How are members capacitated/made ready for their roles as board members
- e. Does the institution set aside resources such as money, time earmarked specifically for strategic planning? Streamline activities the money is specifically used for.

**C. Interpretation of their role in strategic planning**

- a. What role do you as board members play in the strategic planning process?
- b. Tell me about the specific areas where you contribute more? Why?
- c. Are resources such as time and money made available to you for strategic planning purposes?
- d. Tell me how you report back to your community or constituency on proceedings of the planning process?

**D. Involvement of advisory board members**

- a. Kindly advise on how you involve the advisory board members in strategic planning at your institution?
- b. Do advisory board members bring an outsiders' view to compliment and enrich the colleges' strategic planning process?
- c. Advise on how the advisory board members incorporate client feedback into the planning process?

**E. Effective quality improvement of education through sustained strategic planning**

- a. What model does the institution use in strategic planning? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this model for the institution?
- b. How does the model used consider service enhancement options in strategic planning?
- c. How does the college set clearly defined and measurable performance standards for each plan element based on the model used?
- d. Explain how the institution develops an organised system for monitoring how well performance standards are met?
- e. Does the organization review monitoring and revise decisions appropriately?
- f. Are individuals responsible for strategic planning motivated in rewards?

## APPENDIX 'H'

### A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS.

- a. Who attends the strategic planning meetings?
- b. Why these particular individuals?
- c. How regularly is it performed?
- d. Who chairs these meetings and who takes minutes?
- e. How are you as students involved in the planning process?
- f. Does the institution set aside resources such as money, time earmarked specifically for strategic planning?
- g. Streamline activities the money is specifically used for.

### B. Interpretation of their role in strategic planning

- a. What role do you as STUDENTS play in the strategic planning process?
- b. Tell me about the specific areas where you contribute more? Why?
- c. Are resources such as time and money made available to you for strategic planning purposes?
- d. Tell me how you report back to other students on proceedings of the planning process?

### C. Effective quality improvement of education through sustained strategic planning

- a. What model does the institution use in strategic planning? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this model for the institution?
- b. How does the model used consider service enhancement options in strategic planning?
- c. How does the college set clearly defined and measurable performance standards for each plan element based on the model used?
- d. Explain how the institution develops an organised system for monitoring how well performance standards are met?
- e. Does the organization review strategic plans and do you participate?
- f. Are individuals responsible for strategic planning motivated in rewards?