

Examining the Policy Implications of Massification of Higher Education in Zimbabwe, how Quality was Inevitably Compromised

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Abstract: The United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposal to achieve universal access to Primary and higher education in Zimbabwe from the attainment of independence in 1980 till the beginning of the new millennium has faced unprecedented massification of higher education. Any attempt to open up the system and introducing policies of deepening and widening access to higher education seems have inevitably led to the belief that mass education will be achieved at the price of lower quality education. Notwithstanding the wide array of challenges associated with the massification of higher education, the expansion of higher education in Zimbabwe has seen a major challenge of the decline in the quality of teaching and learning. This article examines the policy implication of mass education in Zimbabwe's higher education and how it compromised the quality of higher education teaching and learning. The article adopts a qualitative paradigm, drawing on structure and agency theoretical view point to offer deeper insight into how higher education massification policies compromised the delivery of quality education in the Zimbabwean context of higher education. The article provides a detailed description of the way in which structures and agency have been constrained by the massification of higher education in Zimbabwe. The article also demonstrates how the critical realist theory of structure and agency can contribute towards a deeper understanding of mass education and quality decline.

Key words: Higher education, massification of education, policy, quality education, structure agency perspective, Zimbabwe.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe, the government launched a dramatic expansion of its higher education systems through initiatives of widening and deepening access to higher education. Higher education in Zimbabwe is seen as a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge driven global economy. There is a great need for countries to have quality employees and this can be achieved through a call for quality teaching and learning within higher education. Over the past thirty years Zimbabwe has been moving towards a policy of higher education which focused on deepening and widening access to higher education. The policy is accompanied by the explicit tendencies such as the increase of higher education institutions and enrolment rates, which doubled since the

1990s. The rapid social demand for higher education has been caused in large part by students' desire to achieve the increasing personal benefits to individuals with higher degrees. Expansion of higher education in Zimbabwe is inspired by the idea of addressing colonial injustices, attainment of equality of opportunities and social equilibrium being promoted on the grounds of demographic necessity. This has seen the establishment of a state university in each region in pursuance of economic consideration and labour market demand for more innovative manpower with special competences and capacities for life-long education. In the context of expanding higher education, Zimbabwe higher education faces challenges of adaptation to financial, social and institutional constraints. The source of interest is cost and benefit of mass education system and the quality challenges it has met. Massification of higher education is a global phenomenon, resulting from factors such as democratisation of education, the advent of the knowledge economy and globalisation. The article draws from structure and agency approach (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1984) to understand how the massification of higher education in Zimbabwe compromised the quality of education. This research conducted in two universities in Zimbabwe was undertaken with a view to better understand issues that are compromised by massification of higher education and to identify ways of better operationalising higher education in future.

The article opens with a brief overview of the evolution of Mass Education in Zimbabwe, followed by a critical realist theory of structure and agency theoretical view point. Building on this line of thought, we also strive to show how the massification of higher education has inevitably compromised the quality of education. The brief overview of the (SDGs) and specifically Goal 4 on quality education is also discussed. This is followed by a brief study methodology and presentation of our study findings. The article concludes with some discussions on mass education in Zimbabwe and recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW- MASS EDUCATION AND QUALITY DECLINE.

Ensuring and assuring quality of higher education in the context of mass education has become dominant policy discourse in many jurisdictions across the globe. The rapid expansion of higher education in Zimbabwe and the entire Southern African region has triggered considerable concerns for quality. In this article our argument is that, the growing public demand due to globalisation and the changed local realities, the ideology of socialising and distributive justice and poverty reduction rationales are the main forces driving the unprecedented growth. The unprecedented quantitative growth is received with mixed feelings. The World Bank, (2009) calls on Sub-Saharan African countries to slow down the pace of expansion and shift their attention to propping up the quality of their higher education systems.

The pressures of massification and its attendant problems mean that academics now have increasingly demanding roles to improve student learning (Vukasovic,2014) particularly so in systems ravaged by a paucity of resources. Massification can be defined as the mass adoption of a phenomenon by the suppression of its distinguishing feature. Scot (1995) used the term massification in the context of higher education systems to describe the rapid increase in student enrolment in the later part of the twentieth century. While concerns for higher education quality has been always an important feature of higher education, the quality revolution emerges as a worldwide phenomenon within the context of widening and deepening participation and financial exigencies (Cardoso, Rosa& Stensaker, 2016). Much of the research conducted in Africa and the world over (Mohamed Bhai, 2014; World Bank,2009; Teferra,2015; Altbacty,2013b) has indicated that the marriage between massification of higher education (expansion, numbers game) and quality has not always been easy and achievable. Akalu,(2016) tells us that, one particularly dominant issue in Africa was to talk about quality in higher education with a concerned voice, the sense was that quality in higher education was sick and in need of care. Zimbabwe higher education quality is in the intensive care unit where it requires specialised monitoring and to be taken care of.

Over the last two decades, the rate of expansion in Zimbabwe higher education has been staggering. The number of universities grew from one in 1980 to fourteen universities in 2019. As a result, enrolment also jumped from about 5000 in 2000 to over 20000 in 2019 across faculties. Regardless of the huge challenges facing higher education, the pace of quality seems to show signs of slowing down to allow for reflections or way forward. Although these developments are viewed as a showcase of the government's effort to intensifying Zimbabwe's entry into the club of middle income countries, others (Akalu, 2016) argue that the education system is actually facing a triangular problem of access, quality and sustainability. The manner in which the expansion of higher education in Zimbabwe has taken place and has a peculiar

story of its own which occurs in direct response to a political decision at the highest echelons of power and it is not guided by academic principles. The decisions are made in the face of acute shortages of staff and other critical resources. Class sizes have ballooned while classrooms and library facilities and resources continued to be meagre. In an effort to deliver good value for money, academics are required to do more with less. Academics continue to teach large classes but receive reduced support in resources and professional development. In many countries that are striving to guarantee all children the right to education, the focus on access has overshadowed the issue of quality yet quality stands at the heart of education for all.

The high growth and massification in higher education in Zimbabwe has presented new challenges and implications for their operations. Most of the challenges (World Bank,2009) are manifested naturally in relation to the quality and standards of teaching and learning and also in the quality of full a range of student services, from Information Communication Technology (ICT), Infrastructure and University cultural events. In Zimbabwe, we contend that universities have started to adopt a corporate management approach in the provision of education. This has given rise to a changing phenomenon, that of marketization and income generating institutions and the perception of students as customers purchasing a service at a profit calculated rate. The growing number of students in universities is creating a tension between mass education and the quality of services which can be delivered within operational and resource parameters. In Zimbabwe, higher education has become the norm and a university education is no longer the domain of a select few. Participation ratios in higher education have increased phenomenally.

Quality in Higher Education

Quality in higher education is the most important investment for making progress towards the achievement of international development goals adopted by the UN agenda for 2030. Without major advances in seeking to improve the quality of higher education, Zimbabwe will not be able to take advantage of trade and development opportunities in a technological driven and rapidly integrated world economy. Describing and defining quality within the context of higher education is a complex and elusive issue. We define quality in education as providing students with high levels of employability, or providing them with analytical, critical thinking, problem solving and practical skills that can be used in different work related contexts. Quality higher education should provide learners with education that will make them independent and critical thinkers. However, quality in higher education can be context specific in that there are different interpretations since universities have different focuses and strategies, vision and missions. Shava, (2016) tells us that there is no single definition of quality and that quality is stakeholder-relative, elusive and individualistic in nature. Within the context of a university, the term fitness for a

purpose is often cited as a descriptor for and of quality (Giannakis and Bullivant, 2014). Whilst the literature on quality in higher education is replete with various conceptualisations, it remains that quality is an essentially contested issue with competing voices, multiple interpretations and discourses. Quality is an elusive concept implying different things to different stakeholders, groups and individuals. Newton, (2010) pointed out that quality can be interpreted variously as, exceptional, as perfection (or consistency), and as transformational. With the advent of the Bologna process in Europe, the view of quality as technical performance has surfaced (Saarinen, 2010).

SAUVCA,(2002) argue that, various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from quality as a measure for excellence to quality as perfection or quality as customer satisfaction. Thus quality depending on the definition selected implies a relative measure of inputs, processes, outputs or learning outcomes. Access to quality higher education should not be viewed as a luxury since the survival of a country depends on human's capability of adapting to emerging challenges and the ability to compete globally depends on quality higher education.

Massification and the Quality Imperative in Higher Education

Across the world higher education is witnessing a veritable boom in student numbers, especial in the Southern African region where the researchers conducted research on education for sustainable development. Countries like Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have witnessed growing numbers of students' enrolments and growing numbers of newly established universities. Massification of higher education has become a global phenomenon (Palfrey man, Tapper & Thomas, 2011; Newton, 2010; Akalu, 2016) and in the words of Altbach (2013a) it has become an iron law of twenty first century-higher education. Zimbabwe is no exception to the global trend of massification which seeks to widen and deepen access to higher education. World Bank (2009) tells us that, for the last four decades, tertiary education enrolments in Sub-Saharan Africa grew faster than any other region in the world, although the participation rate remains the lowest in the world.

In Zimbabwe and the entire African region, massification occurred mainly as a result of growths in enrolment in primary and secondary education. The Dakar framework for action World Forum where countries committed themselves to the achievement of education for all (EFA), World Declaration on Education for all (Jomtien,1990), Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child committed themselves that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from education policies on education being a fundamental human right and key to sustainable development. Massification in higher education was as a result of a growing awareness on the part of African governments of the role of higher education to national economic productivity and forging

sustainable livelihoods. Massification has greatly improved access to higher education, greatly benefiting groups who have traditionally been excluded from elite systems of higher education for greater human capital development. From another point of view, massification in higher education is invoked as a cause for many problems that include funding, organisation, governance and poor teaching and learning. Altbach (2012) pointed out that massification has greatly lowered the standards of higher education. He further tells us that:

On average in most countries, the quality of higher education has declined. In a mass system, top quality cannot be provided to all students. It is not affordable, and the ability levels of both students and professors necessarily becomes more diverse. University study and teaching are no longer a preserve for the elite-both in terms of ability and wealth. While the top of a diversified academic system may maintain its quality (although in some countries the top sector has also suffered), the system, as a whole declines (Altbach, 2013b;p.9).

The major challenges brought about by massification in higher education enrolments include, financial, physical, human and material resources shortages. Massification has induced several problems which include dilapidation of infrastructure, resource shortages, large class sizes, lack of classroom space, declining quality of research of the teaching and learning process (Teferra, 2015). Mohamedbhai, (2008;p.10) tells us that 'massification in Africa seems to confirm the claim that 'more means worse' due to the innumerable challenges faced by higher education institutions on the continent. According to Mohamedbhai (2014) massification in higher education has had negative consequences on almost all the public higher education institutions, including physical infrastructure, staff, educational quality, graduate employment and student mobility. This was confirmed by World Bank (2009; p.xxii) report on higher education in sub-Saharan Africa which pointed out that, 'Too rapid an increase in enrolments, as has happened in the recent past, has eroded quality and is undermining the contribution of higher education to growth'. Odhiambo (2011, p.307) stated that, 'There is a general consensus that the quality of education and, therefore, the competence of university graduates has deteriorated'. However, what are the implications of higher education massification? How are the increasing numbers of students impacting on several dimensions of service quality? How can higher education institutions cope with the expansion phenomenon? The present article explores these questions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical view point of the study resonates with the thoughts of Archer, 1995 ,Bourdieu, 1984,Giddens, 1984 and Basker,1979, 1989, 1998, 2010,2011, of critical social realist theory of structure and agency. Archer, (1995) accepts that

there exists a reality independent of people's representation of it, but acknowledges that their knowledge of reality is subject to all kinds of historical and other influences. The concept of structure and agency is interested in the structure of social reality and the extent to which individuals are free to act within that structure. Structures are said to be the objective complexes of social institutions within which people live and act. Agents are said to be human deliberators and choosers who navigate their life plans in an environment of constraints. If structure and agents are considered to be ontologically distinct levels, then we have a series of different questions to confront. For example; which has causal priority? Are structures determinatives of social outcomes, with agents merely playing their roles within those structures? Or are agents the drivers of social causation, and structures are merely secondary effects of individual-level actions and states of consciousness? Human agency is better understood as the collective product of social relations than as an autonomous individual power. We cannot separate agency and structure, rather the fundamental unit of social activity involves both aspects. In this article, structuration theory will be examined on the basis of the authors' observation that agency and structures play a crucial role in constraining the achievement of goals. The achievement of quality higher education in Zimbabwe could be constrained by agency or structures. The structure and agency approach addresses the reciprocal effects of actors' behaviours and their structural context, appears as a more appropriate tool. The structure and agency approach acknowledge people's reflexes and agency. Critical socialists focus on identifying hidden causal mechanisms, how they work, whether they are active or not, and the conditions under which they become active. Critical realist research therefore aims at arriving at knowledge of the content of the causal process in order to understand what it is that generates particular events and experiences (Basker, 1978). Archer, (1995) views structure as a form of social organisation, as well as the social relations that comprises it. Massification of higher education did not consider the existence of structures that would sustain quality higher education. Structure in higher education comprises roles, policies, systems organisation, institutional structures, sub-structures and positional levels within the organisation. Structures also include the material conditions which would motivate action. (Archer, 1995, 2003). For Archer, structures are real, but they require the activity of agents to be reproduced or changed. According to Archer, when analysing structure, one can either focus on the availability of physical infrastructure, positional levels, roles or the institutional structures. Massification of higher education did not consider institutional structures that would sustain quality teaching and learning in the context of expansions in enrolments. Higher education institutions do not possess adequate infrastructure and facilities and funding needed to accommodate large numbers of students.

Agency on the other hand is defined by Archer (1995) as the reflective, creative, innovative and purposeful actions of people. It refers to the choices that people make in their daily

lives which either reinforce existing structures or transform them. It is what people do as individuals or groups with what they have collectively produced. Agency continuously (Giddens, 1984) monitor their own thoughts and activities as well as their physical and social contexts. They rationalise their world by developing routines that not only give actors a sense of security but enable them to deal effectively with their social lives. Archer, (2003) argues that structures and cultural systems improve constraints on the actions of people. Agency therefore in higher education refers to the personal and psychological make-up of individuals, their social roles and relates to their capacity to act in a voluntary way. Agency in higher education refer to people, staff both academic and non-academic, management, administrators and all those who are involved in the teaching and learning processes. In Zimbabwe higher education institutions do not have skilled professionals, especial senior faculty members at PhD level. Universities are unable to retain qualified faculty and research scholars. Due to massification, class sizes have ballooned while classrooms and members of staff are in short supply. Zimbabwe universities are unable to retain qualified agents who are recognised as outstanding scholars.

II. METHODS

In order to explore the proposition that massification of higher education, quality is inevitably compromised, we need to examine the operational process for assessing quality of service delivery. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of university academics who witnessed exponential growth in the number of students in two Zimbabwean universities. Employing interpretive, exploratory descriptive approaches, (Loseke, 2013) the study seeks to establish how participants make meaning of their experiences. A case study approach was considered the most appropriate method to understand the implications of massification in higher education. A qualitative research approach embedded in an interpretive paradigm was considered suitable for the exploratory study. The interpretive paradigm enabled the researchers to see, hear and to grasp the particular meaning-making inherent in people's lives within the selected institutions. A qualitative research approach according to (Alase, 2017) gives researchers the best opportunity to understand the innermost deliberation on the lived experiences of research participants. Shava and Nkengbeza (2019) tell us that qualitative research is a participant oriented, interpretive phenomenological analysis approach which allows the interviewees to express themselves and their lived experiences the way they see fit without any distortion. A qualitative phenomenological inquiry uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomenon in context specific settings (Shava and Nkengbeza, 2019).

Table 1 shows the sample for the study.

University	Number of Lecturers	Number of administrators	Number of deans
A	3	3	2
B	3	3	2
C	3	3	2

The participants in this study, 3 academics, 2 deans and 3 administrators from each university totalling twenty-four (24). These were purposefully chosen based on three criteria. They were full-time academics who had taught for a number of years, they were familiar with higher education systems and policies and willing to participate in the study and represented different disciplinary areas.

Data Collection

To gather a breadth of contextual information about each case the empirical data for this study came from semi-structured open ended interviews. The common questions were used to solicit higher education management and practitioners' views on the implications of massification in higher education. The interview questions were broad and open ended to capture the breadth of how massification in Zimbabwe higher education inevitably compromised quality teaching and learning. Participants were asked questions regarding their views and experiences on education expansion, their conception of quality and their insights on the major challenges they are experiencing in the quality of students' learning in the context of rapid expansion in enrolments. We collected various types of data so as to locate the cases within their contextual nuances (Creswell, 2014). Findings from the study are presented under the overarching themes of massification and quality, conception of quality and education for sustainable development.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For the last few decades, Zimbabwe higher education has experienced remarkable expansion. This has seen the establishment of a university in each of the ten provinces, making a major contribution to the development of human resources in Zimbabwe. The current demand for expansion of higher education was influenced by government policy which introduced free and compulsory primary education which ultimately influenced high enrolments in both secondary and higher education institutions. One of the study participants gave a historical overview of the expansion in higher education by indicating that the introduction of free primary education consequently led to increase in the number of students joining secondary education and this influenced yet another subsequent expansion of enrolments in higher education. This expansion was not only witnessed in Zimbabwe, the entire African region was equally affected. Much research in the context of higher education in Africa (Mohamedbhai, 2014; World Bank, 2009; Teferra, 2015; Shava, 2016) and elsewhere (Albach, 2013b) has indicated that the marriage between massification and quality has not

always been easy. One of the participants commented to say 'higher education institutions have not been able to cope with the large numbers of students, institutional materials have remained inadequate, lecture halls have been overcrowded, while the quality of academic staff and pedagogical approaches at the institutions of higher learning have relatively declined'. The double intakes adopted by universities have worsened the situation. Most participants however, stated that higher education expansion was a necessary move since it opened opportunities for many who by no choice of their own were deprived of higher education opportunities. An administrator from one of the universities remarked that the present expansion effort is essential as it has opened opportunities for many marginalised groups who could not have made it to proceed to university and remain in poverty. However, in this study we argue that if Zimbabwe's higher education is to meet its socio-economic objectives and address the current 21st century challenges, the quality of teaching and learning should remain high on the agenda and institutional strategic plans. Analysis of the responses from participants revealed that there was a perceived decline in the quality of teaching and learning processes at universities since the introduction of the policy on mass education. For many of the study participants, the expansion of students' enrolments has largely meant:

- Opening doors widely to less academically prepared learners into universities.
- Universities introducing double intakes, parallel programmes, block release and weekend schools.
- Increasing academics' workloads often associated with teaching large classes.
- Some students failing to get furniture in the classrooms resulting in them learning sitting on the floors.
- A mismatch between student numbers and resources available.
- Reduced autonomy for academic departments to select their own students.
- Limited infrastructure for teaching and learning.
- Students failing to get accommodation in university residence. (campus residents)
- Students staying in the nearby residential areas where they are grouped in small houses built near universities to raise an income from students.
- Putting pressure on facilities and personnel in universities.
- Academics handling large numbers of students.
- Academics devoting less time to research and publication.
- Mismatch of increased enrolments and available academic facilities e.g. laboratories, computer labs and studios and workshops for practical activities.
- Increased student lecturer ratio leading to reduced individual attention to students.
- Reduced research outputs among academics.

- Deterioration of physical facilities as a result of over usage.

In this study, all participants commented that the availability of adequate infrastructure capacity to deliver quality higher education was not available in all universities in Zimbabwe. The first university in Zimbabwe which was established during the Rhodesian and Nyasaland Federation used to accommodate less than 500 students and the same university now accommodates more than 15000 students with the same infrastructure. The major challenges highlighted by participants is that universities in Zimbabwe lack the necessary infrastructure, human resources, finances and equipment to address the learning and teaching needs of students who joined universities as a result of the policies on widening and deepening access to higher education. Findings from the study revealed that universities in Zimbabwe do not have sufficient facilities, sufficient manpower and they lack funding to run a number of courses and the large cohorts that have arisen as a result of the massification of higher education. Findings from the study indicated that the increase in student numbers compromised the quality of teaching and learning as lecturers struggle to deal with large numbers in terms of consultations, supervision, monitoring, evaluating, assessment and the overall teaching and learning process. One of the participants among the lecturers had this to say, 'We as lecturers cannot advise or dictate to the university management how many students should be enrolled as that is a process or decision determined by management'. During the time of data collection one of the lecturers indicated that he was supervising 21 Masters students in their research project and he was failing to cope especially with face to face consultations. According to the participants massification of higher education resulted in lecturers (agents) having added responsibilities in order to improve students' learning in the face of lack of resources to make the teaching and learning process better. Zimbabwe universities are not adequately resourced for the current population of students and evidence is often clear in the extent to which lecturers struggle to publish results or to meet deadlines for marks and attend to curricula requirements of increasingly diverse student population. In most institutions academics teach more courses than required due to lack of human resources and some are teaching courses they have not specialised in and this has led to deteriorating standards and lack of attention to other areas of teaching as well as support for students. Participants were of the opinion that massification in higher education has negative impact not only on increasing work load but on the usage of existing infrastructure and capacity of lecturers needing more skills to handle large classes. Lecturers indicated that they are not managing to provide students feedback on time or provide individualised coaching. As a result, students complain of late feedback that results in them not making necessary improvements on their work. Most of the study participants were quick to point out that the decline on quality education was also directly linked to the quality of students that universities are enrolling. For one of the

participants, the absence of what he called reading culture on the part of most students was a source of concern. A couple of interviewees expressed feelings of frustration as they narrated their experiences of decline in the quality of higher education due to lack of adequate infrastructure, especially ICT equipment and limited number of computer laboratories in their universities. Another striking observation was how academics were powerless to hand-down prescriptions even in the face of what they considered a disastrous turnaround of events. One of the academics remarked that, quality higher education was compromised due to resource shortages. Another academic pointed out that, many of the students are not university material, the massification of higher education allows students who are academically not suitable to study for degree programs. An academic from one university of Science and Technology remarked that they were enrolling students not suitable to study courses in Science and Technology instead who should be pursuing courses like building, carpentry or textile garment sewing at colleges rather enrolling for courses such as Applied Biochemistry, Applied Physics and Applied Biology. Such students would require lots and lots of academic support because most of them are mediocre.

Collectively it emerged from participants that university libraries and laboratories also have been affected by massification of higher education. Large numbers of students struggle to access required materials to work on their assignments and tests due to insufficient books and other reading materials from the library. In some cases, the internet facilities are down due to overload on servers of the university. Findings from the study showed that due to expansion, libraries have not been able to match increasing numbers of students with required reading materials and this would mean that other students wait for longer periods before accessing books or materials that would have been borrowed by their colleagues. The introduction of the e-library in most universities has assisted in reducing the pressure in the library but facilities available are not enough to accommodate every student who may need to access information at a time that is convenient to them. Most students spend a lot of time waiting for their colleagues to use computers which are not enough for the number of students who want to use them. One university had a ratio of 1 computer to 20 students who are doing their Bachelor of Education degree. In the same university, the whole faculty with about 3000 students did not have a computer laboratory, instead depend on the computer lab from another faculty. A university that is better able to provide quality teaching and learning is a small or medium-sized institution with a reasonable enrolment, because of the information fluidity, availability of resources and straight forward-decision-making process that characterise the university. A quality culture at institutional level can be better achieved through diverse initiative, small sized enrolments and experiments at course or programme level, replication of success stories, the evaluation of quality teaching as a vehicle of discussion and participation of technical and administrative

staff to provide mediation between academics and students. All these strategies can be achieved if enrolments are reduced and not in the context of mass education.

The study established that there are no innovations in Zimbabwe higher education on issues concerning optimal utilization of space, student accommodation, maintenance of physical facilities in the context of massification, all of which relate directly to the massive increase of students' enrolment in universities. Massification in Zimbabwe higher education occurred without an accompanying increase in resources namely financial, physical and human which has had a direct impact on the physical infrastructure, the quality of teaching and learning, research quality of the academics and the students. The greatest negative impact of massification in higher education in Zimbabwe has been on the physical infrastructure of the universities, including the students' classrooms, library, ablution facilities and residences. In all universities in Zimbabwe, very few additional buildings have been put up and some of them have remained incomplete for more than 15 years, most of the existing ones are dilapidated, inadequate for large numbers of students and not having been maintained due to lack of funds and these have greatly deteriorated. The lack of funds remains the major constraint for Zimbabwe higher education institutions to develop their physical infrastructure.

In summary participants for the study identified the following key issues as the major effects of massification in higher education.

- Critical shortage of academic staff as reflected in the high ratio of student/staff.
- Staff over-burdened with teaching and related assignments.
- Heavy teaching loads and other duties among academic staff.
- Lack of accommodation for the bulk of students.
- Universities failing to be facilitators for student housing.
- Poor infrastructure, pitiful state of infrastructure, shortage of public funds for expansion, the physical infrastructure at universities has not increased proportionately with the increased enrolments.
- Future professionals and leaders of the country experiencing poor quality of life on campus or outside campus.
- Universities generating income to supplement grant from government.
- Lack of training for academics to handle large classes.
- Lack of appropriate internal quality assurance mechanism.

Lack of effective planning for massification at Institutional level, steps need to be taken to ensure that the maximum number of students complete their degree programmes;

- Lack of public funding and the issues of cost recovery through tuition fees.
- Hardly any planning for increased enrolment in higher education.
- Lack of staff performance appraisal
- Massive increase in student numbers putting pressure on the management and governance of the universities.
- Lack of video-transmissions and inter-connection of lecture rooms.
- Shortage of teaching space or workshops
- Lack of ICT which has become a global engine for acquiring knowledge.
- Finally, Zimbabwean universities have not make provision for the needs of physically disabled students and staff.

The study therefore established that massification of higher education has consequential problems that can affect the performance of students, and in some cases students taking much longer to complete their degree programmes.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings from the study we make the following recommendations;

- University academics should be allowed to play a central role right from the recruitment of students all the way through the entire process of learning.
- Institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe should be guided by fundamental principles as they seek to expand access by widening and deepening access, one of which is that they should not compromise on quality of teaching and learning.
- If academics are to remain pivotal in efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning, then more attention needs to be paid by institutions and quality assurance structures to the importance of the conditions and context of academics' work.
- When academics' perspectives are shuttered as irrelevant and are not given careful attention in the student admission process, it would be erroneous to expect them to own the national agenda on student education expansion and thereby make their best contribution towards achieving agenda 2030 global goal on quality education and also enhancing Zimbabwe's higher education to become competitive in the global sphere.
- At the helm of capacitating higher learning institutions is the need to establish sufficient infrastructure, support human capital through professional development programmes as well as diversified funding for infrastructure development to enable massive student enrolment and provision of effective teaching and learning.
- It is crucial that higher learning institutions address these challenges in order to improve the quality of

teaching and learning. Also to address massification challenges, there should be design of online courses that will assist with reducing student numbers on campus. Putting mechanisms in place for online learning would greatly improve the teaching and learning conditions in universities.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it emerged that there is tremendous pressure facing higher education institutions as a result of policies on widening and deepening access to higher education and this needs urgent intervention. Higher education in Zimbabwe is increasing, resulting in an overwhelming mismatch with the higher education infrastructure, agency and their readiness for expansion. There is clear insufficient infrastructure in the institutions of higher learning and this serves as a major and clear obstacle to quality teaching and learning. Overcrowding of classrooms, lack of resources, ICT included, decreasing number of senior academics and the low support of staff development programmes characterising universities in Zimbabwe calls for an urgent reaction to address these disastrous challenges. Polygreen (2007) tells us that academics teaching large numbers of students have become so overstretched especially in the areas of continuous assessment to monitor each individual student's learning progress but also can be exposed to the fatigue related diseases. This view resonates with the findings from the study which indicated that growing numbers of students have become overwhelmingly difficult for consultations as well as monitoring students' progress. In Zimbabwe higher education institutions, the impact of policies on massification on the quality of teaching and learning has been a key concern. From the findings of the study it is apparent that the expansion of higher education has led to tremendous pressure on institutions of higher learning as massive numbers of students continue to enrol into universities while the capacity to absorb them has remained insufficient to meet the outstanding demand. One salient issue that this paper has raised is how massive increases in student numbers had particularly been challenging for academics who saw their primary role as one of improving students' learning experiences. All participants in this study spoke of declining quality of education as students' enrolments increase.

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