

# Leadership Dynamics in the Zimbabwe Open University Regional Campuses: A Case Study of Tagutswa Regional Campus

Sharayi Chakanyuka

*Zimbabwe Open University, Masvingo Regional Campus, 68 Hellet Street, Masvingo, Zimbabwe*

**Abstract:** - The study sought to find out the leadership dynamics that make one Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) regional campus different from others. It was a case study of Tagutswa Regional Campus. The objectives of the study were to explore the leadership characteristics of the Regional campus director with regards to teaching and learning, research and community service; establish subordinates' perceptions of and assess effect of the Regional director's leadership on subordinates. The research adopted the qualitative paradigm and the social constructivism philosophical perspective. Data was collected from the Regional director and academic staff through semi-structured interviews and from non-academic staff through focus group discussion. Preliminary results show that the regional campus director (RCD) is a visionary who leads by example. In teaching and learning, the RCD encourages tutorial workshops for tutors to improve the quality of tutoring; keeps abreast of developments in relevant ministries to keep the regional campus staff updated on developments which affect the regional campus. He also monitors tutorials, assignment marking and student support through learner and peer evaluations. He is a renowned scholar, prolific researcher and author who has influenced academic staff to research and publish articles to the extent that most of them are associate or full professors. He adopts a collective approach to decision making and holds regular staff meetings to resolve regional campus issues. He also works harmoniously with the local community and stakeholders. The RCD has motivated academic and non-academic staff to improve their academic and professional qualifications so that all members of the academic staff hold or are studying towards doctoral degrees and members of the non-academic staff are first or Master's degree holders. The study recommends that the ZOU National Centre should award prizes to outstanding RCD's to encourage excellent performance in the regional campuses where the actual teaching and learning takes place. Further studies should be carried out to assess the effectiveness of other ZOU regional campuses.

**Key words:** leadership, regional campus, Director, transformational

## I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership of organizations is viewed differently by different people. Some people view leadership as a process of leading people and others as the group of people who lead others. Whatever view one takes, leadership involves clearly defined activities such as setting a clear vision for an organisation, sharing the vision so that other can buy into it, providing direction on how to accomplish the

vision and coordinating and controlling the needs of subordinates and other stakeholders to ensure that the vision is accomplished. Yukl (2006:3) defines leadership as "a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organisation". Northouse (2010) defines leadership simply as influencing other people to work towards the achievement of a common goal. Key components of these definitions are that leadership is a process which involves other people in a group or organisational context and involves achieving a goal shared by the leader and the other people.

The definitions of leadership above also apply to higher education, where leaders could be the vice chancellor, pro vice chancellor, registrar, dean or director. However leadership of higher education (HE) institutions has a number of complications resulting from the need for validation by academics who need to be convinced that their work matters (Black, 2005). Academics also have a strong sense of personal mission and entrenched independence. Other challenges faced by HE leadership are shortages of funding, increased competition for students and regulatory pressures to broaden access. HE leadership is thus very demanding and the leader has to be a visionary able to anticipate trends, articulate a sense of mission to university community and the public, inspire people in order to retain the support and good will of academics (Guardian Professional, 2014). Sathye (2004) argues that an HE leader has to set clear goals and vision for the institution and retain high calibre staff. In addition the HE leader has to be able to motivate staff and help them to plan their future and give their best. The leader also has to identify staff needs and reward good performance. In addition, the leader has to praise and sustain staff interest and give feedback. Important skills required by an HE leader are interpersonal skills and leading by example (Sathye, 2004). This makes perceptions of leadership in higher education different (Lumby, 2013). Black et al (2011) argue that the way leaders think and approach issues have a strong influence on the institutional operations, organisational structure, policy, goal setting, decision making and achievement of results.

Recent trends in higher education research have referred to transformational leadership, what Bryman (1992) and Kennedy (1994) call the new paradigm in leadership. A

transformational leader is one who can clearly articulate a vision for the higher education institution/ Faculty/ department that can be shared by subordinates, and which acknowledges differences among the subordinates. This leadership style involves setting clear vision, values, personal credibility, technical competence, conceptual skills, judgment, experimentation and facilitating involvement (Peters 1987, Kouzes and Posner, 1987, Bennis, 1999). Such capacities enable the leader to transform habits, loyalties and behaviours of staff and develop a shared culture.

In addition transformational leaders exert effort to ensure that their subordinates understand what is right and important (Bass and Avolio, 1997). In the process, the leader motivates subordinates and encourages them to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the group. A transformational leader is viewed as possessing four attributes, charisma, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1990). These four attributes together refer to a leader's ability to create a sense of mission among subordinates, articulate vision clearly and logically, treat subordinates as individuals, and challenge individuals to find creative ways of solving problems (Bass, 1990, 1997). Hartog (1997) argues that the attributes of transformational leadership are seen as contributing to outstanding leadership throughout the world.

Saeed (2010) contends that a good leader is one who can build an effective team, can listen, can make it on his / her own, retain good subordinates and surround himself/ herself with good people. These qualities are based on the source of power exerted on subordinates. Saeed (ibid) refers to the five power bases- legitimate, expert, reward/ punishment and personality power. As a result of the exercise of these power bases, Hodgetts and Luthans (2000) argue that certain leader behaviours become evident, such as paternalistic, participative, transactional and transformative leadership. The paternalistic leader encourages subordinates to work hard so that the organisation can take care of them. The participative leader involves subordinates in decision making; transitional leaders motivate staff to excel by helping them to understand their responsibilities and the rewards accompanying good performance. On the other hand, the transformative leader inspires subordinates by encouraging them to focus on broader issues, to concentrate on intrinsic higher level goals and to develop confidence to achieve at the highest possible level. Kouzes and Posner (2007) identify five practices of exemplary transformational leadership as:

- i. Modelling the way through establishing principles for treating people, pursuing goals, setting standards of excellence;
- ii. Inspiring subordinates and sharing vision for the institution;
- iii. Challenging subordinates to greater performance
- iv. Enabling others to act through collaboration, team spirit and active involvement;

- v. Encouraging others to keep hope and determination alive, recognise their individual contribution, share rewards with the team, celebrate accomplishments and make people feel like heroes.

The issues discussed above about leadership in general and leadership of higher education institutions, in particular, led me to the leadership of the regional campuses of the Zimbabwe Open University. From the time I joined the University eight months ago, I have heard it said over and over again that Tagutswa Regional Campus is different from other regional campuses. To what extent does the leadership of the regional campus distinguish it from other campuses?

#### *Statement of the problem*

The ten ZOU regional campuses are managed by regional campus directors who have the role of steering regional campus activities which range from recruitment of students and part time staff, and organising and conducting teaching and learning of students in the region. In addition the regional campus directors have to ensure that the threefold mandate of the university- teaching and learning, research and scholarship and community service- are achieved in the regional campus. Differences exist in the management of these campuses. The problem of this study is: what leadership factors differentiate the management of the ZOU regional campuses focusing on the Tagutswa Regional Campus.

#### *Research questions*

The research questions for this study are as follows: -

- a. How is the Tagutswa Regional Campus managed?
- b. How does the leadership of Tagutswa Regional campus affect the core university functions?
- c. To what extent is the leadership responsible for the success factors?
- d. What lessons can be drawn from the regional campus experiences?

#### *The context: Tagutswa Regional Campus*

After independence, the government of Zimbabwe set policies to ensure that every citizen who wanted to receive education. Two ministries of education were created- the ministry of education and Culture and the Ministry of Higher education. This second Ministry was established in 1988. The mandate of the Ministry of Higher Education was to create opportunities for all who qualify to attain university education. At the time there was only one university, the University of Zimbabwe (Kurasha, undated). The ministry started the process of increasing universities, starting with the National University of Science and Technology. The next was the Centre for Distance Education which had to provide university education to employed teachers who held diplomas in education (Kurasha, Ibid). The Centre was established in 1993 under the Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe. In 1996, the Centre became the University College of Distance Education, a college of the University of Zimbabwe. In 1999, the

university college became a fully-fledged university, the Zimbabwe Open University.

From its early days as the Centre for Distance Education, regional centres were a critical component of its delivery mode. Tagutswa Regional Campus was set up on the inception of the then Centre for Distance Education. There were two acting regional director before the appointment of a full time appointment Regional director, incumbent, in 1996.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research paradigm which focuses on explaining social phenomenon and the manner in which people may have different ways of viewing reality (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009). It enabled me to study the participants in their natural settings, the Regional Campus in which they worked. The social constructivism philosophical perspective was chosen because it allowed me to understand the world in which participants lived and worked (Creswell, 2003). I was able to explore the multiple and varied meanings participants had of the leadership of the Tagutswa Regional Campus through interacting with them (Creswell, *ibid*). This perspective holds the view that reality is constructed by people through such human activity as collaboration and interaction and is not an individual but cooperative experience (Vygotsky 1978). In addition, individuals acquire knowledge through interaction with their surroundings and other people and in this way they construct reality (Amineh & Asl, 2015). In line with this perspective, I was able to ask broad and general questions to enable participants to construct meanings through discussion and interaction with other persons (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011; Hancock et al 2009).

Two data generation procedures were adopted, the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion. The semi structured interview was used with the regional director, five academic members of staff and two administrative staff. Harrell and Bradley (2009) view semi structured interviews as a method that allows gathering of in-depth data on a topic of interest to the researcher. Participants have the opportunity to express their opinions and experiences with regards to the topic of discussion. It also allows follow up to probe for more information and seek clarification or explanation of issues Harrell and Bradley, 2009). Cohen and Crabtree (2006) note that the semi structured interview uses an interview guide with a list of questions to be asked by the researcher. The semi structured interview also uses open ended questions which give participants room to respond in their own words as freely as possible (Cohen and Crabtree, *Ibid*).

The focus group discussion is a qualitative research method which allows the researcher to Gather together people of similar backgrounds and experience to discuss a topic of interest. (Morgan, 1988).In the meeting participants discuss issues interacting among themselves and influencing each other, agreeing and disagreeing with each other, thereby

constructing subjective and shared reality of the leadership of Tagutswa Regional Campus (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). The researcher gathers data from the interaction. Focus group discussion was held with six non-academic members of staff. In this case, participants discussed the management of the Tagutswa regional campus, the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership style adopted and the effect of these on the group (Freitas, Jenkins and Popjoy (1998). Participants freely exchanged opinions on the topic of discussion, resulting in the acquisition of very useful data for the study.

As the data generation was in progress, I began the process of data analysis, studying the transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussion, making field notes to capture key issues. In data analysis the intention of the researcher is to understand the text as interaction between the researcher and the intentions of the participants (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). I coded data working with categories that emerged through data generation. I established the frequencies of the occurrences of the categories (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Mayring, 2014). At the end of data generation, I collated and interpreted the data to produce a report which showed how the leadership of the Tagutswa regional Centre impacted on the subordinates in the key areas of teaching and learning, research and scholarship and community service.

## III. RESULTS

### *Biographic detail of participants*

Table 1 below presents the biographical details of the participants.

Table 1: Biographical details of participants (n=14)

Staff group	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>RCD</b>	1	6.7			1	7.1
<b>Academic Staff</b>	4	26.7	3	20	7	46.7
<b>Admin staff</b>	4	26.7	3	20	7	46.7
	<b>9</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 1, there were more male participants 9(60%) than female 6 (40%). This is a reflection of the composition of the staff in the regional campus where there are more men than women, as shown in Table 2 below. There were equal numbers of male academic (4, 26.7%) and administrative staff (4, 26.7%) and equal numbers of female academic (3, 20%) and administrative participants (3, 20%). All participants were assigned letters A- N to protect their identities.

Table 2: Tagutswa Regional Campus Staff

Staff group	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>RCD</b>	1	3.0	0	0	1	3.0
<b>Academic Staff</b>	6	17.6	4	11.8	10	29.4
<b>Admin staff</b>	8	23.5	9	26.4	17	49.9
<b>Security staff</b>	5	14.7	1	3.0	6	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

The regional campus has a total of 34(100%) staff. 19 (58.8%) are male while 14 (41.2%) are female. Of the male staff 1 (3.0%) is the RCD, 6 (17.6%) are academic staff; 8 (23.5%) are administrative staff and 5 (14.7 %) are security personnel. 5 (14.7%) of the male academic staff and the RCD are professors. The rest of the academic staff members are senior lecturers. Of the 14 (41.2%) females, 4 (14.7%) academic staff, 9(26.4%) are administrative staff and 1 (3.0) is

Data was collected through semi structured interviews with the director, the four academic staff and two senior administrative staff members and focus group discussion with five administrative staff.

The findings are presented according to four themes that emerged from the data.

The director has been in a leadership role for twenty years in the current position and six years previously. He holds a doctoral degree in curriculum development and obtained most of his qualifications through distance education. In his previous capacity, he was a head of department in a teacher education college. These are some of the basic qualities required of a leader in distance education (Nworie, Haughton and Oprandi, 2012). This shows that he is an experienced educational leader.

The first theme is general management of the campus. In this theme, the RCD, the four academic and all administrative participants pointed out that the leader used a family approach according to which he views everybody as members of his family and treats them as such. Consequently he supports staff by attending such social functions as funerals, graduation ceremonies, weddings and visiting the sick. As a father figure, he is willing to listen, open and helpful.

*He is a father to me and he is open and willing to listen. I can discuss my problems with him.* (Employee J)

*Lecturers are as good as the RCD's sons and daughters whom he expects to be obedient, respectful, and enthusiastic about work* (Employee H)

He is also a very religious man who upholds Christian values and encourages others to do the same. As a result of his fatherly attitude, members of staff view the regional campus

as a second home where they have the freedom to be.

*The director encourages us to pray and believe in God.* (Employee F)

*He encourages us to pray* (Employee A)

One academic participant also pointed out that the RCD used accommodative and situational leadership styles in addition to the family type leadership.

*The RCD is able to work harmoniously with his staff, the local community and stakeholders* (Employee H)

*He is able to read situations and adopt situational leadership, for example when the university called for lecturers to upgrade themselves to PhD's, the RCD rose to the occasion and encouraged lecturers to study. Today almost all lecturers in the campus are holders of doctoral degrees* (Employee H)

The RCD viewed his leadership as being fair to workers, upholding the university mandate and balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the employees in his care. He also believed that he was an efficient leader in that he aimed at meeting goals on time resulting in satisfying consumer but he watches against achieving efficiency at the expense of internal and external customers.

*My management has a human touch and is not technical or dehumanising but requires technical, human and intellectual skills to manage staff with feeling* (RCD).

*I want to ensure that the campus meets deadlines by producing results on time without overworking the staff which may lead to staff flight* (RCD).

This demonstrates a deep rooted concern for the welfare of both staff and students and for the continued existence of the regional campus.

Yet the focus group participants felt that the work environment was not fair but restrictive, as the leader was stern/ autocratic towards them. This was also echoed by one academic who felt that the leader was stern with administrative staff.

The focus group participants expressed their appreciation of the fact that working in Tagutswa Regional campus enabled them to live with their families. They also echoed the view of the academic staff that the RCD praised them verbally and through tea parties. The focus group participants were all proud of the regional campus facilities and were therefore committed to their work.

- *We have a good place of our own with adequate facilities such as the library, computer laboratory and staff offices.* (Employee E)

The administrative staff participants also felt that the way in which their work is organised made it appear as if the work load was too heavy. They felt that the long hours they spent at work were unwarranted, as they deprived their families of time with them, as the excerpts below show:

- *My child is affected by my long hours at work even at weekends. I have no time to mould her as I would like to do (Employee C)*
- *Our families are suffering (Employee B)*

They acknowledged the fact that they could study and improve themselves academically and professionally but they were not allowed to take time off to study for examinations, time which ZOU policies allow. The staff also felt that there was no motivation for studying as those with Master's degrees were not recognised or promoted, as excerpt below shows.

- *In other regions, once one obtained a Master's degree, they were appointed part time tutor (Employee G)*

The RCD and all research participants agreed that the campus has a student focus which ensures that the needs of the students are paramount. The RCD sets an example in this regard in that any students who want to see him can do so with or without prior arrangement. He further encouraged students to share ideas, participate in co-curricular activities. He also encourages full time programme coordinators to conduct surveys during tutorials, as shown below: -

*I encourage tutors to carry out surveys during tutorials to establish strengths and weaknesses of tutorial services and use the results as a basis for the improvement of our service to students (RCD)*

*Students should participate in co-curricular activities such as netball, tennis, football which are part of the Vice chancellor's games platform (RCD)*

However, the administrative staff participants pointed out that they appreciated the fact that this focus ensured that student interests were paramount. While they understood that because of this, they had to work at weekends, they did not feel that their welfare was taken into consideration. They indicated that they found their work difficult because when they worked over time and during weekends they did not get financial or other benefits like time off in line with the policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, which were also supported by ZOU policies. They also agreed that in other regions and at the ZOU National Centre staff members were given transport and meal allowances for working at weekends.

*We work over time and at weekends with no financial or other benefits which other ZOU staff members receive for working like this (Participant E)*

*At National Centre, staff members who work at weekends get bus fare and lunches (Participant C)*

The RCD and academics agreed that the he holds regular meetings with the staff to forge a collective way forward with regards to students' issues which everybody would be able to support.

- *Regular staff meetings create an opportunity for the leader to share ideas with staff resulting in useful*

*decisions and plans. Agreed decisions are taken on board, which ensures staff commitment to the success of such decisions (Employee J).*

- *Agreed decisions are taken on board (Employee J)*
- *The leader holds regular staff meetings to decide on what to be done collectively (Employee H)*

Both academic and administrative staff members commented that the RCD allowed staff to be innovative and to work without supervision, thereby encouraging their professional growth. He uses different ways of motivating staff such as reward and appreciation of good achievement through verbal praise and offering tea parties. The RCD is strict on punctuality, smartness and respect. The academic participants viewed the RCD as a good leader who is accommodative and work and people oriented. He helps staff to focus on the university mandate.

One academic participant pointed out that the RCD uses committee system to manage regional Campus projects, as shown below.

- *He facilitates a vibrant committee system in which authority is delegated to the committee members (Employee J).*

He also encourages staff to develop themselves professionally and academically, as he does.

- *He encourages staff to develop themselves professionally and academically (Employee L)*
- *The director believes in capacity building his subordinates (Employee H)*

According to one academic participant, the RCD is able to react to situations effectively using situational leadership style, as shown in the excerpt below: -

- *There was call for lecturers to upgrade themselves to doctor of philosophy degrees. Through his guidance and encouragement, lecturers in the region positively responded to the call to the extent that almost all academic staff hold doctoral degrees. The very few who do not hold those degrees are currently pursuing their doctoral studies. (Employee H)*

One weakness agreed upon by both academic and administrative staff is preferential treatment of some members of staff, as shown below: -

- *Preferential treatment of some members of staff is problematic. (Employee I)*
- *One member of staff had a party thrown for her on completion of her master's degree. Other staff who achieved the same did not receive any commendation, let alone a party. (Employee C).*
- *He trusts those who came to the region through his initiative (Employee I)*

However, the RCD contests this claiming that he treated all staff the same. They also complained about the preferential treatment given in particular to one of them recently in that some of them completed Master's degrees before but no party was thrown for them. They saw this as unequal treatment of staff, which they also perceived in the granting of allowances. Two people would do the same work outside the office but only one would get an allowance and the other does not. This differential treatment was observed in the manner in which the leader protected those he liked, both academic and administrative staff. If other staff committed an offense, there was no proper investigation carried out resulting in unfair judgments.

The RCD agreed with most participants that he set himself up as a role model for staff to admire. He sets goals for himself and his subordinates. He viewed being a good model as motivating to staff which paid dividends.

- *I inspire staff to move a rank higher and conquer fear of the unknown (RCD)*

He believes that having a personal relationship with each individual member of staff helped in that staff would be more willing to listen. In this way he hoped to influence staff positively. For academic staff, the RCD specifically raises their aspirations to compete with other universities by being mega researchers. His motto is inspire and reward. He believes in this so much that he throws parties for successful achievement for all members of his staff.

The RCD pointed out that he had good interpersonal skills. He was on good terms with the Department of Teacher Education, University of Zimbabwe which led to some professors in the campus being appointed external examiners. The donation of a generator to the campus was also a result of his interpersonal skills. In addition all venues used by the regional campus for tutorials are a result of the good interpersonal skill. Other benefits of his interpersonal skills are the short courses offered to municipal staff, consultancy offered to one of his professors,

- *Some of the academics are teaching in local universities because of the good interpersonal skill (RCD)*

The RCD and academic participants agreed that the RCD is a man of vision.

- *I set short and long term vision for my staff. The short term vision is to promote teamwork, collegiality, peership and family approach to issues. This is the basis for all other campus developmental issues. The long term vision is to raise the recognition and credibility of the regional campus recognisable through scholarship. In this regard, I wish to see each member of staff, both academic and administrative pursuing further studies. We are in the knowledge industry. Our success depends on our ability to be drivers of knowledge (RCD).*

The RCD believed that the campus had made a lot of strides towards accomplishing the long vision. He cited the fact that he had a collegial relationship with the staff. Collaboration also defined the regional campus. In terms of scholarship, the regional campus was second to none, as 70% of the academics were holders of doctoral degrees, the majority are professors, only three are studying for the doctor of philosophy degrees and one would be a professor by end of 2017. He was hoping he could inspire academic staff to go further into the area of consultancies by specialisation so that the regional campus becomes a referral point for stakeholders and government. The RCD pointed out that the vision he had for the regional campus was in line with the ZOU vision to become a world class university through scholarship.

From a general management perspective, it is noted that the RCD uses a familial, situational, accommodative leadership style especially towards academic staff. He is a man of vision whose aim is to inspire, motivate and reward his subordinates. He has good interpersonal skills and tries to be fair to all staff, balancing the needs of the students with those of his subordinates. Weaknesses identified were preferential treatment of staff, overworking administrative staff without due compensation and treating all subordinates as his children, which some staff do not appreciate. In addition, the RCD is intolerant of failure to be punctual for work, meeting deadlines and dirty environments.

The second theme was teaching and learning. In this area the role of the RCD is to encourage academics and monitor the progress of teaching and learning by creating a conducive environment in which in which lecturers and tutors can work without direct supervision. The RCD indicated effective leadership of teaching meant demonstrating his understanding of good teaching and to be accountable to students, their families.

- *Effective leadership of teaching and learning is associated with accountability to students and their families.; inspire subordinates to promote collaborative teaching, content selection and ensuring students are treated as individuals and their potential is developed (RCD).*

From the above it is noted that the RCD took the teaching and learning role seriously considering himself as a model for tutors to follow. He also felt he was accountable for what was taught to students.

Five academic participants viewed the RCD as a leader and guide. They pointed out that the RCD encouraged holding of regular workshops with part time tutors to enhance their understanding of distance education methodologies and thus building regional capacity. The RCD keeps in regular contact with Ministries to ensure that the campus remains abreast with developments in the relevant ministries; developments which impinge on the lecturers and tutors work.

- *In fact, tutor workshops are a brainchild of the RCD, who tend to be more obedient (Employee J)*
- *He encourages regional programme coordinators to hold workshops with part time tutors on tutoring, marking and research supervision to improve quality of services to students (Employee M)*
- *Leader initiated the culture of work shopping and sharing of ideas which is now spilling over to part time tutors (Employee J)*

The RCD also supports workshops for students, such as those for Teaching Practice which prepare students for their roles as practising teachers.

The RCD also monitors quality of teaching and learning through student and peer evaluation. He regularly visits centres where tutorials are held to monitor progress in person and encourages production of reports for weekend tutorials which are used to improve the regional tutorial service to students. He also requires full time lecturers to attend tutorial sessions in order to ensure that all courses are offered and to monitor quality.

- *He does not tolerate any absence from tutorials (Employee I)*

The third theme was research and scholarship, an area in which great strides have been made. Both academic and administrative staff participants reported that the RCD was a very active researcher, a real role model and motivator, especially to academic staff.

- *The RCD is a very well-focused prolific researcher and author. (Employee I)*

The RCD viewed his role in research and scholarship as being aware of educational challenges requiring solutions in order to address them through research and inspiring subordinates to research and publish in local and international interdisciplinary journals. He felt that the regional campus needs to impact the education sector through research.

- *There is need for subordinates to research, present at local and international fora and establish a local interdisciplinary journal. The new curriculum, especially the speed of its roll out, is an area that should excite researchers, such as heads of schools, teachers, lecturers (RCD)*

All academic and administrative participants agreed that in this area he led by example. The RCD admitted that he was a keen researcher who has thirty-one publications locally and internationally. He pointed out that even when university funding for research dwindled out, he sponsored himself to attend conferences in Europe and East Africa. Academic participants further noted that he encourages academic staff to respond to calls for papers and international conferences and consequently set up a research committee to steer research in the regional campus.

- *He encourages us to respond to calls for papers and to attend international conferences. He even follows up to ensure that we have responded. (Employee J)*
- *One time, we produced such papers and with his guidance, we put them together to produce a book which was then published (Employee J)*
- *For the regional campus, the turning point was the SASE which lecturers and I attended. This opened our eyes to what was possible (RCD).*

Academic participants also pointed out that the RCD encourages holding of research workshops to sharpen the research skills of both full time and part time academic staff.

- *We would hold research workshops and present so that in the discussion, we help each other improve in both research skills and presentation skills. (Employee M).*
- *For those who are studying for PHD's, the director encourages them to present their work at research workshops to sharpen their presentation skills. (Employee K)*

All academic participants agreed that as a result of his encouragement, three academics have been promoted to associate professor and one full professor. The RCD himself is an associate professor, confirming the view held by both academic and administrative staff that the campus has more professors than other regions. One is awaiting the results of his application for promotion to associate professor. In addition all the other academics are in the senior lecturer grade and those who qualify are tenured.

- *His encouragement in meetings led to lecturers researching and publishing (Employee I)*
- *Academic lecturers have been promoted to associate and full professor while the remainder are tenured and at the level of senior lecturer (Employee J)*
- *I inspire the academic staff to continually aim to move to the next rank (RCD)*

The fourth and last theme was community service. In this area the RCD leads by example and facilitator. He is a member of many organisational boards and encourages staff to do the same. He sometimes delegated some of these responsibilities to relevant staff as a means of mentoring them in that particular area. He encourages academic to do community work. Because he works harmoniously with the local community and stakeholders, he gets to know about opportunities for community work and informs the academics and encourages relevant staff to do the work, for example training city council staff on customer care, translation of a Shona film to English, teaching in other universities, attending cultural festivals, Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises etc.

- *He encourages us to supervise PHD students and to lecture in other universities to sharpen our skills (Employee H)*

- *The RD is well known in Tagutswa, as senior people are his friends. He gets to know about opportunities for community service and shares these with academic staff* (Employee I)
- *He works harmoniously with the local community and stakeholders* (Employee H)
- *As a result of the good relations between the RCD and the local community a generator was donated to the campus* (Employee J)

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the leadership of Tagutswa Regional campus to establish why it is different from other regional campuses. The themes emerging from the data were the overall management of the campus, management of teaching and learning, research and scholarship and community service. The leader, the RCD, played a critical role in the management of the regional campus. He sets short term and long term vision for his staff in order to motivate them to aim higher in their careers (Benoit and Graham 2005; Sathye, 2004). While the RCD mostly used the family leadership style in which he considers every subordinate as a member of his family, he also used situational leadership depending on the situation (Saeed, 2010) on the basis of the five power bases (Hodgetts and Luthans, 2000). Therefore, some staff saw him as stern and harsh at times. The leader also encourages collegial and collaborative relations among the staff (Ambrose *et al* 2005). Through their collaboration, the staff members were able to adopt a committee structure which supervised the construction of the new office block at the campus.

The RCD involves staff in decision making to map the way forward and encourages open communication among himself and all staff (Bland, Weber *et al*, 2005). He endeavours to treat staff fairly and with integrity (Ambrose, *et al*, 2005)

The RCD was anxious to see the staff advancing themselves academically and professionally. Through his knowledge of faculty roles in distance education, he created an environment in which most academic staff advanced to being holders of doctor of philosophy degrees and four were studying for such degrees; four were at the level of associate professor while the remaining six were senior lecturers. In addition, most of the non-academic staff members were holders of first degrees; about half were holders of masters' degrees and a few were studying for their first degrees. The academic staff have published profusely in national, regional and international journals. They have also attended conferences nationally, regionally and internationally, even when university funding had fizzled out. While the RCD did not directly recruit full time staff at academic and administrative levels, he played a significant role in moulding and staff developing them to be the right kind of professionals for distance education (Nworie *et al*, 2012). He constantly inspired all the regional campus staff to aim higher (Bass & Avolio, 1993)

The leader had such good interpersonal (people) skills that he worked extremely well with the local community to advance the regional campus' cause such as securing easy access to venues for tutorial services, accessing community work projects for academic staff and securing donations for the campus (Bland, Weber *et al*, 2005).

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings it can be concluded that leaders play critical roles in shaping organizational the directions (vision) of organisations, designing organizational strategies, influencing stakeholders, and ultimately achieving the goals of organisations. For this reason, leaders are a crucial variable in organizational dynamics (Alemu, 2015). The Tagutswa RCD is a transformational leader who fulfils the five practices of exemplary leadership highlighted by Kouzes and Posner (2007). The RCD is a visionary who encourages staff, motivates them and ensures high achievement of regional campus and university goals. As a result of his leadership, the regional campus excels in professional development of staff, scholarship and teaching and learning. His espoused student focus ensures that the campus meets the needs of the students who are the main clients. However, preferential treatment of staff takes away from his generally good and effective management of the regional campus. In addition, the family leadership may be viewed by some as being paternalistic and needs to be exercised with caution. All in all, the RCD holds the qualifications and qualities required of a leader in distance education and transformative leadership skills. As Nworie *et al* (2012) recommend, the RCD is an educational leader who has vision and direction, ability to motivate all his staff, and ability to adapt to changing situations.

It can also be concluded that the RCD effectively performs the four critical leadership variables - decision making, organizational goal achievement, modelling, and meeting ethical expectations (Alemu, 2015).

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the RCD reviews his family leadership style as it may easily verge on being paternalistic, which some subordinates may be offensive to some subordinates. There is also need for him to, as much as possible, treat all staff equally regardless of who they are.

The ZOU needs to encourage other regional campuses to emulate the impressive leadership of Tagutswa Regional campus, especially in the areas of staff development, research and scholarship and community service.

Further studies need to be carried out throughout the ten regional campuses of the ZOU to explore leadership practices in order for the ZOU to remain abreast of developments in leadership practices in distance education globally.



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